

# **Future Directions for USAID Support to Conflict Mitigation in Nigeria**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

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<b>AD</b>	Alliance for Democracy (political party strongest in Yoruba area; see Glossary)
<b>ADR</b>	Alternative dispute resolution
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>CAN</b>	Christian Association of Nigeria
<b>CAREFOR</b>	Campaign for the Reforestation of Katsina State (Nigerian environmental NGO)
<b>CBO</b>	Community-based organization
<b>CEDPA</b>	Centre for Development and Population Activities
<b>CEPACS</b>	Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (University of Ibadan operational interdisciplinary conflict resolution program)
<b>CPCR</b>	Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (University of Jos planned conflict resolution program)
<b>CR</b>	Conflict resolution
<b>CRESNET</b>	Conflict Resolution Stakeholders' Network
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (Great Britain's development agency)
<b>DG</b>	Democracy and Governance
<b>DoD</b>	Department of Defense
<b>E.H.</b>	<i>El Haji</i> , honorific title applied to any Muslim while s/he is completing the <i>haji</i> , the pilgrimage to Mecca, as well as after completion
<b>GFRN</b>	Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
<b>IFES</b>	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
<b>INEC</b>	Independent Nigerian Electoral Commission
<b>IP</b>	Implementing partner
<b>IPCR</b>	Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>NCSC</b>	National Center for State Courts
<b>NDDC</b>	Niger Delta Development Corporation
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>NIPSS</b>	National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies
<b>NPF</b>	National Police Force

<b>OPC</b>	Oodudwa People’s Congress, Yoruba ethnic association (alternate spelling: O’odua People’s Congress)
<b>OTI</b>	Office of Transition Initiatives, constituent unit of the United States Agency for International Development
<b>OTI/NIGERIA</b>	Office of Transition Initiatives country office in Nigeria
<b>PDP</b>	People’s Democratic Party (President Obasanjo’s party, currently in the majority)
<b>SCSN</b>	Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria
<b>SPDC</b>	Shell Petroleum Development Corporation
<b>TOT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USAID/NIGERIA</b>	United States Agency for International Development Mission in Nigeria
<b>VOA</b>	Voice of America

## GLOSSARY

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**Afenifere:** Yoruba ethnic leaders who play a powerful role in slating political candidates for the Alliance for Democracy (AD) party.

**Area Boys:** Social miscreants often available for rioting.

**Bakassi Boys:** Vigilante youth group active in Nigeria's Southeastern geopolitical zone.

**Conflict:** Conditions and dynamics in which two or more parties are in a situation in which the *goals* of one or both parties are *incompatible* because existing structures, processes, or relationships result in the *basic human needs* (both material and nonmaterial) of one or both parties *not being met*. Since basic human needs are considered to be *nonnegotiable*, the resolution of conflicts generally requires approaches that go beyond mere bargaining or negotiations, to include changes in those structures, processes, and relationships.

**Conflict Mitigation:** Intervention in cases in which violent conflict has occurred and amelioration of the immediate results of violent conflict.

**Conflict Management:** Solving problems or settling disputes and/or establishing mechanisms to solve problems or settle disputes.

**Conflict Resolution:** Addressing the underlying sources of conflicts, rather than the immediate surface issues, so that conflicts do not persist or recur.

**Conflict Transformation:** Approaching the resolution of conflicts as opportunities to change the relationships between the parties, as well as to change the parties themselves, in positive ways. Some authors use the term to denote not only changes in relationships and individuals, but also changes in the social, political, or economic structures in which conflicts are embedded.

**Conflict Prevention:** Efforts to prevent violent conflicts by addressing their underlying structural and relational sources, as well as by establishing mechanisms to address conflicts in constructive ways.

**Dagaci:** Head of an urban district within the Kano indigenous Hausa–Fulani system of governance.

**Dispute:** Conditions and dynamics in which two or more parties are in a situation in which the *interest-based goals* of one or both parties are *incompatible*. Since interests are considered negotiable, disputes can be resolved through bargaining and negotiation that lead to compromise (in which each party wins something and loses something) or through problem-solving approaches that lead to collaboration (or win–win solutions).

**Hausa–Fulani:** Major Nigerian ethnic complex combining two ethnic groups, the sedentary Hausa and the transhumant, pastoral Fulani (Fulbe). Although large numbers of Fulani remain pastoralists in northern areas of Nigeria, many have settled there as farmers or city dwellers. Fulani descended from Uthman Dan Fodio, the Fulani Muslim conqueror who organized the early nineteenth century *jihad* to replace lax Muslim or pagan Hausa leaders with practicing Muslims, remain important in indigenous governance structures in much of Nigeria's northern region.

**Hisba:** Muslim volunteers who organize patrols to enforce application of *shari'a* provisions.

**Igbo:** Major Nigerian ethnic group based in the Southeast region.

**Jihad:** Islamic religious war destined to extend the Muslim faith to conquered areas.

**Magajin Gari:** In the Katsina Emirate, title of the individual (emir's eldest son) who currently administers the city of Katsina.

**Naira:** Nigerian currency unit. Rate as of May 2001, \$1 US = 120 Naira.

**Peacekeeping:** Third-party military intervention to stop violence but not to go beyond the cessation of violence and enforcement of peace. The most common types of actors in such situations are multinational peacekeeping forces.

**Peacemaking:** Interventions by official governmental actors to draw up formal agreements between parties, such as peace accords. The most common types of actors are high-level international or third-party diplomats.

**Peacebuilding:** The broad range of interventions that aim to address the psychological, relational, and structural aspects of conflict, including social, political, and economic injustice and underdevelopment. The most common types of actors are representatives of unofficial, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as religious or civil society leaders.

**Sarki:** Hausa term for chief or emir (e.g., *Sarkin Kano*, Emir of Kano).

**Shari'a:** Muslim legal code that governs both civil relations and criminal matters. Currently applied in some (northern) Nigerian states.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Nigeria, like many other countries, confronts a number of internal conflicts. Since independence in 1960 it has survived a civil war. It has also survived a series of military regimes that have exacerbated many conflicts by treating them as illegitimate dissent. Rather than working with people and groups to transform the structures, issues, and relationships that underlie those conflicts, most Nigerian military leaders sought instead to suppress the symptoms, particularly when conflicts turned violent.

### A. Background on Conflict in Nigeria

The upshot of the policy of suppression became clear when Nigeria returned again at the very end of the twentieth century to civilian rule and launched its Third Republic. Conflicts that had festered under the preceding military regimes, becoming more venomous and difficult to process with the passage of time, burst into the open shortly after the accession of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to the Nigerian presidency on May 29, 1999.

The array of conflicts is bewildering; the intensity of the violence often stunning. In the short space of two years since a democratically elected civilian administration took power, armed confrontations have erupted throughout the country over such issues as:

- Religion;
- Economic power and opportunities;
- Political power and offices;
- Division of wealth (known colloquially as “the federal cake”) derived from subsurface nonrenewable resources—principally petroleum in the Niger Delta and neighboring areas—and controlled by the federal government;
- Land;
- Renewable natural resources, including livestock forage, woodstocks, and fisheries;
- Environmental damage;
- Labor–management relations;
- Urban “turf” disputes among youth gangs;
- Disputes among youth of rural communities; and
- Police-related violence.

Some of these conflicts occur along ethnic lines and therefore have a potential to spread to other areas, whereas other sorts of conflicts are more localized and less threatening to the broader Nigerian political system.

Thousands of people have died in violent interactions tied to incompatible visions of religion within the context of a state whose constitution is ambiguous as to whether the state is to be secular, and in battles between ethnic groups over control of markets and other income-generating enterprises such as slaughterhouses. Many of these outbreaks have given rise to the phenomenon designated here as *ricochet riots*, in which members of the ethnic group considered to have suffered the most casualties in the first round of violent conflict even the score by attacking members of the other ethnic group elsewhere in the country. Typically those attacked have emigrated and settled in areas where the first-round “losers” are both *indigenes* and dominant, leaving the *settlers* critically exposed to attack in the second round. These tit-for-tat assaults heighten tensions as people of both groups find it prudent to plan for third and subsequent rounds.

### B. Incentives to Promote Conflict

The principled and the unscrupulous alike can profit from violence. For some religious leaders, martyrdom of some followers strengthens faith and commitment among others. Some politicians identify themselves with programs of religious groups (e.g., by legislating application as state law of the criminal sections of the Islamic *shari’a* legal code, 95% of which concerns personal and civil conduct rather than criminal behavior). Members of ethnic groups, both leaders and followers, seek advantage by driving out competitors from other ethnic groups from their home areas. This kind of *nativist* reaction to outsiders, phrased in terms of *indigene-settler opposition*, reflects popular perceptions that the Nigerian economy is shrinking, and that most people can hope only for meaningless crumbs from the federal cake.

## C. Mitigating and Transforming Conflicts

Despite this litany of woes, much can be done to mitigate conflict in Nigeria. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) has, since the fall of 1999, enabled many, many Nigerians to demonstrate that they fervently seek peace. OTI, with a two-year mandate to support Nigeria's transition from military to civilian democratic rule, has progressively focused its efforts on aiding and abetting Nigeria peacemakers at all levels in the society. Nigerians, for their part, have proven repeatedly that they will invest energy and long hours in acquiring the skills and techniques of peacebuilding, and will spend countless days trying to apply those skills through individual interventions and peace and reconciliation committees in efforts to prevent or halt violence.

Once the violence has stopped, many peacemakers in Nigeria continue to work with former antagonists to restructure the relationships, structures, and processes that gave rise to violent conflict in the first place. Their efforts have borne fruit in a sufficiently wide variety of places and situations in the country (see Boer, 2000: Appendix B) to suggest that further support for conflict resolution in Nigeria will pay important dividends, not only in reducing violent confrontations, but in gradually transforming conflicts and building relationships of peace and trust that form the indispensable foundation for economic development.

## D. Conflict Intervention: A General Approach

OTI has worked to promote the sustainability of the Conflict Resolution Stakeholders' Network (CRESNET), a professional association of Nigerians dedicated to promoting peace and conflict resolution (CR) in their country. Together, OTI staff and CRESNET members have pursued a general, four-part strategy to intervene in community conflicts:

1. Sensitizing and training of stakeholders in specific conflicts;
2. Facilitating stakeholder dialogue;
3. Developing understanding among stakeholders; and
4. Monitoring implementation of understandings.

In this tested approach, peacemakers first intervene in conflicts to help stakeholders realize that they can pursue alternatives to violence and confrontation. Peacemakers also help stakeholders acquire skills so that antagonistic stakeholders can begin talking seriously with each other about issues that cause conflict because the issues involve divergent or contradictory basic needs of the stakeholders. Through brainstorming sessions, peacemakers then support discussions that lead to agreements among stakeholders on how they can move beyond the current conflict. Finally, mechanisms must be created to monitor whether all parties comply with their agreements and to report findings regularly and in a highly transparent manner.

## E. USAID/Nigeria: Recommended Strategy for Conflict Mitigation

Nigeria is a huge country with a population well in excess of 100 million. USAID is working with a two-year programming timeframe (FY2002–2003) for the next phase of support to CR in Nigeria. Three other criteria likewise constrain the choice of CR activities. The first is formulated by reference to the Mission's *Strategic Objective 1: Sustain Transition to Democratic Civilian Governance*. Conflict mitigation interventions should focus on conflicts that threaten that transition. Second, conflicts that can damage the national economy sufficiently to undermine the transition should also be targeted. Finally, conflicts that are prone to generate ricochet riots should be targeted.

These criteria suggest that the Mission should narrow its CR focus to a small subset of the total number of conflicts currently affecting Nigeria and Nigerians. The choice should be driven by the intensity of the threat to the transition, as well as by the need to select a manageable number of conflicts on which to work. This suggests that Mission support for conflict mitigation activities should incorporate a geographic focus.

Many conflicts, although dangerous to the lives and property of immediate stakeholders, are localized and do not particularly threaten the transition to democratic civilian governance. Included here are disputes over land, renewable resources, environmental issues, youth battles over sundry issues, labor–management strife, and police-related violence. The remaining major types of conflict—religious, economic, and political struggles, as well as issues surrounding the allocation of oil wealth among various jurisdictions within the country—all pose, in decreasing order of severity, potential threats to the transition to democratic civilian governance.

Recent religious strife over incorporating criminal sections of the *shari'a* code into state legislation (11 of 19 northern states have now taken this step, although not all have passed implementing rules and regulations) culminated in armed clashes in Kaduna City during February and again during May 2000. These battles left more than 2,000 Muslims and Christians dead. But the political leaders of Kaduna State have taken vigorous action to prevent repetition of these conflicts. They have established a peace and reconciliation committee, they have taken steps to limit the application of *shari'a* provisions to those areas of Kaduna State where Muslims constitute substantial majorities, and they have begun to work on some of the underlying economic problems that lead many youth from rural areas of the state to migrate to urban centers. Frequently those young people cannot find work and so can be easily mobilized for small amounts of money to participate in confrontations over religious issues. Kaduna State thus offers a significant positive example of conflict mitigation, the support and expansion to which USAID should commit itself.

Two other states have a strong potential for violence and for generating ricochet riots: Lagos and Kano. Particularly in the country's two largest cities, Lagos and Kano, violence formulated along ethnic lines has flared over both religious and economic issues. These pit the largely Muslim Hausa–Fulani indigenes of the north against the southern Yoruba and Igbo. The Yoruba, divided equally between Islam and Christianity, are indigenes of the Southwest, including Lagos State. The Igbo, largely Christian, are indigenes of the Southeast. The potential for ricochet riots is extremely strong because major Hausa–Fulani settler communities exist in Lagos as elsewhere throughout the South, and these are mirrored by large concentrations of Yoruba and Igbo settlers established in the *sabon gari* (Hausa: *new town*) sections of most northern cities.

Electoral violence has to date been concentrated predominately in the South South and Southwest. Further analysis of historical patterns of such violence and areas where political competition in the upcoming elections is expected to be particularly intense could provide additional clues to predicting priority intervention locations.

## F. Mechanisms for Intervention

USAID should engage an implementing partner to work over the next two years on the following three areas:

1. Capacity building
  - strengthening CRESNET;
  - strengthening academic CR centers located at the Universities of Ibadan (operational) and Jos (under development); and
  - supporting linkages between CRESNET practitioners and academic centers to enhance the applied skills of the practitioners.
2. Community intervention
  - supporting, through CRESNET or other CR NGOs, intervention in priority community conflicts by training community leaders, religious leaders, youth, women leaders, indigenous government officials, secular government officials at all levels, and other relevant stakeholders in CR skills;
  - promoting development of agreements among these stakeholders to address conflict issues through appropriate forms of facilitated negotiation; and
  - supporting establishment, or strengthening, of institutional mechanisms that will allow community-based organizations, religious groups, and local and state governments to pursue development activities designed to reduce the potential for conflict by addressing underlying sources of conflict (economic, political, religious, ethnic).
3. Electoral violence
  - targeting support for mitigating electoral violence in locations that have a history of such violence and where particularly intense political competition is anticipated, coupled with organizing a database on electoral violence at one of the university centers;
  - providing training and financial support to community, youth, and women's groups for monitoring and publicly reporting electoral violence and for nonviolent election advocacy; and
  - providing CR training to election officials, political parties, poll-watchers, and other election stakeholders.

Capacity-building activities would draw heavily on existing Nigerian professionals, academics, and practitioners. The bulk of the work on religious–ethnic–economic conflict would be concentrated in Kaduna, Kano, and Lagos states, but CRESNET could provide professional CR trainers to work in other areas of the country—for example, in the South South states of the Niger Delta area, if USAID staff decided that was appropriate.

## I. INTRODUCTION

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Nigeria, with a population of 120 million, vast natural resources, and highly developed human resources, could provide the key to a peaceful and prosperous future for at least West Africa and, probably, for much of the rest of the African continent. Corrupt and arbitrary governance in Nigeria can and has imposed serious inconveniences on its neighbors. On the other hand, Nigerian success in consolidating effective systems of democratic governance can inspire and enable success elsewhere. Achievements in democratic civilian governance in Nigeria would demonstrate that Africans can indeed deal with their challenging political and economic problems. Were Nigeria to get its house in order, it could generate enormous economic energy that would create a magnet and a market for the rest of West Africa. If its leadership recaptures its former status, the country can take the region forward on a number of fronts, not least of all peacekeeping. Finally, its successes would generate lessons that, appropriately adapted to changed contexts, could be usefully shared with its neighbors. Indeed, it is not unrealistic to suppose that Nigeria could potentially exert the kind of impact on the rest of Africa that democratic success in the Iberian peninsula had subsequently in Latin America.

The fledgling Nigerian Third Republic, however, faces many challenges. Perhaps the most explosive and destructive of these is the ethnic and religious conflict that has torn at Nigeria since the first two coups and ensuing pogroms of 1966. These were followed by electoral disputes that wrenched its first two attempts at democracy, ending both of those efforts before they had had a chance to take root and grow into established systems of civilian governance.

Destructive ethnic and religious conflicts have continued throughout the 1990s and into the first decade of the new century, occasioning the loss of thousands of lives and destroying much property of people who already experience grinding poverty. These conflicts must be carefully distinguished from the myriad disputes found in Nigeria as in all human societies.

The box at right indicates how these terms are used in this assessment of conflict in Nigeria.

The diverse groups of Nigeria generally co-exist peacefully in mixed ethnic neighborhoods throughout the country's urban areas. Nonetheless, members of different ethnic groups often look with suspicion on one another. They remember the violence of the past, and remain sensitive to slights, insults, and "unfair" advantages. They frequently interpret the actions of members of other groups as efforts to assert (or reassert) domination over them. Each group has its own history of perceived slights, injuries, and disadvantages experienced at the hands of other groups. Each group has militants to mobilize those most ready to engage in intergroup violence, and each group has hurt members of the others. If these cycles of violence cannot be stopped, the next elections will predictably escalate the conflict, as each major group seeks to protect itself from the others by acquiring political power. Smaller groups will inevitably suffer in these conflicts. In this circumstance, Nigeria could easily slip back into another round of authoritarian governance, with all the nasty consequences that military regimes have triggered over much of the last two decades. This could indeed provoke general violence, perhaps state collapse and dismemberment reminiscent of Yugoslavia's. This outcome must be prevented.

Against this backdrop of recent Nigerian history follow several observations. Conflicts per se do not cause concern in Nigeria, but atrophying of the means to manage them does. A society of 120 million people cannot function without generating disputes. Humans—whether as individuals or organized in families, groups, firms, or governments at various levels—often differ in their perspectives on the myriad issues that span the gamut from minor problems of daily life to fundamental questions such as the country's constitutional structure. From these differences of perspective flow, inevitably, discussions and arguments. Some escalate into disputes. All this is perfectly normal and prosaic in a democracy where people enjoy freedom to express opinions and where entrepreneurs, both public and private, enjoy freedom to pursue opportunities.

**Conflict:** Conditions and dynamics in which two or more parties have *incompatible goals* because existing structures, processes, or relationships result in the *basic human needs* (both material and nonmaterial) of one or both parties *not being met*. Since basic human needs are considered to be *nonnegotiable*, the resolution of conflicts generally requires approaches that go beyond mere bargaining or negotiations, to include changes in those structures, processes, and relationships.

**Dispute:** Conditions and dynamics in which two or more parties have *interest-based goals* that are *incompatible*. Since interests are considered negotiable, disputes can be resolved through bargaining and negotiation, leading to compromise (in which each party wins something and loses something), or through problem-solving approaches that lead to collaboration (or win-win solutions).

In these very typical circumstances, disputes typically signal unresolved problems. They also highlight areas of opportunity to restructure institutional arrangements, the distribution of resources, and even values, in ways that consider the interests of all active and passive stakeholders in a problem. Furthermore, systems of governance that can successfully craft, negotiate, or mediate solutions to problems typically grow in power and authority and in their ability to process new rounds of disputes successfully: practice makes perfect.

At present, Nigeria cannot successfully manage disputes—a key test of an effective system of governance. Twenty years of military misrule underlie this failure. The soldiers in power for all but four years, from 1975 to 1999, viewed disputes as evidence of defiance and resistance to their will in a command and control system (Osaghae, 1998: 21). That system concentrated power at the apex of a hierarchy, and the ruling soldiers did not view disputes as opportunities to craft more productive solutions to collective problems.

With the advent of Nigeria's Third Republic on May 29, 1999, elementary democratic freedoms once again replaced military repression. But that shift of power from military to civilian leaders did not automatically revive dispute resolution capacities in the country. Indeed, in the relaxation of controls a broad range of disputes surfaced that military leaders had, for the previous 15 years, actively repressed. These disputes threatened, in many areas of the country, to overwhelm dispute resolution capabilities. Often, disputes not only threatened to, but did in fact, exceed resolution capacities, erupting in lethal conflicts with extensive loss of life and property. These events have shaken public confidence in the capacity of Nigeria's new democratic system of governance to ensure the minimum conditions of security necessary for a peaceful existence and for development.

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) stepped into this breach in September 1999. Among other activities OTI took on,<sup>1</sup> its support for Nigerians already engaged in the struggle to improve conflict resolution (CR) capacities throughout the country has emerged as a key investment for Nigeria. OTI/Nigeria spent the bulk of its FY2000 grants budget on conflict management (\$1,803,812 distributed in 52 separate grants to 43 grantees; OTI/Nigeria, 2000: 1, Table 1). OTI is now rapidly approaching the end of its two-year mandate, and will have withdrawn from Nigeria by the end of FY2001.

Few doubt the need for USAID/Nigeria to continue to support the work begun by OTI/Nigeria. Support for conflict management and for creation of a network of Nigeria conflict management specialists has clearly produced tangible and important results in peace keeping (OTI/Nigeria, 2000: 4–12; Boer, 2000: Annexes 2 and 3). The Mission now seeks to program CR activity for the next two fiscal years, 2002–2003. This activity will fall within the framework of its *Democracy and Governance Strategic Objective (SO1: Sustain Transition to Democratic Civilian Governance)*.

Concerning follow-on work, relevant questions include: How? In what form? For what types of conflicts? and Where? In answering these questions, this report draws on background reading and two weeks of interviews with four separate groups: a broad spectrum of Nigerians engaged in or concerned about CR; OTI/Nigeria staff; USAID/Nigeria personnel; and representatives of other donor agencies. It begins with a rapid review of the roots of conflict in contemporary Nigeria, then turns to the policy environment as it affects CR possibilities. The next section presents a general approach to intervening in conflict situations, and shows how OTI/Nigeria has pursued this approach during its two-year mandate. Findings and lessons learned are considered in the following section. The report concludes with recommendations and a plan of action. Appendices include (A) Terms of Reference, (B) Bibliography, (C) Persons Interviewed, (D) Methodology, and (E) Background Information on Key Areas of the country where the report proposes that USAID pursue follow-on activities.

These areas have been selected either because, like Kano, Lagos/Southwest, and the Delta/South South, they appear to have potential for (renewed) conflict or, like Kaduna, because they point the way to effective conflict mitigation and realistic, development-oriented approaches to addressing the underlying sources of conflict. This set of activities represents, in the team's judgment, a logical continuation and deepening of a path pioneered by Nigerians with consistent and effective OTI/Nigeria support.

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<sup>1</sup> OTI initially supported dialogue on civilian–military relations, promoted anticorruption activities, and also provided a consultant to work with Nigeria's electricity parastatal. By the end of calendar year 2000, OTI had withdrawn from these activities. The U.S. Department of Defense had assumed responsibility for the civilian–military relations program (OTI/Nigeria, 2000: 12–15). OTI terminated its anticorruption activities after having concluded that the problem in Nigeria was too deep seated to be amenable to solutions within the framework of OTI's two-year mandate (ibid.: 15–18). The U.S. Department of Energy stepped in to take over the electricity reform program (ibid.: 1).

A four-person team conducted this assessment of conflict in Nigeria over 19 days (April 30–May 18, 2001). The assessment team consisted of:

- Wendy Marshall, USAID/Global/DG Center, democracy specialist;
- Mary Hope Schwoebel, CR specialist;
- James T. Thomson, West African institutional specialist and team leader; and
- James S. Wunsch, professor of political science and Nigeria specialist.

## II. BACKGROUND OF CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

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Conflict in contemporary Nigeria largely flows from the interactions among four elements of its recent history:

1. Its complex mix of diverse ethnic groups and religions (Osaghae, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1998) and a persistent feeling of marginalization by many ethnic groups of all scales within the society (Ibelema, 2000);
2. Twenty years of military misrule and generally poor governance;
3. Existence of vast and rich oil deposits in the Niger Delta, coupled with the dominant role the federal government has played in controlling oil wealth, as well as the economy in general; and
4. Perceptions by southerners that the country's northern region has dominated the federal government since independence, preventing them from gaining access to positions and power at the federal level, coupled with northerners' perceptions that they must maintain a strong political position within the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (GFRN) to avoid being marginalized in competition with southerners. (Because northerners have lost power within the federal government under the current civilian regime, their apprehensions on this score have sharpened appreciably.)

### A. Identity and Values: Ethnicity and Religion

Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity means that its peoples hold significantly different perceptions of history and of one another, their values often diverge on fundamental issues, and they live their lives in inherited, indigenous institutions characterized more by their differences than by their similarities. Under the current Nigerian civilian regime, religious and ethnic confrontations have repeatedly erupted. These events have, unfortunately, accentuated individuals' identification with their ethnic and religious groups. Most can now be mobilized through such groups as almost instantaneous coalitions in competition for economic advantage and political power. As control over political power often creates economic leverage, politicians face a constant temptation to appeal to primordial identifications in trying to win or retain office. Such strategies may succeed for individual politicians but, cumulatively, they drive up the level of tension and conflict within the society at large.

Repeatedly since independence in 1960, competition among groups has escalated into violence. Sometimes conflicts grow out of genuinely different visions of how a good society is ordered. The current controversy over implementing criminal aspects of the Islamic *shari'a* code fits this pattern. Particularly in northern states, this dispute pits indigenous Muslim populations supportive of *shari'a* against southern, Middle Belt, and even northern Christians who fear the *shari'a* movement as an instrument of political domination.

Sometimes, elites in their pursuit of political and economic power have "played the ethnic card" and inflamed their followers to violent conflict, as in the First Republic. John Paden noted nearly 30 years ago in his study *Religion and Political Culture in Kano* that new ethnic categories ("southerner," "northerner") arose when southerners, particularly Igbo, began to threaten economic interests of the far-flung Hausa commercial empire based in Kano. The policy of *northernization*, adopted by northern elites during the late 1950s, sought to open jobs for Hausa in commercial firms in Kano; gain greater access to government contracts, civil service posts, and financial services; and reassert control over produce export (Paden, 1973: 322–323). The fear of losing out economically heightened the sense among northern indigenes of marginalization. "Northernization established the predominance of politics over economics, which made political competition at the national level a matter of primary concern" (ibid.: 334–335). Nothing in the four decades since independence has lessened these concerns.

At still other times, genuine grassroots movements have sprung from feelings of grievance within an ethnic group and a sense that the federal government has persecuted its members, as happened among many Yoruba in the post-Abiola era. Many minorities in the Middle Belt, in Delta states, and elsewhere in the country have felt marginalized for much of the twentieth century. That feeling persists today (Ibelema, 2000). These groups include *dispersed* minorities such as the Ijaw in Delta, Ondo, and Edo states, separated from the main concentration of Ijaw in Bayelsa State, and non-Muslim minorities in northern states—for example, the Katab, Kaje, Gbabyi, Numana, Kono, Kagoma, and Chawai in the southern part of Kaduna State (Osaghae, 1998: 6, 9). Until the religious riots of 2000 precipitated an adjustment in institutional arrangements that recognized these groups as autonomous, they had been subjected to the overlordship of the Hausa–Fulani rulers of Zazzau, the Muslim emirate that ruled much of what is now Kaduna State throughout the nineteenth century (Smith, 1960). Other conflicts arising from feelings of marginalization among some groups in the population include the Tiv–Jukun and Aguleri–Umuleri conflicts and the 1992 Zango Katab riots in the Kafanchan region of southern Kaduna State.

The incident that triggered the Zango Kataf conflict turned on control of the local market. In the mid-eighteenth century, Hausa traders founded the town of Zango Kataf and a market, in an area populated by non-Muslim people they call *Kataf*. The *Zazzau* rulers, both Hausa and Hausa–Fulani, used the town as a basis for slave raids in neighboring villages. When the Atyab, as those indigenes call themselves, elected for the first time an Atyab man to head the local government, they decided in May 1992 to move the market to get more room. Hausa traders opposed the move because they feared it would set a precedent for non-Muslim control of the market. One thing led to another and soon Christian Atyab attacked Muslim Hausa in Zango Kataf. This led to calls for a *jihad* in the more northerly parts of Kaduna State. Only after the army moved in did the rioting end, but not before several hundred lives were lost (Maier, 2000).

Other conflicts clothed in the trappings of ethnicity have erupted as competition sharpens among different production systems for certain renewable resources. The perennial confrontations between sedentary farmers and transhumant pastoralists appear to pit Fulani (Fulbe) herders against Hausa, or Kanuri, or Yoruba, or Middle Belt minority groups. As agriculture spreads into arable areas formerly reserved for use as pastures, herders have a harder time finding forage for their animals. Some resort to putting their cows in other people's corn, leading to disputes and, not infrequently, violence.

**Sources of Conflict in Nigeria** are diverse and multifaceted. Conflicts arise when people feel that some individual or group is threatening their capacity to satisfy their basic needs. Issues that can stir conflict include access to land and renewable resources, access to markets, control over power, degree of representation in government, and so forth.

Unless people can find ways to restructure relationships between people and resources, or between groups, conflicts can easily turn violent, as those who feel fundamentally threatened take preemptive action to defend themselves.

Other tenure issues pose similar struggles of control over access to and use of renewable resources (e.g., arable land, wooded areas, fisheries, and water sources). Although these struggles may be between individuals from different ethnic groups, they can just as well pit members of the same ethnic group against each other. An example is the 150-year-long Ife–Modakeke struggle, named for the adjacent areas in question, between Yoruba *indigenes* (original occupants) and Yoruba *settlers* (families who moved into the area after it had been settled and claimed by the indigenes). Because these struggles concern resources on which people's very existence depends, they can easily degenerate into deadly conflicts.

These differences in values, histories, and sense of autonomous identities create critical and persistently dangerous fractures among Nigeria's peoples. Although these ethnic groups are not intrinsically hostile, they often harbor suspicions about one another based, to an extent, on personal experience from the capture and use of power, and have often shown themselves ready to believe and act on exaggerated and inflammatory rumors. The generalized perception among many groups that Nigeria is stagnating economically certainly fuels these frictions. If people felt the economy were expanding rapidly, they might be less inclined to respond to ethnic appeals. But since many believe the economy is shrinking, any tool that can protect an individual's economic future is welcome. This heightens the reliance on ethnic and religious identifications and accentuates the differences among groups (Cohen, 1969). Political actors can manipulate such differences to advance their own agendas and careers—though sometimes at awful cost to those affected when violence ensues.

## B. Military Rule/Misrule

Twenty years of military rule and poor governance from 1975 to 1999 have done much to intensify the prospects for conflict, while seriously damaging Nigerian society's capacity to contain, manage, and resolve disputes. The vast looting of petroleum-derived public resources, the open door to corruption, and the lack of accountability of GFRN officials to citizens combined to produce economic stagnation, declining living standards, and abuse of power. Protests highlighting these ills, such as in Ogoni land in the Niger Delta over oil-related problems, and in the Southwest over

**Military Rule Promoted Poor Governance in Nigeria.** Although a cliché, this observation explains many of the conflicts the country now confronts. Most of Nigeria's military governments that lasted long enough to have an impact (1) failed to promote conflict resolution, (2) suppressed dissent that arose from unresolved conflicts rather than trying to reshape structures and relationships and process conflicts effectively, and (3) undermined governance arrangements that might have worked with better effect to transform the conditions underlying conflicts in the country.

the 1993 elections, elicited immediate and ruthless repression from most of Nigeria's military regimes (i.e., those headed by Buhari and Sani Abacha).

Simultaneously, praetorian leaders and their military and civilian supporters corrupted, dismissed, or destroyed the staffs of the conventional institutions of constitutional systems for managing conflict, such as legislatures, human rights commissions, and courts. Notable among them was Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993). He employed gentler tactics than his friend Abacha, but did more to corrupt the society as a whole (Maier, 2000). Military leaders also corrupted, manipulated, and intimidated local-level, indigenous, and community institutions of conflict management and collective action. Military misrule weakened the economy and severely undermined the middle class and the institutions it staffed (universities and the civil service). Growing inequality brought together a generation of youths facing extremely limited economic prospects, led to the rise of intimidating groups of "area boys" (local toughs), and forced all political players to compete for their "slice of the federal cake." Many analysts also assert that poverty explains much of the rise of contemporary mass religious movements, whether in the South or the North.

During this same period the military government ignored or suppressed burning problems and grievances, which are now bursting into the open. These include the problem of the rise of serious crime and personal insecurity, illustrated by the growth of the area boys, the corruption of the police and much of the judicial system, and the rise of vigilantism as practiced by the "Bakassi Boys" and the Oodudwa People's Congress (OPC). Although crime appears less an issue in the North, many assert that popular support for the Muslim *hisba* groups, who work to enforce the *shari'a*, can be understood as a rejection of the social disorder growing in part from the corruption and decline of conventional governance institutions. In the oil-rich Delta, Nigeria's failure to deal with the environmental and economic problems has spawned persistent, low-grade anarchic behavior, typically between small groups of youths and oil companies, but also frequently between youths from neighboring communities. Depending on circumstances, such groups function either as self-defense associations or incipient *mafias*.

In summary, 20 years of misrule destroyed both formal and informal institutions of governance and led to severe problems in the society at large, in the economy at all levels, and in personal security. It also unleashed lawlessness in much of the Delta.

### C. Oil Wealth/Federal Domination of Economy

Many of contemporary Nigeria's conflicts grow directly from the existence of lucrative oil deposits in the Delta and the federal government's control over them and domination of much of the rest of the economy. Because federal government officials control oil royalties and how they are distributed, they enjoy unique opportunities, both to divert a share of those funds to private ends through corrupt means and to allocate the part that remains. Astute allocation policies allow federal officials to keep much of the rest of the society dependent on the federal government for fiscal resources. The never-ending discussion about allocation of the federal cake reveals the power of this phenomenon.

**Bonny Light: A Poison Pill?** Abundant reserves of low-sulfur, high-value oil in the southern Niger Delta and adjacent regions of the country have generated \$280 billion for Nigeria since 1970. Allocating that wealth posed immediate, sticky decisions: who should get how much and why? Using the federal government to capture and then distribute oil wealth created a standing temptation for civilian and military leaders to help themselves to the cash flow, and for everyone else to invest inordinate time and energy in trying to capture their share of "the federal cake."

There is an inevitable and serious conflict of interest between Delta communities that bear the environmental damage of oil extraction and the rest of the nation for which oil money is essentially a free good. Delta populations, clearly a minority, regularly lose these struggles. Had they some authority over environmental issues, many current problems might be more manageable. Lacking this, and given the federal government's control over *all* subsurface resources as well as "ownership" of all land, all Delta issues inevitably become national issues. The national government has failed to resolve these. In its campaign to "buy off" Delta discontent on the cheap, earlier administrations frequently corrupted Delta community leaders. There is a deep distrust in the Delta concerning the federal government and a feeling among local populations that most other Nigerians care little for their problems, so long as the oil flows. Delta populations constantly campaign for a larger share of the federal cake, most of which originates in their homelands (discussed further in the Economics section below).

As a result of these factors, and because oil companies did and do make tempting targets, many aggrieved youths in the Delta resort to direct action to extract compensation for their perceived losses. They invade oil company properties, take employees hostage, and shut down facilities. Oil companies typically negotiate release of captured personnel and properties with relative ease by paying the youths modest ransoms. This oil company strategy creates a “moral hazard”: the willingness of companies to pay ransoms stimulates imitators of this lucrative “business,” leading to sustained disruptions, at times to competition among youths, and to a general sense of anarchy in the Delta.

Another conflict closely linked to federal control over Delta oil and the economy in general is the intense competition for political office. For politicians, and for their communities, control of federal office opens the high road to resources that can be diverted from public to private or community control. Competition is naturally intense for federal political offices and has historically turned violent in the second election in each of Nigeria’s two previous republics. In summary, federal control over oil and much of the rest of the economy tends to “federalize” many economic problems, particularly in the Delta, and stimulates intense efforts to gain and hold office throughout Nigeria.

#### D. Perceived Regional Power Disparities

Finally, the perception among southerners in Nigeria that they were “locked out” of federal power for 40 years underlies the attitudes many have toward the federal government. This is the case broadly in the South, despite the fact that southerners, especially Yoruba, have benefited greatly in economic terms because they were the group indigenous to Lagos, the country’s commercial and economic center and, until recently, its political capital (Ibelema, 2000). Particularly among the Yoruba,

**GFRN: Bone of Contention.** Competition to control the GFRN has spurred from pre-independence days conflicts that have often turned violent. Northerners fear that if they lose control of the GFRN they will be left behind by the better-educated, economically more powerful southerners. Southerners bitterly resent what they perceive as their exclusion from the political arena at the federal level, despite the Yoruba Chief Olusegun Obasanjo’s now being president and appointing numerous Yoruba to positions in key federal security and justice systems.

there is a deep suspicion toward both the government and the ethnic group they felt was behind most of those years of rule: the Hausa–Fulani. This perception persists today, despite the Yoruba Chief Olusegun Obasanjo’s now serving as GFRN president. At the time of the 1999 elections that launched Nigeria’s Third Republic, many Yoruba considered Obasanjo as a “Trojan horse” for northern interests; indeed, very few voted for him.

Perhaps the most powerful grassroots organization in Nigeria, the Yoruba OPC, defines itself largely in terms of its resistance to excessive federal power and the perceived dominance of the Hausa–Fulani over the Yoruba through that medium. The OPC is a militant, ethnically based organization whose members will use violence if necessary in advancing organization goals.

At the same time, many northerners continue to believe in the need for a northernization policy instituted by northern political elites during the late colonial era to prevent southerners from dominating the northern economy. The anti-Igbo riots of 1953 and again in October 1966 following the July revenge coup drew very heavily on that sentiment. Currently, tensions between Yoruba and Hausa–Fulani have moved to center stage, but northern antagonism toward all southern economic operators targets them indiscriminately as members of the “southern” ethnic group. The *sabon gari* (Hausa: *new town*) neighborhoods established under Lord Lugard in many northern cities gave southerners a foothold in property rights in the north, but expanding those rights has provoked bitter resistance. Individuals at both elite and commoner levels in Hausa–Fulani society understand their vulnerability to Yoruba and Igbo commercial power. To resist it they are prepared to use a range of political tools—violence as well.

It is only in the context of these perceptions of power disparities and zero-sum competition that many “ricochet riots” can be understood. These occur when rumors of an incident somewhere in Nigeria opposing Hausa–Fulani and Yoruba stimulate reprisal violence among those same groups in another area of the country. Ricochet riots also pit other southern ethnic groups against northerners, with reprisals possible in either region for violence committed in the other.

Our focus on these four factors no doubt oversimplifies Nigerian realities to some extent. Nonetheless, their impact on Nigeria today appears clearly in fueling most of the conflicts Nigeria must now manage. Economic decline, severe inequalities in wealth, a reaction to corruption, and the Islamic heritage seem to explain much of

the movement toward *shari'a* in the North. Some politicians undoubtedly made astute calculations (“opportunism”) that, by championing an issue as popular as *shari'a*, they could consolidate and quite likely increase their personal political support. The Christian heritage in the South and southerners’ fear of continued Hausa–Fulani domination in simply another guise (the increasingly questionable assumption that the northerners who financed President Obasanjo’s campaign control policy through him) help explain the South’s reaction to the application of *shari'a* criminal penalties. Christians in all parts of the country likewise oppose the northern strategy of moving Nigeria officially into the camp of Islamic countries.

The wealth and power accessible through government office explain intense conflict in pursuit of those offices. Federal control over the economic and ecological fate of the Delta, the decay of local institutions there, and the lucrative target the oil companies present all explain the general pattern of anarchy amidst economic decay that characterizes that region. Finally, southern, primarily Yoruba, fear of another iteration of northern/Hausa–Fulani dominance, in the midst of economic competition that often intensifies ethnic divisions, heightens volatility in such areas as Lagos and Kano. These two cities, the country’s largest, have often erupted in ricochet riots.

Many of these problems cannot be easily undone. By understanding the roots of these problems, however, one can better develop interventions likely to have lasting benefits in the following:

- Calming protagonists in violent conflicts;
- Developing more effective, nonviolent approaches to dispute management and resolution; and
- Addressing underlying economic sources of conflict through development and growth-oriented activities.

### III. POLICY ENVIRONMENT

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Many potentially destabilizing conflicts in Nigeria have direct ties to national-level policy issues. Ultimately, these issues will have to be addressed if Nigerians are to develop stable democratic governance. The distribution of powers between the federal and state governments has evolved considerably since independence. At the moment, the federal government has the upper hand by virtue of its control over most of Nigeria's fiscal resources, derived from petroleum production in the Delta. How those resources are to be divided is a perennial question in Nigeria. In addition, the size of the federal cake induces constant political struggle for federal office, in which corruption plays a strong role. The vast majority of Nigerians who fail to obtain more than crumbs of federal resources feel marginalized. This, in turn, gives rise to a search for a more just political system, leading to violent confrontations between Muslims and Christians over the introduction of Islamic *shari'a* criminal law provisions in 11 northern states. The way the national police force provides or fails to provide security constitutes another source of conflict.

#### A. State–Federal Balance

Federalism in Nigeria was established under colonial rule. Since independence, Nigeria has gone through cycles of civilian and military rule, several of which resulted in the inauguration of new constitutions. Federalism has remained a constant through these cycles, but the relative balance of power between the federal government and state governments has varied markedly from regime to regime.

Aspects of this debate relevant to conflict today include revenue allocation, religion and its degree of separation from government, and police and security.

**Federal–State Institutional Arrangements:** These vary over time in Nigeria, but represent very real constraints on the country's capacity to resolve conflicts. Structural issues such as centralizing control over proceeds of subsurface mineral deposits in effect creates the federal cake. Ethnic groups and regions within the country are not likely to give up on "getting their share of the cake," which means that competition for federal posts will continue to be fierce.

#### 1. Economics

The debate over revenue allocation and resource control is politically charged for two reasons.<sup>2</sup> First, states depend almost entirely on federal revenue allocation for their budgets. Second, the government's failure to diversify the economy has left it dependent on a single export commodity concentrated in a small number of states. The revenue allocation question centers on the formula for dividing federally collected revenue among states. Relative weightings assigned to derivation of revenues (e.g., royalties on oil produced in the Delta states), populations of receiving states, some calculation of need, or own source revenue effort, materially affect the absolute amounts of the federal cake that each state receives. The question of resource control involves determining whether state resources include both on- and offshore resources. Naturally, the strongest voices arguing for larger percentage of revenue to be allocated on the basis of derivation and for state resource control are those of the South South, the core Delta states. People in the South South believe that although their region supplies the dominant source of Nigerian wealth, they bear all the costs of environmental degradation while enjoying few benefits from oil exploitation.

Current discussions over the proper formula for allocating revenue from the federal government to individual states continue a debate begun under colonial rule. Early revenue allocation formulas were based on the principle of derivation, which channeled from 50% to 100% of certain federally collected revenues back into the region of origin. This, combined with independent state authority to generate revenue, created relatively strong regions and a relatively weak center. Under the derivation principle, the rich got richer and the poor stayed poor.

Pressure to redistribute wealth grew as political competition among regions, and later states, intensified following independence. Nigerian officials revisited the revenue allocation formula several times in the following decades, reducing the weight accorded derivation at each rendition. New factors added to counterbalance derivation included need, population, and even progress. After the civil war, the federal government increased states' dependency on revenue allocations, thereby increasing competition for it, by cutting states' tax authority. Thus, South South states saw their allocation of oil wealth based on derivation shrink from 50% in the 1960s to 30%, then to 3%, before finally rising again to the current 13%.

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<sup>2</sup> This subsection draws heavily on Baker, 1984.

At the same time that South South states have gotten smaller shares of oil revenue by derivation, other decisions threaten to shrink still further the amount of oil they can claim as derived from their jurisdictions. The Obasanjo administration is seeking Supreme Court clarification of states' rights to count offshore resources as part of their resource base. The current formula declares these resources to be federal, cutting the South South states' claim to oil revenue by almost half.

## 2. Religion: Secular or theocratic systems at state level

Some 11 northern states, beginning with Zamfara on October 27, 1999, and including Sokoto, Kano, and Niger (USAID, 2000a: 2–3), have passed into law the criminal law sections of the Islamic *shari'a* code of conduct. The states concerned have advanced with varying speed toward application. Zamfara and Katsina, for example, are now applying the code, while other states have not. Included as part of the *shari'a* criminal code are the penalties for specific violations—for example, flogging for imbibing alcohol, removal of hands and then feet for recidivist thieves, and stoning in cases of proven adultery (the standard of proof for the last type of behavior is very high). Many northern politicians have supported the so-called *shari'a* movement through personal conviction, political opportunism, political realism, or a sense that they should represent the wishes of those who elected them.

**Religious Differences and Opposing Values:** The GFRN constitution guarantees both a secular state and freedom of religion, while allowing states to establish state court systems. Muslims see *shari'a*, accurately, as a religiously based code of conduct, and therefore believe it should apply to all Muslims. Islam calls for consolidation of “church” and state, rather than their separation.

Christians worry about possible negative impacts on their lives and livelihoods. These two different views oppose two different sets of basic psychological needs, creating a major potential source of conflict.

This poses a constitutional problem because the Nigerian constitution guarantees a secular state, guarantees freedom of religion, and vests in states concurrent power to establish their own court systems. At both constitutional and practical levels, these guarantees are incompatible in light of the fact that Islam rejects separation of political from religious authority and proposes a unified theocratic system of governance.

The intervening two-and-a-half years since Zamfara's adoption of the code has produced a series of violent incidents, culminating in the February and May 2000 Kaduna riots in which a total of some 2,000 individuals died. Catholics conducted an anti-*shari'a* march through Muslim neighborhoods in Kaduna, which sparked the outbreak. Muslim youth reacted, violence ensued, and the city twice went up in flames. Kaduna State's current Executive Governor, E.H. Ahmed Makarfi, a Muslim, has managed to calm the situation in his jurisdiction through a series of astute political moves (see Appendix E). Elsewhere, however, the conflict persists over institutionalizing the *shari'a* code through state legislation. The Muslim Governor of Kogi State was quoted as recently as Saturday May 12, 2001, that he would never adopt the *shari'a* criminal code because it was “barbaric and unfit for any decent society” (*Daily Times*). In Kano, a group of youths led by the Deputy Governor, Abdullahi Ganduje, attacked a number of hotels and clubs on the night of Good Friday (April 13), destroying alcohol in accord with their interpretation of *shari'a* criminal law provisions that ban the drinking of alcohol. The following Monday night, youths, acting independently, reportedly again attacked and torched a number of hotels in the city (Adeyemo, 2000).

## 3. Police and security

Nigerians frequently voice intense complaints about the National Police Force (NPF). Nearly everyone believes they are incompetent, corrupt, and involved in much of the crime that plagues Nigeria's large urban areas. Experts concur that the NPF is understaffed and that personnel are extremely poorly trained, poorly equipped, and very poorly paid. Given these facts, it is not surprising that police resort to frequent roadblocks and vehicle stops to collect *dash* from many citizens. Nor is it surprising that they are largely ineffective in investigating crimes or even in policing their areas.

**National Police Force (NPF): Peacemaker or Breaker?** NPF rank and file members lack training and equipment and are poorly paid, but they represent the state and can compel individuals to comply with their orders. This creates an opportunity to improve their incomes that many NPF members exploit regularly. On occasion they also foment trouble, which can provide further sources of illegitimate income.

In self-defense, many ethnic groups in Nigeria have organized their own “police” forces. These vigilante groups (“Bakassi Boys,” OPC, ‘*Yan Daba*’) often take the law into their own hands, provoking conflicts within the broader society.

The roots of these problems lie in the funding, staffing, training, and pay issues noted above, but also in what most respondents describe as an utterly failed formal judicial system, where “justice” is available to whoever pays the most.<sup>3</sup> They lie as well in the misuse of the police for political purposes and the obvious gross corruption of the 20 years of military rule.<sup>4</sup> As a result, professionalism, morale, and ethics have all collapsed in the NPF.

In this climate, crime has exploded. Area boys, armed robbers, and the like have taken over market areas and neighborhoods, while the police reportedly cower in their barracks, look the other way, or aid and abet. In response, militia-like vigilantes such as the Bakassi Boys (Okafor), the armed wing of the Yoruba OPC, and other local groups have “identified” those whom they believe to be robbers (with NPF members often among those identified), attacked them, and frequently executed them. Although such lynchings are greeted with much grassroots approbation, these acts add a significant increment of violence in an already violent society and reflect further erosion of an already weak state. These vigilante groups exercise the fundamental function of the state, the use of coercion, without the due process and checks of a functioning formal legal system (with predictable consequences; see Abayomi, 2001). Some actions by such groups have led to broader, ethnic-based confrontations and lethal violence.

Federal control over the police does not seem to have solved these problems. In the Southeast for instance, NPF are currently seeking to reestablish authority over the Bakassi Boys vigilantes (Okafor). Thus, a current hot political debate centers on whether some or all policing functions should be returned to the states. Regardless of how this debate is resolved, police must become more accountable to state authorities if local crime problems are to be addressed more effectively.

## B. Corruption

Nigeria has, over the past four decades, earned a reputation for corruption on a grand scale. Modest requests for *dash* early in the country’s history grew by leaps and bounds, with the exploitation of centrally controlled oil resources from the 1960s onward, into truly massive transfers of public funds from government coffers to private accounts. The military by no means started the system—allegations of corruption figured heavily in the first (“January”) coup in 1966—but men such as Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha certainly escalated the scale of corruption to astounding levels (Diamond, 1993).

**Corruption in Nigeria: Endemic, Pervasive, and Pernicious:** It affects all aspects of life in the country, creates feelings of injustice and exploitation among its victims, and erodes the capacity of governments at all levels to provide the collective services on which improved standards of living in substantial part depend.

Public monies are viewed as *open access goods*; anyone who fails to grab as much as he can as fast as he can is a fool, stupidly stinting himself and his relatives and friends so that others may benefit. This concept has become entrenched in Nigerian thinking about public affairs. A latter-day Hausa political adage—*In na gwamnati ne, ba na kowa ba* (“If it belongs to the Government, it belongs to no one”)—encapsulates the idea that public funds are fair game for anyone who can capture them. The majority of office holders at all levels of public secular government seemingly prefer to risk jail for embezzlement of public funds entrusted to their care rather than risk opprobrium in their home areas for failing to enrich themselves and their communities during their time at the public trough.

Public and indigenous government officials similarly appropriate, or authorize illegal sale of, other public resources—for example, forest reserves (CAREFOR). Members of the public view Nigerian NPF officials, particularly beat officers, primarily as predators seeking illegal rents through abuse of their official powers. Some assert that police agents desiring a post with lucrative rent opportunities must share a portion of their corrupt earnings with the superiors who can name them to and remove them from such positions. These examples suggest how pervasive corruption has become in Nigerian daily life.

<sup>3</sup> By contrast with the formal court system, *shari’a* courts are seen as more effective in deciding cases within a reasonable timeframe. Indeed, many Christian entrepreneurs resident in the North enter pleas in *shari’a* courts to recover debts against Muslims because experience demonstrates they get satisfaction there much more rapidly than in the formal courts. In the latter, cases can drag on for years and the outcome is rarely certain, however clear may be the facts. (Personal interview, Barrister Igwe Nnandi, chief of Kano State Igbo community, Kano, 8 May 2001.)

<sup>4</sup> The last military ruler of Nigeria, General Abdusalami Abubakar, managed the transition to civilian rule after the death of the dictator Sani Abacha on 8 June 1998. He apparently also set an impressive new standard for corruption, presiding over the disappearance of \$3 billion in foreign exchange reserves within the space of six months, which amounts to embezzling roughly \$17 million/day (Maier, 2000: 6).

## C. Elections

As noted above, the corruption dynamic has made public office the fast track to riches. The size of the prizes intensifies the heat of electoral contests, creating a fertile ground for violent conflict.

### 1. Policy on political party recognition/numbers

Government preparations for the next round of elections are already behind schedule. A particularly contentious outstanding issue concerns the number of, and process by which, new political parties will be allowed to register. Preparation time for the 1999 election was quite short, and some Nigerian politicians apparently did not believe that the elections would actually happen. For these reasons, at least some who would normally have formed parties and competed for office did not participate. These potential candidates are now looking toward the 2002/2003 elections as their opportunity to reenter the political arena. If the government does not provide a means to register new political parties, in addition to the existing three,<sup>5</sup> greater infighting within the present parties may be expected, as those in office and those who would like to be in office struggle for nominations.

### 2. INEC

The Independent Nigerian Electoral Commission (INEC) has a mandate to organize open, fair elections. In the 1999 elections, INEC played a useful role, but could have contributed considerably more than it did to protect Nigerian voters against manipulation of their ballots. INEC currently has a total of 10,000 employees, twice the number a seasoned observer believes would be required were those employees adequately paid.<sup>6</sup> In addition to 12 commissioners and supporting staff at the national level, INEC has a resident commissioner stationed in every state in the federation. What INEC lacks is a reliable presence at the local government area (LGA) level, where electoral tensions run high and potential for violence is substantial.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), USAID/Nigeria's implementing partner (IP) for electoral support, offered workshops during May 2001 for a selection of INEC employees in 14 states on the proper organization and conduct of elections. IFES has funds to finance additional workshops for election officials in the remaining 22 states. Those workshops are designed to set a standard of professional performance for Nigerian election officials and to train them on how to deal with election-related problems (media representatives, angry politicians, attempts at corruption, etc.). Given INEC pay scales and the incentives politicians have to win elections in order to get access to public funds, corruption remains a serious problem. This is perhaps an even greater danger in party primaries, which are subject to little if any scrutiny, than it is in general elections.

**Elections:** The International Foundation for Electoral Systems, a USAID implementing partner, currently helps the Independent Nigerian Electoral Commission train election officers in professional standards. The premium placed on winning office in Nigeria means that corruption of the electoral process poses a constant threat.

The worst electoral violence occurs at the local government area (LGA) level. At present, electoral officers in the 774 LGAs have no special training in conflict resolution skills appropriate to election campaigns.

<sup>5</sup> President Obasanjo's People's Democratic Party, Alliance for Democracy (strong in the Southwest), and the All People's Party (strong in the North).

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Joe C. Baxter, Nigeria country director, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Abuja, 2 May 2001.

## IV. GENERAL APPROACH TO CONFLICT MITIGATION

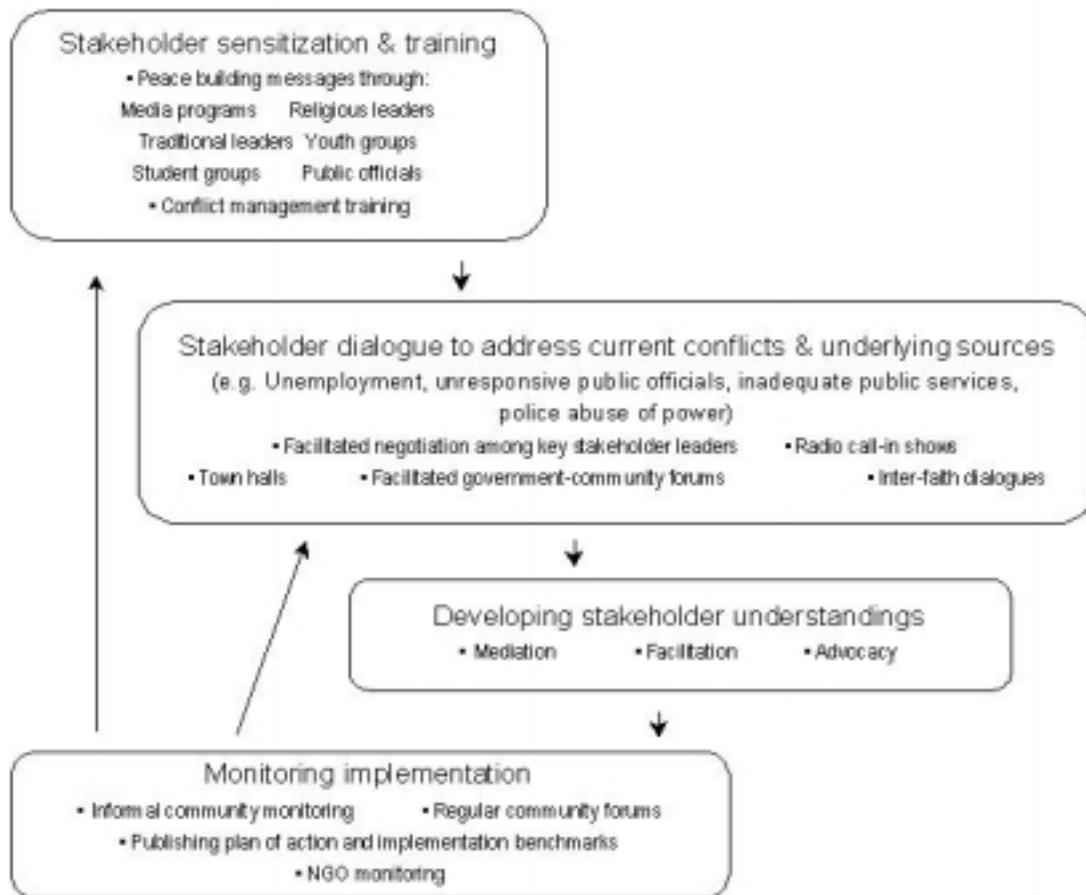
Staff of OTI and its implementing partner, Louis Berger Inc.,<sup>7</sup> have successfully employed a community intervention approach in their conflict management work. The goals of the approach are to calm current crises and establish enduring mechanisms for communities to address underlying sources of conflict and manage future conflict. The approach is extremely flexible and can be appropriately adapted to a myriad of conflict situations. The experiences of OTI's two years of activity confirm that this recommended general strategy for addressing conflict situations produces desirable results. The team considers it to be a useful starting point for conceptualizing USAID's follow-on CR activities.

### A. Elements of the Approach

The *participatory community intervention model* comprises four iterative phases (see Figure 1):

1. Sensitization and training of stakeholders in the three highest priority geographic areas;
2. Facilitated stakeholder dialogue;
3. Development of understanding(s) among stakeholders; and
4. Monitoring implementation of understandings.

**Figure 1: 4 Phases of Community Conflict Intervention**  
**An Iterative Process to Address Successive Sources of Conflict**



<sup>7</sup> Through the Support with Implementing Fast Transitions IQC (SWIFT) mechanism.

Implementing these phases entails collaboration between an IP and a local CR resource person, such as a Conflict Resolution Stakeholders' Network (CRESNET) member, or a local CR non-governmental organization (NGO); see Section VI, Figure 2. The intervention model begins with a preliminary assessment of the conflict to determine both its general nature and the principal stakeholders. Stakeholders may include traders, religious leaders, traditional leaders, organized youth, women, ethnic leaders, government officials, police, or business executives, depending on the conflict at hand. In the target states, this assessment is largely complete.

After stakeholders are identified and have expressed an interest in pursuing the process, appropriate sensitization and conflict management training activities are conducted. Such activities defuse the sense of crisis and provide stakeholders with the conflict management skills they will need to address the issues at hand. These must be designed to fit the particular situation on the ground—the nature of the conflict, its sensitivity, and the degree of tension. In highly volatile situations, sensitization may be done by using multiple channels to spread messages of peacebuilding (e.g., via print media, radio and television programs, religious leaders, traditional leaders, youth groups, and public officials). Training of stakeholders in the dynamics of conflicts and conflict management may be done separately or jointly, concurrently or sequentially.

Once stakeholders have some knowledge of conflict management techniques and are willing to discuss current conflict issues, a forum for dialogue is established. The goal of such forums is to provide a safe space for stakeholders to meet and discuss the conflict issues opposing them so that they can begin to reach mutual understandings. Again, such forums should be designed to fit the unique nature of the conflict situation at hand. It is frequently helpful to have initial dialogues facilitated by a neutral party acceptable to all members, though this may not be necessary in all cases. Dialogue forums can take many forms: meetings between/among leaders of key stakeholder groups, call-in radio programs focused on conflict issues, interfaith dialogues, community–police dialogues, community problem-solving workshops, or town hall meetings.

Through dialogue forums, stakeholders can develop mutual understandings that address current conflict issues. These may be formal or informal, written or unwritten. Their scope may be limited to the current conflict issues, or may establish institutional mechanisms, such as a peace committee or consultative forums, to manage new issues as they arise. Whatever their nature, understandings generally entail some observable change in behavior on the part of one or more stakeholders intended to address the conflictual issues at hand.

Once understandings are reached, their implementation must be monitored. This can take many forms, depending on the stakeholders and nature of the understanding. It may be done informally by community members or may entail additional formal activities. Potential monitoring activities include publishing a plan of action and setting implementation benchmarks, convening regular forums to review implementation progress, and inviting a third party to evaluate implementation efforts.

Naturally, conflict management processes can take a long time to develop—if the issues and sources of conflict were easy to surmount, violent conflict would not have erupted. Stakeholders may encounter difficulties at any phase in the process, especially when conflict issues and sources are deep-rooted and require participation of stakeholders at local, state, and national levels for their solution. Advocacy or lobbying by one stakeholder group, such as a youth organization, may be needed to engage another group, such as government officials, police, or business leaders, in the process. Facilitation, mediation, or technical assistance may be required to develop realistic, sustainable understandings, particularly when underlying economic, political processes, or security issues are being undertaken. In most situations, the entire process will be repeated several times as groups address successive sources of conflict in their communities.

Translating this general approach into a specific strategy is discussed in Section VI.

## **B. OTI's Experience with This Approach**

OTI has utilized this general approach increasingly in its CR work in Nigeria. Whether the conflict involved, for example, land tenure, competition over economic opportunities, struggles between youth in rural communities, or religious confrontations, OTI and CRESNET CR practitioners have first sought to sensitize specific groups of stakeholders involved in a conflict and provide them with basic CR concepts. The next step has been to bring together the parties that have engaged in violent conflict in a facilitated dialogue that has often legitimized establishment of a peace and reconciliation committee. In most cases, the peace committees have tried to reach agreements on which stakeholders could rely. Joint monitoring committees have been created in some instances. The overall result of this approach has been mostly positive. Resolving structural problems underlying a given conflict has proven to be especially challenging.

## V. FINDINGS/LESSONS LEARNED

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Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, presents a series of contrasts that materially affect the myriad sources of conflict, conflict dynamics, and opportunities for conflict management. Regional differences in indigenous governance structures, self-governing capacities, and quality of civil society and community-based organizations result in markedly different local environments. The diversity that exists within the two major religions creates unique opportunities for mitigating religious and other conflicts. Not surprisingly, these factors combine to engender regional differences in conflict dynamics.

In this highly complex conflict environment, multiple institutions for promoting more effective CR and peacebuilding exist. Among these are a CR network, organized by Nigerians with strong support from OTI/Nigeria, two universities, and various government and donor initiatives. Among these, CRESNET and the universities could together contribute significantly to building peace over the next two years.

Naturally, no one donor can hope to materially mitigate all conflicts in Nigeria over two years. Analyzing conflicts in terms of their probable capacity to destabilize Nigeria's transition to democracy and civilian rule, as well as in terms of the feasibility of constructive donor intervention, can help identify priorities.

### A. Nigerian Institutions Affecting Conflict

#### 1. Marked variation in governance structures

Regional differences in governance structures and practices were recognized and much commented on in colonial Nigeria. Hierarchy and norms of deference and obedience characterized indigenous institutions in the North. Igbo "stateless" societies in the East, where community groups self-governed and neither village headmen nor paramount chiefs existed, constituted a quite different set of institutional arrangements for dealing with public problems. In the West, Yoruba chiefs did play lead roles, but were strongly supported and partially checked by organized groups within the society. These differences, partially transformed by an eventful century of colonial and independent rule, persist today.

*North.* Less broadly recognized are the very significant intraregional differences found today in the character of indigenous institutions, as well as in political processes both in that context and in the comparatively new context of secular government within local government areas and states. In the Northwest, core of the old North, some emirates—for example, Sokoto, Katsina, and Kano—retain much of their old authority. Others, such as Zazzau, have recently lost control over areas they formerly claimed, and their authority may be waning. By contrast, minority groups in southern Kaduna State such as the Byagyi, have, as part of the same recent events, gained recognition as new "indigenous" governments. Still others—for example, the newly minted Emirate of Dutse (1990)—may lack, at least at the emirate level, the authority associated with governance structures in the original seven Hausa states (Daura, Kano, Rano, Gobir, Biram [Sokoto], Zamfara, and Zazzau [Zaria]).

Similarly, elected officials at the local government and state levels within the North's 19 states opt for quite different strategies in the face of common problems (e.g., the issue of establishing *shari'a* law provisions as the criminal code at the state level).

*Southwest.* Chiefs exist and continue to play important roles in the society, but they do not influence politics to the extent that some northern emirate leaders do.

#### **Inter- and Intragroup Variations in Governance Structures:**

Indigenous governance and judicial structures and processes differ dramatically among ethnic groups. The northern Hausa-Fulani emirates are hierarchical; indigenous Igbo communities were stateless and self-governing; other groups have more diverse institutional structures and processes. Significant variations can be found as well in indigenous governance and judicial structures within the same ethnic group. Some emirates have long-standing traditions and great authority, whereas others no longer carry the same weight.

Conflicts will inevitably be addressed differently under these differing institutional and procedural circumstances. Conflict mitigation interventions must therefore be adapted to the institutional and procedural characteristics of the local context. This will require the expertise of individuals knowledgeable about local circumstances and about local indigenous conflict mitigation approaches. All stakeholders must be involved in conflict mitigation efforts from the outset, since they are generally the only people who have an understanding of the local conflict and who are able to judge the likelihood that an intervention will or will not be effective.

*South South.* The multiplicity of ethnic groups in the South South is reflected in myriad traditional governance structures. The integrity and relative influence of traditional leaders differ from group to group and community to community.

## 2. Substantial differences in CBOs/CSOs

Community-based organizations (CBOs), such as families, resource user groups, cultural units, and community self-help societies, and civil society organizations (CSOs) (e.g., Muslim sects, churches, human rights organizations, local trade and professional associations) vary dramatically in sophistication, experience, and capacity. Despite significant exceptions, both types of organizations are more developed in the South than in the North, where indigenous governance structures have remained generally more effective and constitute less of an enabling environment for self-governing practices.

**Successful efforts** to involve CBOs and CSOs in CR work must likewise adapt to time and place circumstances. Religious organizations offer effective avenues into communities in many parts of the country, and may be the most relevant in terms of mitigating religious conflicts.

## 3. Religious differences: Intra-Islamic and intra-Christian variations

Nigeria's two major religions, Islam and Christianity, are sometimes depicted as monolithic entities that confront each other in pitched battles, with formal implementation of the criminal aspects of the Muslim *shari'a* legal code (or the likelihood of implementation) providing the spark that touches off violence. Riots based (at least ostensibly) on religious affiliation and religious policies have indeed occurred, the worst such being the two confrontations that took place in Kaduna between February and May 2000.

Such descriptions, however, can be misleading. Within the Christian community one finds a broad range of churches spanning the gamut from the mainstream Roman Catholic and Anglican to many smaller Protestant organizations. These latter include many Pentecostal denominations that tend to be quite aggressive in their

**Intrafaith Variations:** Muslims and Christians are organized in a variety of religious sects and associations. These groups have their own particular tenets, agendas, and modes of operating that distinguish them, despite broader shared beliefs and approaches. CR operators will have to learn how these various stakeholders view particular conflicts if they are to work effectively to mitigate them.

Successful efforts at interfaith dialogue in Nigeria offer a starting point for reconciliation and reconstruction. Two examples merit citation: the Inter-Faith Mediation Centre in Kaduna and the Christian Muslim Forum in Sokoto.

proselytizing. Although each Christian church retains its autonomy of thought and action, all belong to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). CAN has a chapter in each state in the federation. The CAN leader in each state plays a lead role in relationships with Muslim counterparts and with elected state and local government officials. Interviews with three different CAN leaders reveal significant state-to-state variations in Christian/Muslim relationships.<sup>8</sup>

In part this reflects differing agendas of elected political leaders in northern states. Governor Ahmed Sani of Zamfara State, which first introduced and applied the criminal provisions of the *shari'a* code, has realized considerable political advantage from his support for *shari'a*. The local population strongly supports application of *shari'a* and the governor who made it possible. By contrast, Kaduna State Governor E.H. Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi has deliberately and successfully sought to restrict application of *shari'a* civil and criminal provisions to Muslim populations of the state. In Kano, the elected state leadership appears split over the advisability of applying *shari'a* provisions.

Underlying these different public political agendas are significant variations in the character of local Muslim populations. Although most Muslims in Nigeria's North follow orthodox Sunni Islam and the Maliki school of *shari'a* jurisprudence,<sup>9</sup> Shiite Islam, in its Iranian variant, has attracted some adepts. These include the Shiite leader, Sheikh El Zakzaky, who initially opposed applying *shari'a* in Kano because he argued that the

<sup>8</sup> Interviews with Rev. Dr. Gabriel A. Ojo, Chairman, Kano State CAN Chapter, Kano, 8 May 2001; Rt. Rev. James Shakari Kwasi, Chairman, Katsina State CAN, Katsina, 9 May 2001; and Rt. Rev. Yusuf Ibrahim Lumu, Jigawa State CAN Chairman, Dutse, 10 May 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Maliki *shari'a* is one of four Sunni orthodox legal schools; the others are Shafi'i, Hanbali, and Hanafi (Coulson, 1964).

underlying socioeconomic conditions necessary for its proper application were not present. Both Zakzaky and another Shiite leader, Abubakar Mujahid, promote a thorough Islamic revolution to reclaim society for the Muslim faithful (Maier, 2000: 168–181).

The Sunni group comprises several sects. In Katsina city, for instance, five are represented: Qadriyya, Tijani, Tarika, Shia, and Izala. Some of these have political programs that focus heavily on *shari'a* at the moment. The Izala attract bright, young, educated individuals who are strongly committed to Islam and to the application of the *shari'a* criminal code. As Shia sect members follow Shiite teachings,<sup>10</sup> local indigenous political leaders view them as radical and believe they are committed to the overthrow of existing government.<sup>11</sup> Other sects—the Qadriyya, Tijani, and Ahmadiyya, for instance—seem less committed on the political front and more centered on the practice of Islam as a nonmilitant doctrine.

Despite these differences, Muslims in Nigeria's North can act together in a disciplined manner when they consider it politically necessary. But groups and leaders in each state also pursue their own agendas, including relationships with Christians. In some traditional chieftaincies (e.g., Katsina and Gumel), relationships between Muslim political and religious leaders and Christians appear better than in others.<sup>12</sup> Some Muslim and Christian leaders have sought to engage in peaceful dialogue, and there would appear to be real opportunities in this area that should be exploited.

#### 4. Regional variations in sources, issues, and dynamics of conflict

*Mosaic* may be a misleading word to describe the character of conflicts in Nigeria. They occur almost everywhere, often in bewildering variety, but underlying this surface confusion are certain regionally specific patterns. Most notable among these are the following:

- Environmental, distributional, and developmental conflicts associated with production of oil in the Delta (South South Region) (Maier, 2000: 75–110);
- Religious conflicts in the North (Northwest, North Central, and Northeast regions) that pit proponents of Islam, Christianity, and animist religions against each other (Boer, 2000: Appendix 1);
- Farmer–herder conflicts in the South (OTI/Nigeria, 2001: 7–8), as well as in northern, tse-tse fly-free areas where agricultural encroachment on former pasture reserves and cattle tracks, uncontrolled by local government authorities, generates sometimes deadly conflicts when pastoralists in search of forage put their cows into other people's still unharvested corn;<sup>13</sup>
- Land disputes among indigenes and settlers, sometimes of the same ethnic group, in the Southwest (ibid.: 4–7) and Middlebelt (Maier, 2000: 198–208); and
- Election-related violence in southern regions of the country (see Item 2, below).

<p><b>Distribution of Conflict Types</b> varies tremendously depending on location. Stakeholders, if properly involved, will be able to clarify critical details. CR practitioners may specialize in particular kinds of conflicts.</p>
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Other types of conflict—for example, battles over ethnic dominance of economic opportunities, struggles over land tenure rights that pit first settlers (indigenes) against those who arrive later (settlers), conflicts between indigenous and secular governance structures, youth- and police-related disputes—occur more generally throughout the country (Boer, 2000: including appendices).

*North.* The struggles within northern states over application of the criminal aspects of the *shari'a* code currently occupy center stage. These are often linked with confrontations over economic issues that pit Hausa–Fulani indigenes against southern settler “ethnic” entrepreneurs who began moving into the old Northern Region during the colonial era. Competition for renewable resources, notably pastures, forests, and fisheries, also produces violent conflicts.

*Southwest.* Conflict in the Southwest at its heart grows from the competition for scarce resources that, at times, appears organized along ethnic lines. Underlying this contemporary economic competition is a pervasive sense

<sup>10</sup> Rt. Rev. James Shakari Kwasi, Chairman, Katsina State CAN, Katsina, 9 May 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Magajin Gari E.H. Abdulmumuni Kabir Usuman (eldest son of Katsina Emir, indigenous administrator in charge of Katsina City), interview Katsina, 9 May 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Rt. Rev. Yusuf Ibrahim Lumu, Jigawa State CAN Chairman, Dutse, 10 May 2001; Rt. Rev. James Shakari Kwasi, Chairman, Katsina State CAN, Katsina, 9 May 2001; and Magajin Gari E.H. Abdulmumuni Kabir Usuman, interview Katsina, 9 May 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Sagir Sulaiman, Director, CAREFOR, interview Katsina, 9 May 2001; Sarki Nuhu Muhammadu Sanusi, Emir of Dutse and Madaki, Dutse court official; interview Dutse, 10 May 2001.

among Yoruba that they have consistently been turned away from political power by the Hausa–Fulani, as well as the keen awareness of Hausa–Fulani living in the Southwest of their repeated victimization by mob violence in the recent past. In these conflicts, religious identification is “trumped” by ethnicity, as Yoruba Muslims and Hausa Christians find themselves indiscriminately targeted by members of the other ethnic group, regardless of the religions they share.

Many seemingly minor conflicts can set off large-scale violence. Issues such as allocation of market stalls, control of the Lagos slaughterhouse, taxes levied on vehicles registered elsewhere, OPC activities, and perceived slights to religious or community holidays can trigger such violence. A ricochet riot effect between Lagos and northern cities, frequently Kano, spreads violence from one area to another. The OPC’s robust organization adds both a risk and an opportunity in this area, as this Yoruba group can mobilize many members, whether to spread violence or to calm communities.

*South South.* Conflict in the South South (Delta) reflects years of economic neglect and decline. These factors are compounded by ongoing local disputes over land, fishing rights, and traditional rulers’ authority; by local political fragmentation; and the decline of traditional community leaders. In addition, oil company operations present tempting targets. Violence among unemployed youths who have no legitimate economic prospects is on the rise. These disaffected, violent youths are enabled by, take advantage of, and make more severe all of these conditions.

*Southeast.* The team was unable to visit the Southeast. Potential for conflict in this region remains high, as demonstrated by the massacre of Hausa–Fulani in Aba that followed the killing of Igbos in Kaduna during the February and May 2000 fighting between Muslims and Christians in the latter city. In the aftermath, northerners left the South and southerners the North to return, at least temporarily, to their home bases (Ibelema, 2000: 211). Although Igbo have long since returned to the North, which they left en masse in the fall of 1966 when thousands were massacred in Kano before the outbreak of the Biafran war, memories of those events remain. Southeasterners have recently threatened tit-for-tat killings if Igbo are attacked in the North.

## **5. Elections 2002/2003: Potential dynamics and regional issues**

Although it is not possible to predict the level and nature of violence that upcoming elections might incite, early signs indicate competition will be fierce. Regional variations can be projected based on the degree of political competition in a given state, the level of political and community organization, and the history of violence in past elections.

In the South South, both inter- and intraparty violence can be expected. The breakdown of social and governance institutions in the region creates open political space, within which anyone with enough financial resources can purchase an office by buying votes or hiring touts to manipulate the electoral process. No local authorities exist who can shape the nomination process. Many political figures who lost their posts at the last election are looking to these next elections as an opportunity to return to office. Current office holders have allegedly begun to amass their war chests. Use of touts for intimidation, buying of votes, and other electoral misconduct is anticipated. We believe that the incidence of violence will be greater if new political parties are not allowed to register, intensifying the struggle for party nominations by restricting the number of candidates who may run.

In the Southwest, the likelihood of *intraparty* violence is significantly lower than that of *interparty* violence. Yoruba ethnic leaders, the Afenifere, still tightly control nominations for the dominant political party, the Alliance for Democracy (AD). At present, there is no group challenging the Afenifere’s prerogative. In contrast, interparty competition between President Obasanjo’s People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and the AD for control of key Southwest states, particularly Lagos, will be heated. Again, use of touts for intimidation, buying of votes, and other misconduct are anticipated.

<p><b>Election Violence:</b> Given the history of electoral violence in southwestern states, it may be appropriate to target most of USAID at mitigating this kind of conflict to Lagos State.</p>
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In the North, election violence has posed less of a problem in the past. People have certainly manipulated the electoral process in both primary and general elections, but the tools of choice in such operations have been either reliance on traditional authorities to direct voters or vote buying more frequently than violence. Persons interviewed did not consider election violence a major threat in the 2002 and 2003 elections in the North.

## 6. Ricochet riots effect: Locally violent clashes incite lethal violence elsewhere

Nigeria has long suffered from a pattern of ethnic reprisals that often follow in completely different parts of the country after a localized confrontation between two ethnic groups. Hausa–Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba have taken lead roles as classic ethnic protagonists in Nigeria, fighting each other repeatedly since the founding of the federation.<sup>14</sup> The typical ricochet riot scenario plays out as follows.

**Ricochet Riots** can occur anywhere in the country where members of ethnic groups in conflict are both present. The strategic issue for USAID/Nigeria becomes one of achieving the most impact. Because of the large number of ethnic groups present in both Kano and Lagos, including particularly Yoruba and Hausa–Fulani, efforts to quell ethnic conflict should be directed to those areas on a priority basis.

Members of ethnic group 1 commit violence against those of ethnic group 2, who have settled in the home area of group 1. When news (and sometimes the wounded and bodies of the slain) arrive in the group 2's home area, leaders and followers often exact vengeance on members of group 1 who have settled in group 2's territory, even though the latter will usually have had nothing whatsoever to do with the original incident of violence. Any number of causes (e.g., economic competition, religious values, control over governance institutions) can trigger the initial dispute between groups 1 and 2. But in the second round of violence, here termed *ricochet riots*, conflicts proceed on another basis, that of the blood feud writ large across whole ethnic groups rather than individual warring families or other smaller social units.

## 7. Media and violence

Media, and the information (or misinformation) they purvey, can play powerful roles in fomenting or discouraging violence. The misinformation in inflammatory rumors can provoke senseless casualties. Timely, accurate reporting can have the opposite effect. Unfortunately,

**Media and Violence:** Print media dominate in the South; electronic media, particularly radio, in the North. Both types play important roles in conflict within the country. Both have biases. Northern electronic media tend to exclude Christian programming, whereas southern print media, most of which originate in the Southwest, often present a Christian viewpoint on religious conflict. Editors have incentives to dramatize stories to increase sales.

Nigerian media are largely polarized along ethnic lines. Yoruba dominate most of the print media, much of which originate in the Southwest. English language literacy rates are high throughout the South and considerably lower in the North, so the major audience for print media tends to be southerners. Informed observers note that a fair number of articles play to the southern bias—for example, in the contemporary dispute over the application of *shari'a* criminal law provisions. Some observers assert that editors frequently sensationalize objective stories filed by reporters to sell more copies.

Those papers and reviews are disseminated nationally, however, and many northerners read them. The more sensationalist, or biased, reports and editorials probably induce among English-literate northerners a sense that their views are either not represented or are deliberately misrepresented.

In the North, by contrast, much information about current events circulates through the electronic media. Non-English-literate Hausa–Fulani rely heavily on electronic media for their information.<sup>15</sup> These originate from both domestic and international sources. The states control domestic electronic media. Northern radio and television stations incorporate a strong Muslim, northern bias in their programming. Christians rarely if ever get air time. The major external sources of Hausa-language programming are the Hausa sections of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Voice of America (VOA). Staff in those sections are drawn largely from Northern Nigeria, which may introduce some bias into their programming. *Radio Deutsche Welle* also provides some Hausa programming. Neither the BBC nor the VOA produces programming in Yoruba or Ibo.

Hausa–Fulani follow news from available electronic sources, as many southerners do from print media. In terms of exposure to electronic programming or English-language news, both groups are reasonably well informed. But the quality of editing, if not reporting, may be questionable in many cases, and exposure to different (i.e., opposing) viewpoints seems limited in both cases. This tends to generate a negative dynamic of misinformation that, over time, exacerbates disputes rather than aiding in their reasoned resolution.

<sup>14</sup> These three groups are by no means the only ones who have engaged in ethnic conflict: Ijaw, Urhobo, and Itsekiri, Tiv and Jukun, Hausa and Fulani, as well as many others, have fought each other over land, renewable resources, governance issues, and economic disputes.

<sup>15</sup> Note that many, many northerners are literate in Hausa. Some read Hausa written with Arabic characters; others read *Ajemi*, Hausa texts written in Roman characters. The major Hausa-language newspaper in the North is *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* (literally, “The Truth Is Worth More than a Penny”), but the audience does not compare with that in the South for English-language print media.

## B. Nigerian Organizations for Conflict Mitigation/Peacebuilding

Although conflict issues in Nigeria are thorny, incipient capacity to intervene constructively does exist. The OTI-supported CRESNET provides training and skills development for conflict professionals. Universities in Ibadan and Jos are embarking on graduate programs in CR. Finally, state, federal, and other donors have launched their own initiatives in this area.

### 1. CRESNET

In less than a year and a half, OTI has achieved significant results in supporting interventions in community conflicts and in building the capacity of individuals and organizations to carry out such interventions. In addition, OTI has been responsible for planting the seeds for a culture of peace throughout Nigeria, through support to intercommunal dialogues and through social marketing activities. Potentially the longest lasting of OTI's contributions, however, may be its support of an initiative, conceived by participants in an OTI-sponsored Stakeholders Conference held in Badagry, Lagos State, in February 2000, to establish a CR practitioners network. Thirty-six individuals from CSOs and CBOs, with experience in CR, representing all six of Nigeria's geopolitical zones, attended the conference.

They formed CRESNET, a national professional membership association of individuals from the six zones. Following the Stakeholders' Conference, OTI developed a training manual appropriate to the Nigerian context. In March 2000, a Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop was held in Port Harcourt that again included representatives from the six zones. There, OTI expatriate specialists schooled 30 master trainers in basic CR and participatory training skills. The latter, supported by the OTI trainers, subsequently conducted a series of six zonal TOTs, between March and June 2000, working with a total of 200 individuals from CSOs and CBOs.

CRESNET now constitutes the only nationwide civil society network in the country devoted to peacebuilding and CR. The British Council tried earlier to establish such a network, which reportedly functioned for a year, but collapsed when the British Council ceased supporting it. After a highly contested start, CRESNET has evolved into its present structure of a national network of conflict intervenors who can, purportedly, be mobilized to address community conflicts anywhere in the country at anytime. The constitution was revised in April 2001. CRESNET's national board remained and has served as a basis for the zonal structures and elections at that level. These took place in May 2001 and produced a 15-member national board and six sets of regional officers. The organization officially registered in March 2001 with the national government as a private organization. This has enabled CRESNET to open a bank account and achieve credibility as an association whose members can offer training and intervene with governmental bodies.

**CRESNET and Peacebuilding in Nigeria:** OTI has supported efforts by Nigerian CR practitioners to develop a professional association. Founded in February 2000, CRESNET has now established six regional affiliates. Members—more than 300 practitioners—have intervened successfully to provide CR training and conflict mitigation services.

Although CRESNET has made a promising start, it will require continued support to establish itself as a viable organization able to help members upgrade their skills to help them increase the efficacy of their CR interventions.

At present, membership is open to individuals, not organizations. Membership dues have been established at 5,000 *naira* per individual, or slightly more than \$40 at the current rate of \$1 US = 120 *naira*. CRESNET offers training to members in return for members committing to training others on behalf of CRESNET. A membership drive is currently underway in the six zones that promises to increase dues-paying members from the current, approximately 100 individuals to an estimated 300–500. CRESNET charges dues for several reasons, including the benefits CR practitioners acquire through membership, such as the following opportunities:

- To network with other individuals and organizations involved in peacebuilding and CR;
- To enhance CR and peacebuilding skills through CRESNET training;
- To gain practical experience with CR skills to use in conflict settings;
- To provide a return on CRESNET's training investment in its members by training others; and
- To address the issues of NGO credibility through membership in CRESNET.

By applying CR practices such as mediation and facilitation, individuals and organizations associated with CRESNET have successfully addressed outbreaks of violence in various locations through the country. CRESNET trainers have worked with some collective associations at the community level; these have been primarily religious groups. They have also established mechanisms, such as peace committees, for the prevention of further violence. These have been well documented in a report prepared for OTI in December 2000 (Boer, 2000).

CRESNET has promoted a participatory approach to training in its TOT workshops. Participatory training approaches increase learning, especially in a practice-oriented field such as CR. They build on participants' knowledge and experience, encourage them to identify and develop their own solutions to problems they face in CR, and enhance the likelihood that participants will both take ownership of the techniques they have learned and apply them in subsequent actions.

This approach appears better adapted to the communications and group process styles of the cultures of some ethnic groups in Nigeria, such as Yoruba and Igbo, and more alien to those of other groups, such as Hausa–Fulani.<sup>16</sup> It is also more in keeping with the communications styles of some individuals than others. Nevertheless, it is a critical one in a context in which neither traditional leaders nor elected officials can be counted on to represent their constituents. CRESNET has had some success in transferring this approach.

The curriculum covered in the training manual and the accompanying facilitators' manual is elementary, but does cover some basic theories and practices in the fields of peacebuilding and CR. These include communications skills such as active listening and anger management, CR practices, (e.g., problem-solving, negotiation, mediation, and facilitation skills), and introductions to some of the theoretical underpinnings of these practices, including basic needs and reconciliation theories.

The greatest contributions thus far by individuals and organizations associated with CRESNET are those addressing underlying sources of conflict. An example is OTI-sponsored workshops CR training and policy dialogues with policy makers at different levels. Trainers devote the first half of these workshops to CR skills, and focus the second half through facilitated dialogues on policy issues with potential to generate conflict. An assessment team witnessed part of such a training/dialogue workshop in Kano, involving high-level Kaduna State and local government officials. The workshop modeled participatory approaches to training and discussion around issues related to ethnic and religious conflicts.

Despite this progress, CRESNET's status as an organization remains fragile. It depends for its survival almost wholly on the knowledge, experience, energy, and commitment of a small number of individuals. Like most CSOs in Nigeria, CRESNET overrepresents the Southwest on its national board and in its membership. Nevertheless, the six zonal offices offer an avenue to rectify this situation. Unless the organization provides tangible benefits to its members in the near future, they may well allow their memberships to lapse. At present, continuation of the TOTs seems wholly dependent on donor funding. There appears to be considerable demand for the types of services that individual CRESNET members and associated organizations are able to provide. Whether potential clients will pay for some or all of those services, however, remains to be seen.

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<sup>16</sup> The issue here turns on whether the style in which training materials are transmitted contributes to creating an uneven playing field in which southerners are favored because the training approach is one with which southerners are more familiar and more comfortable than northerners. Skilled trainers and facilitators use specific techniques to level the playing field in terms of approaches to communications with which specific cultural groups are comfortable and learning styles appropriate to particular cultures.

## 2. Other organizational resources in Nigeria relevant to conflict mitigation/peacebuilding—universities

Nigerian universities can contribute materially to CR, advocacy, and development efforts in Nigeria through research on conflicts and CR efforts and through training CR practitioners at various levels. The universities of Ibadan and Jos have both initiated CR programs. Ibadan's has achieved critical mass and several sources of support; Jos's operation is still in the exploratory stages. The latter program could, however, grow into a significant provider of CR research and training. Other universities might also contribute in this regard. A number could play the role, as Ibadan and Jos undoubtedly will, of CR centers within Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. Over time, university staff should be able to document and analyze both conflicts and CR procedures. This information can be passed on to peacebuilding practitioners to enable them to increase gradually the number of tested, effective CR, advocacy, and development tools they can offer clients.

**Other Nigerian Organizational Resources for CR:** Two universities, Ibadan and Jos, are moving ahead with CR activities. Ibadan's center is operational; Jos's is in the development stages. The GFRN Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution is also functional.

These organizations offer the prospect of in-country training and capacity building for CR practitioners, as well as frameworks within which to encourage links between CR research, theory, and practice.

## 3. Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CEPACS)—University of Ibadan

In 1996 the British High Commission initiated and founded a "Link" program between the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, and Ibadan faculty working on diverse conflict issues in Africa. In January 1999, the Ibadan faculties formally joined together in the "Peace and Studies Group" and have just recently organized themselves as CEPACS. This unit draws on a broad range of disciplines, including political science, sociology, law, history, economics, geography, psychology, adult education, and anthropology. CEPACS members focus on:

- Research into the causes, patterns, and dynamics of conflict in Nigeria and in Africa in general;
- Education at the master's level;
- Training of CR trainers;
- Applied consultation;
- Publications; and
- Conferences and information dissemination.

The program addresses five focus areas: (1) managing ethnic and social conflict; (2) traditional African CR practices; (3) environmental scarcity and resource-related conflict; (4) women and children in war and peace; and (5) peacekeeping/making/and building. The first three conflict areas have clear and immediate relevance to the activities proposed here, and should, over time, build the knowledge base and analytical capacities of conflict mitigation personnel. Their current work particularly emphasizes *indigene-settler* questions, and includes studies centering on proposed priority areas of Kaduna and in the Southwest.

CEPACS's TOT, conferencing, and information dissemination capacities could contribute a critical bridge in linking practitioners to current developments in CR theory and complement activities proposed below in Section VI.

Several CEPACS faculty members have built international reputations as authorities in their fields. They have produced excellent work and, partly in consequence, are well networked with other leading African and international personnel active in these areas.

## 4. Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution—University of Jos

In the 1980s and early 1990s, Jos professors trained some diplomats for the External Affairs Ministry as students in the University's master's level International Relations and Strategic Studies Programme. Jos staff also teach at the National War College and at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS).

A multidisciplinary committee of Jos faculty members is currently exploring possibilities of organizing a Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (CPCR). They have established contacts with Bradford University in

England, and also with the University of Geneva. The Department for International Development (DFID) is funding the Bradford connection; the British Council currently administers those funds.

University of Jos faculty already have links with CRESNET member organizations. One of the Committee's goals is to provide students with opportunities to gain experience with CR practice by placing them as interns with CRESNET member organizations. One of the committee's long-term goals is to organize a master's program in CR. If and when this occurs, placements with CRESNET members can provide students with opportunities to conduct action research for their master's theses. As a university unit, CPCR can be involved in CR initiatives in the long term, in ways that CSOs cannot. Because of the multidisciplinary backgrounds of its faculty, CPCR can contribute not only to the initial "fire-fighting" phase of conflicts, but also to the subsequent reconciliation and reconstruction phases.

The University Linkage Committee has been overseeing these efforts. Committee members indicate they intend to start small and expand into professional training as a priority focus. They expressed interest in exploring additional support for the program both from USAID and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

## **5. Potential CRESNET–university linkages**

CRESNET, universities, and other CSOs could collaborate and cooperate in a variety of ways that would strengthen the linkages between theory, research, and practice, enhancing the usefulness, effectiveness, and impact of each. Examples include:

- Provide documentation, publication, and dissemination of case studies, best practices, and lessons learned;
- Provide resource persons to training, facilitation, and problem-solving workshops, and dialogues, particularly in cases in which CR technical information is required;
- Carry out systematic research on specific questions and problems identified by practitioners;
- Provide more rigorous and in-depth training to CR trainers, practitioners, and policy makers;
- Publish a joint newsletter with information about developments in CR theory, research, and practice;
- Disseminate a joint electronic newsletter with the same information described above, as well as discussion groups around issues of importance pertaining to CR theory and practice;
- Organize an annual conference to bring together researchers, policy makers, and practitioners from the CR field to share best practices and lessons learned; and
- Use university personnel to conduct assessments and evaluations for CSOs' CR and peacebuilding programs and interventions.

## **6. Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution**

The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) is the research arm of the Ministry of Co-operation and Integration in Africa and the National Peace Commission, based in the Presidency. It was initially established to conduct research related to peace, conflict prevention, management, and resolution throughout Africa, particularly relating to those conflicts to which Nigeria has provided peacekeeping soldiers and/or has contributed to peacemaking initiatives, such as in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The mandate of the IPCR was recently expanded to include research relating to conflicts within Nigeria. However, GFRN funding for research pertaining to conflict in Nigeria will not be forthcoming until 2002.

The IPCR recognizes the roles in ensuring sustainable peace of democratization, development, and the establishment of viable institutions that can guarantee general security, the satisfaction of basic needs, the rule of law, and human rights. The IPCR comprises four departments: Research and Policy Analysis, Defense and Security Studies, Conflict Prevention and Resolution, and Democracy and Development. The research staff comprise individuals with expertise in a variety of social science disciplines, including security studies, international relations, political science, and economics. However, they lack an individual(s) with specific peace and conflict studies expertise. Research staff expressed an interest in enhancing their skills in these fields.

The Nigerian government subsidizes IPCR operations, but the Institute is expected to supplement its funding with donations from public and private donors. It has a library, a computer center, and a conference hall. One of the IPCR's long-term goals is to establish and operate a conflict early warning system for Nigeria. The initial phase would entail producing a "map" of all conflicts in the country that would include information such as the sources of and salient issues of each conflict, and its current status and intensity. The IPCR envisions working in collaboration with an organization such as CRESNET, which has a network of contacts throughout the country, as an integral component of a conflict early warning system.

## 7. Lagos State

The conflict mediation program organized by the Ministry of Justice of Lagos State illustrates the potential for creative problem-solving by Nigeria's states in CR. Using specially trained lawyers as mediators in civil disputes, this program has resolved more than 5,000 disputes in its 13-month existence. These typically involve such issues as employer–employee disputes, landlord–tenant problems, and domestic disputes. Parties voluntarily bring their disputes to the program, where staff handle them informally and without attorneys. Those who avail themselves of these services are primarily poor people. Disputes are generally resolved. This is an example of how civil and democratic politics have begun to regenerate the conflict-management institutions typical of well-functioning democracies.

## 8. Donors: DFID/UNDP/UN Foundation/oil companies

The British have a long-standing interest in abating conflict in Nigeria. The British High Commission and DFID anticipate receiving significant funding from the new British Africa-wide Conflict Reduction Fund (\$75 million/year from 2002–2004, in addition to larger annual amounts for peacekeeping, 2001–2003). If so, they will be positioned to play a strong role in the country.

DFID have selected four Nigerian states—Jigawa, Benue, Ekiti, and a fourth state in the Southeast—as their priority geographic areas of intervention. They are supporting local government strengthening, and so could contribute insights on that element of the development equation.

### **Donors Involved in CR and Donor Coordination:**

Several donors, including DFID and UNDP, plan CR activities. DFID in particular may soon have substantial resources to invest in the area. Oil companies operating in South South are also beginning to play a greater role in CR in the Delta region.

Donors' and companies' strategies could be designed to become mutually reinforcing over time. Given the size of the challenge, intervenors in conflicts should at the very least coordinate their strategies through regular exchange of information.

UNDP funding levels will be smaller than those British assistance appears set to mobilize, yet UNDP staff can play a useful role in a variety of governance areas. UNDP has already received commissioned papers from Nigerian specialists in 13 distinct governance areas, but will rely on USAID/OTI's CR assessment in structuring their approach to the last area. A solid basis for USAID/UNDP cooperation thus exists and should be nurtured.

The UN Foundation may provide funding for a UNDP conflict management program, and possibly for CEPACS at University of Ibadan. The UN Foundation representative expressed the hope that USAID would collaborate with UNDP in this effort.

Comments here are representative of the oil companies, though they reflect primarily Shell Oil's current conflict mitigation strategy in the Delta. Shell emphasizes sustained community development partnerships with local stakeholders, where Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC) and community leaders identify priority local needs and develop plans to address them. Crucial in this strategy is the willingness of communities to take "ownership" of the project and participate in sustaining it.

Rather than responding to ad hoc extortion by Delta youths, which seems to lead only to more of the same and has little if any community development impact, Shell now seeks to reward community-wide planning and cooperation in clearly developmental activities. However, senior company personnel interviewed note that this will reach only a few communities in the Delta, and far more broadly based and funded initiatives are necessary to even begin to "dent" the poverty, institutional fragmentation and decay, and low-grade conflict and violence typical of the area. They also note that they are having mixed success in effectively getting communities to perform their "partnership" functions.

Oil companies' activities thus could provide "breathing room" until the Delta States and the Nigeria Delta Development Corporation (NDDC) can begin applying their resources to solving environmental and development problems in the area.

### C. Prioritizing Conflicts in Nigeria by Potential for Destabilizing Civilian Governance

Proposing a strategy for further work on CR in Nigeria over the next two years requires narrowing the focus of effort. The types and geographic range of conflict in Nigeria are sufficiently large to make focusing USAID/Nigeria's effort imperative. The team thus proposes the following approach to prioritizing conflicts.

#### 1. Criteria for selecting conflict intervention targets

- Destabilizing effect seriously impeding Nigeria's transition to democracy;
- Economic impact at national level sufficiently negative to impede functioning of Nigerian democracy;
- Conflicts that can incite ricochet riots; and
- Feasibility of generating impact within two years.

Of these four criteria, the first can be seen as a general category: whatever the source of violence, the violence itself must be sufficiently great that it could derail the current transition to democratic civilian governance (e.g., by inciting a secessionist movement or creating an opening for another military takeover).

Conflicts that meet the second or third criterion, the team believes, have the potential to derail democratic civilian rule and therefore merit serious consideration. The fourth criterion, finally, reflects the constraints of USAID/Nigeria's programming arrangements. The team believes that any AID-sponsored intervention aimed at mitigating violence or building peace should be able to demonstrate measurable progress within two years. The team does not, however, expect that any funded intervention should completely resolve within two years the conflict it is designed to address. Indeed, given the deep-seated nature and complex causes of many of Nigeria's current conflicts, it would be unrealistic to assume that the more serious ones can be transformed into sustainable efforts at peacebuilding within so short a time. Rather, the team believes it is imperative for USAID/Nigeria to build rapidly on OTI/Nigeria's conflict mitigation initiatives and push them forward with the goal of achieving sustainable solutions over the longer term (5–20 years, depending on the situation).

#### 2. Conflict types

*Religious conflict (Muslim/Christian).* Religious conflicts constitute a serious cause of violence in Nigeria and have for a number of years.<sup>17</sup> Much of this violence has occurred in the North, although anti-Muslim incidents often occur in the South as well. Low-level incidents seem more or less a constant of daily life, and more or less manageable at that level; but when they escalate, the costs in lives, property, and political and economic stability can be devastating. This latter kind of violence can touch off ricochet riots in other parts of the country (e.g., in Aba after the two Kaduna religious riots during the first five months of 2000).

Northern Muslims' support for application of criminal aspects of the *shari'a* legal code appears motivated by lack of economic development, disparities of wealth between rich and poor, and relative insecurity, as well as forms of behavior (drinking, prostitution, etc.) stigmatized by their faith. Religious and political leaders have seen in the *shari'a* movement a vehicle to advance moral or personal agendas. The issue of *shari'a* has taken on real economic significance for southern Christian entrepreneur settlers in the North who often operate restaurants, hotels, and bars where drinking and prostitution occur. Under these circumstances, potential for violence remains high.

OTI/Nigeria has demonstrated repeatedly, however, that representatives of both religious groups enthusiastically welcome timely interventions to provide CR training and establish peacebuilding institutions (Boer, 2000: 23–

**Prioritizing Conflicts:** To achieve results within the proposed two-year timeframe, USAID/Nigeria should focus its efforts on a few high-priority conflicts and limit its interventions primarily to three geographic regions. The highest priority conflicts concern *religious* and *ethnic* confrontations, often linked to underlying issues. *Electoral* conflict, although serious, does not pose the same level of destabilizing threat to Nigeria's transition to democratic civilian governance.

Three states should receive priority: Kaduna, which in the aftermath of devastating religious riots in 2000 has taken promising steps to address conflict, and Kano and Lagos, because ethnic conflict between indigenes and settlers, often over economic issues, can generate ricochet riots in many other parts of the country, compounding violence and destruction.

Other types of conflicts, though they can also prove deadly, pose lesser threats. This includes conflicts over oil resources in South South states.

<sup>17</sup> Boer, 2000: Appendix 1, listing a total of 34 religious riots occurring in 17 different locations in the North in the 21 years 1980–2000.

26). Much has been accomplished in the past two years, principally through TOTs organized by CRESNET members. Many participants report having had occasion to use their new knowledge almost immediately, sometimes in stemming religious riots. CRESNET members and other peacebuilders could very likely accomplish considerably more by intensifying their work with religious leaders and communities.

*Ethnic politico-economic conflict—Kano and Lagos (Hausa/Fulani vs. Yoruba).* Conflicts spurred by competition over economic opportunities have been part and parcel of life for more than 150 years in the area now known as Nigeria (see, e.g., Cohen, 1969). Such competition has long been managed with varying degrees of success in many places in the country, but it can erupt at any moment into violent confrontations (Boer, 2000: 13–20, Appendix 3). Both Kano and Lagos, Nigeria’s two largest urban centers, attract immigrants from most other parts of the country. They come seeking economic opportunities, and frequently gain access to employment through kin networks or, failing that, through membership in an ethnic group. This means that economic competition often occurs between groups organized on ethnic bases. In consequence, such conflicts incorporate powerful potential to destabilize Nigeria’s transition to democracy as well as the political situation more broadly, and to wreak havoc with the economy. At the same time, such economic competition, like other forms of dispute, can be managed successfully if local leaders have the training and institutional facilities that allow them to diffuse ethnic tensions before they boil over into open violence.

*Political and electoral conflict.* Nigeria’s political and electoral history has been punctuated repeatedly with violent incidents. In the North, political and electoral competition, though often fierce, tends to be relatively peaceful. In the South, and particularly in the Southwest, violence has more often characterized political interactions and especially elections. Both have the potential to destabilize the transition to civilian rule and democracy. Both can spill back into patterns of ethnic competition; but, most often, such conflicts pit members of the same ethnic group against each other in struggles for leadership posts. Positive changes can be achieved within a two-year timeframe.

*Delta oil resources linked to development and environmental problems.* With several million extremely poor people living in circumstances of low-grade anarchy, where local collective action institutions have eroded badly, prospects for settling conflicts and promoting development appear sharply constrained. USAID lacks the resources and political leverage to change these dynamics by itself. If the GFRN takes serious steps to steer resources to the state level (via increased royalties and a viable NDDC), and if state governments commit themselves to developing the Delta, USAID might play a facilitating role in the institutional reintegration and development of the area.

At the moment, the level of violence that Delta youth can muster seems unlikely to seriously impede oil production. This implies that Delta conflicts will not exert a marked negative effect on the national economy. Moreover, Delta problems do not threaten consolidation of democratic civilian governance in Nigeria nor do they trigger ethnic riots elsewhere in the country. It seems problematic that assistance efforts could turn around, within the space of 2 years, 40 years of serious misrule, environmental degradation, and economic decline. For these reasons, the team considers the Delta no more than a second-order conflict in terms of USAID/Nigeria programming over the next two years.

*Land and renewable resources.* Conflicts concerning these resources can and do escalate into lethal violence among protagonists, but they tend to be localized incidents. Something meaningful could almost certainly be done within two years about individual cases of conflict; however, they do not (1) meet our criteria of destabilizing the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, (2) seriously threaten the well-being of the national economy, and (3) systematically occur on the fault lines of major ethnic divisions.<sup>18</sup> They oppose *indigenes*, the term Nigerians use to designate those who first settled a region, and *settlers*—the term for immigrants who arrived later in an already claimed area. Not infrequently, they occur between members of the same ethnic group.<sup>19</sup>

*Indigenous governance structures versus contemporary secular constitutional governance:* The popular consensus holds that most contemporary secular governments at all levels in Nigeria are “broken,” in major part because those who lead them view public office as a means to enrich themselves and their communities by

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<sup>18</sup> Conflicts in the northern half of the country that pit transhumant pastoralists—mainly, members of the Fulani ethnic group—against sedentary agriculturalists do have ethnic overtones. In contrast to Hausa–Fulani/Yoruba or Hausa–Fulani/Igbo battles, farmers involved in disputes with herders come from many different ethnic groups. This diminishes somewhat the potential for violence to spread from one area to another.

<sup>19</sup> The Ife–Modakeke land tenure dispute offers a classic example of an indigene–settler conflict. See OTI/Nigeria, 2001a: 4–7; Boer, 2000: Appendix 2. The latter provides a detailed analysis and explanations of why the conflict remained unresolved for a century and a half.

raiding public funds. This fuels popular desires for alternatives. Particularly in the North, the emirate system put in place after Usman dan Fodio's successful *jihad* against the Hausa states in the early nineteenth century retains in many places a capacity to provide some essential government services, particularly resolution of certain kinds of disputes.<sup>20</sup> In Yoruba areas as well, indigenous structures retain some authority. By contrast, indigenous leaders are discredited in many Ibo and minority areas (particularly the Delta).<sup>21</sup> Corrupt practices associated with secular governments undoubtedly retard development; they do not necessarily threaten consolidation of democratic civilian governance, nor do they have an easily measurable negative impact on the national economy that might threaten consolidation. Finally, it is unlikely that a two-year activity could modify this situation.

*Labor-management.* Such conflicts exist in Nigeria and could potentially be resolved within the two-year limit, but they are localized in nature, do not overtly threaten democratic consolidation, and, with the possible exception of the oil industry, do not threaten the national economy. These disputes include the current one between professors in the Nigerian university system and university management.

*Youth.* Young people, particularly young men, often take the lead in violence. This means that youth are, typically, a cross-cutting factor found in the majority of conflicts. Causes for their participation are diverse, but their status as unemployed or underemployed individuals often makes them extremely susceptible to invitations to participate in violence. Their role in conflicts needs to be addressed, as do the deeper causes, such as economic stagnation, that underlie it. CRESNET intervenors, with firm OTI/Nigeria support, have regularly and appropriately done so (OTI/Nigeria, 2000: 8–10, 11–12).

*Media.* Through their frequent involvement in conflict dynamics, print and electronic media pose a cross-cutting issue similar to that of youth. English-language print media dominate in the South, particularly in Southwest; in the North, local and international Hausa-language radio programs play the major role. Both print and electronic media can calm or exacerbate many conflicts—and *have*—so it makes sense to develop contingency plans and include journalists in contingency planning. Yet however objective and well-trained reporters may be, they do not have the last word on what appears in the press; editors do. Many observers contend that editors dramatize reporters' factual accounts of ethnic conflict to increase sales. Conflict contingency planning efforts directed at the media should thus involve editors as well as reporters.

*Police/personal insecurity/vigilantes/police as stakeholders perverting role as law officers.* The role of police and vigilante groups in either inciting or defusing disputes in a timely manner remains a key to managing conflict in Nigeria. Poor to abysmal police work was the norm rather than the exception under military rule, and police performance has not dramatically changed since the return to civilian rule (Boer, 2000: 36). OTI/Nigeria has, however, engaged with police officials interested in pursuing peace-training opportunities for officers (OTI/Nigeria, 2000: 7–8), and significant opportunities exist in this area.

In the meantime, police in and of themselves will not likely destabilize the move to civilian governance. Vigilante groups pose a greater problem in this regard, but, as with the police, the negative role of such groups in violence tends to be cross-cutting and contributory rather than primordial. Efforts to address the causes underlying ethnic conflicts will therefore have to deal with both police and vigilantes.

In summary, the team finds that two types of conflict merit immediate attention: religious and ethnic conflict. Electoral conflict merits attention as a second-order priority. If conditions improve for CR and development work in the South South states, investments in supporting CR efforts in that context would constitute a third-order priority.

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<sup>20</sup> Sarki Nuhu Muhammadu Sanusi, Emir of Dutse, and Madaki, Dutse court official; interview Dutse, 10 May 2001; and Magajin Gari E.H. Abdulmumuni Kabir Usman, interview Katsina, 9 May 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Indigenous Ibo societies were "stateless" (*acephalous*). Ibo communities appear to have governed themselves through a series of semi-autonomous associations. In the Delta area certain groups such as the Efik, Ijaw, and Itsekiri, advantaged by their strategic position, historically dominated the Igbo, Ibibio, and Urhobo. Many of these dominant minority groups lost power as Britain colonized Nigeria and economic circumstances changed. Typically during the last century, certain elite minority groups have been closer to centers of decision making than have the others (Osaghae, 1998: 6–8). The governments in power during the independence era have to some extent exploited these relationships to maintain control over minorities, playing one group off against the other. The oil companies, consciously or inadvertently, have often employed the same strategy. All these factors have weakened governance institutions among these groups, and the credibility of their leaders as well.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

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These recommendations reflect the fact that USAID/Nigeria wants to program conflict mitigation activity over the next two years. If adopted, the recommendations should be seen as an opening phase of a longer process. They are shaped by the conflict rankings presented in Section V. The criteria that inform those rankings of conflict types, listed subsection C of Section V, consist of the potential to (1) destabilize Nigeria's transition to democratic civilian governance, (2) damage the national economy sufficiently to undermine that transition, (3) generate ricochet riots, and (4) have the conflict type be partially mitigated within two years. Justification for these recommendations and a discussion of implementation options follows.

USAID should pursue and intensify OTI's CR work in the *two high-priority areas* and one *medium-priority area*, respectively:

- Religious strife;
- Ethnic/economic confrontations; and
- Elections.

The team considers that the first two types of conflict, which are often linked, pose a more serious threat to the consolidation of democratic civilian governance in Nigeria than does electoral violence. Electoral violence occurs because candidates (and voters) intensely value winning office in a larger situation of ethnic and religious competition. It should be considered a *second-order priority*.

CR work in the South South would be a *third-order priority*, assuming amelioration of current conditions in the Delta and availability of USAID resources.

The Mission should seek to facilitate mitigation of religious strife and ethnic/economic confrontations in three geographic settings: Kaduna, Kano, and Lagos. Mission efforts to mitigate electoral violence should be focused in geographic areas that have a history of such violence as well as locations where political competition is expected to be intense. In addition to intervening in priority conflicts, the mission should support further development of Nigerian capacity to manage conflicts. In each geographic area the Mission should promote the following results:

- Development of sustained peaceful interactions among stakeholders in conflict situations to enable them to establish trust and mutual understanding about the issues;
- Development of reliable institutional arrangements to enable stakeholders to both prevent (renewed) conflict through timely interventions to defuse rumor-based violence before it starts and explore options for more positive interaction; and
- Initiation of collaborative efforts to address the threats to basic human needs that underlie these conflicts.

Detailed results concerning these three points cannot be proposed effectively by outsiders on the basis of short-term visits.<sup>22</sup> Working agendas for conflict mitigation will have to be crafted in each targeted geographic area through facilitated workshops with full participation of all relevant stakeholders.

### A. Justification for Proposed Activities—Religious and Economic–Ethnic Confrontations

USAID should focus its efforts on mitigating religious and economic–ethnic conflict on three states: Kaduna, Kano, and Lagos. AID-sponsored efforts to mitigate *electoral violence* should be channeled either through the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), USAID/Nigeria's implementing partner for support to the electoral process in Nigeria, or through a new IP responsible for a variety of CR activities.

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<sup>22</sup> Team members spent no more than a few days each in Kaduna, Kano, and Lagos states. It would be inappropriate to propose detailed solutions to the conflicts in these areas, not simply because team members lack the knowledge to do so, but because viable solutions depend on the willing consent of stakeholders, which implies that they must be involved in crafting strategies to overcome conflicts.

## 1. Religious violence

Kaduna suffered through a set of religiously based<sup>23</sup> riots in the four months from February 2000, with appalling loss of life (perhaps as many as 2,000 dead) and destruction of property. The violence has abated, but not the underlying causes, most of which relate to poverty in rural and urban areas. Many stakeholders in the state recognize this and have followed the lead of a progressive Muslim governor to consolidate peace gains by addressing the sources of the religious (and ethnic) strife.

Kaduna offers a compelling model for promoting development over the long term—an area where USAID can reasonably claim competence—as an enduring antidote to conflict and violence. It also offers USAID/Nigeria an opportunity to support investments keyed to development activities already mapped out and initiated by the governor, members of the state legislature, key opinion leaders (including CSOs), and local government officials.

In addition, USAID is planning to finance a pilot police reform support activity in Kaduna. Focusing part of the agency's CR effort on that state should provide ample opportunity for synergy and mutually reinforcing relations and learning between the two activities in creating a long-term foundation for peace, security, and development in the jurisdiction.

## 2. Economic–ethnic confrontations

Kano and Lagos, as the country's two major metropolises, have a potential for catastrophic confrontation through the phenomenon of ricochet riots—the repeated pattern of violence in parts of the country removed from an area where a flash-point incident triggers local riots. If these escalate before they can be controlled, they typically culminate in substantial loss of life and property damage in the local setting. This temporarily destroys the basis for development within that context, which is bad enough. But such riots frequently ricochet, inducing negative repercussions in locations elsewhere in the country. The ricochet effect occurs when members of an ethnic group widespread through the country (typically Hausa–Fulani, Yoruba, or Igbo) consider themselves to have suffered unacceptable losses in the initial round of rioting. Members of that same group located elsewhere then “avenge their losses” by reprisal killings directed at members of the opposing ethnic group in their locality. The second set of victims has no connection with the first set other than that of shared ethnicity. They generally have played no meaningful role in the first riots.

Such ethnically based attacks usually occur at considerable distance (e.g., in Kano) to avenge losses in Lagos, or vice versa, and are directed against members of the opposing group with no concern for the individual guilt of individuals attacked and massacred. Work should begin with all speed to build on and reinforce the investments and achievements in mitigating ethnic conflict already realized in both of these cities under OTI's two-year mandate.

North–South ricochet riots have not been confined just to Kano and Lagos. So why should USAID focus its CR work on those two cities? Three principal reasons justify this choice. First, the history of ricochet riots in Nigeria since independence suggests that Kano and Lagos can become critical flash points again at any time. Second, many potential targets—*settler* ethnics—reside in both metropolises. Third, the large numbers of possible protagonists create an extreme potential for destructive violence both locally and elsewhere in the country. Because settlers tend to come from many parts of the country to these two major urban poles, serious trouble in either place can lead to ricochet effects in many other parts of the country.

That said, the team does *not* assert that preventing ethnic or religious outbreaks in those two places (as well as consolidating gains in Kaduna) automatically precludes violence elsewhere in Nigeria. Nonetheless, Lagos and Kano are the major population concentrations. If they explode in rioting, spread effects in other communities with indigene/other ethnic-nonindigene mixes will predictably be considerable. On the other hand, if it becomes possible to create sensible, consensual, effective antiviolence programs in both metropolises, those operations might help leaders and populations in Kano and Lagos withstand the temptation to jump in on the next round of religious or economic–ethnic rioting and metastasize the conflict.

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<sup>23</sup> As usual, these “religious” riots appear to have been fueled by a mix of motives. Although the immediate causes revolved around Muslim/Christian clashes over the possible application of *shari'a* criminal provisions in Kaduna, the resulting destruction was driven as well by underlying ethnic and economic tensions.

### 3. Electoral violence

USAID is currently not addressing this problem directly. Its support for IFES's work on the Nigerian electoral system focuses on reforming electoral law and improving the administration of elections. IFES collaborates with the INEC, seeking to build on and strengthen Nigerian initiatives already underway in this area. INEC and IFES share the goal of establishing electoral systems in Nigeria that are broadly seen to be legitimate because they create and maintain a reliable framework for fair primaries and general elections.

To mitigate electoral violence in priority areas, the Mission should follow an intervention model similar to that used for other conflicts. Thus, key stakeholders should be identified and their willingness to participate ascertained. Stakeholders may include election officials, political party members, candidates, youths, students, women, traditional and religious leaders, and NGOs. Training in conflict management should be provided as well as support for the development and implementation of a plan to mitigate local election violence. In addition to monitoring, activities may include civic education, creating and publishing campaign performance grade cards, and peace and constructive participation campaigns.

The Mission could proceed in this area either through its current implementing partner, IFES, or through a new IP engaged to guide USAID-financed CR work in Nigeria over the next two years. The IFES country director believes that it would be possible to provide conflict prevention and/or mitigation training to the electoral officers in the country's 774 LGAs, and to one or more NGOs, or at least to religious groups in each LGA. The Mission could increase IFES's budget to allow it to contract with CRESNET or other CR trainers to provide this training.

If a new IP charged with organizing USAID-financed CR work in Nigeria were given responsibility for supporting mitigation of electoral violence, that IP should collaborate with IFES and consult Nigerian elections experts to identify areas of highest priority.

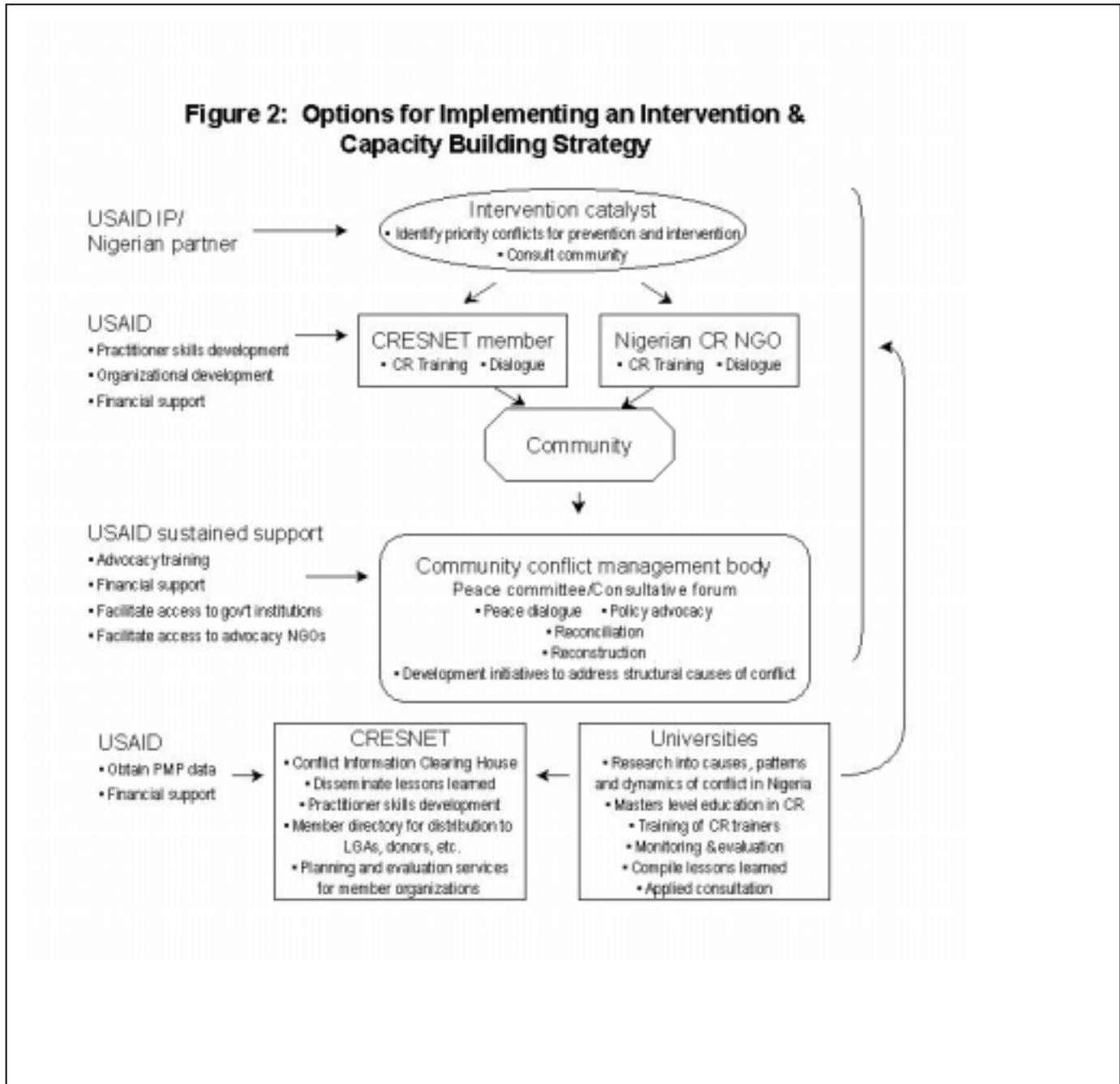
IFES or the IP specializing in CR should also try to support establishment of a database on electoral violence, to be updated regularly. It would seem appropriate to locate such a monitoring system in one of the Nigerian university centers specializing in conflict. This would provide some degree of objectivity and encourage sustainability, since both staff and center leadership would have incentives to maintain the database.

### B. Intervening in Priority Conflicts

To mitigate these priority conflicts, USAID should facilitate specific interventions and build Nigerian capacity to intervene constructively in conflicts. When intervening in particular communities, USAID should build on the model employed by OTI/Nigeria (described Section IV). In implementation terms, this would entail engaging an IP to work with Nigerian CR professionals (see Figure 2). The IP, in conjunction with Nigerian partners, would determine which communities within the priority geographic areas and conflict types to target. Once a target community is selected, a local facilitator would be identified. This could be a CRESNET member or a local CR NGO. The IP, Nigerian partner, and local facilitator would function as an intervention team working with the community through the intervention process. Activities may include:

- Initiating separate meetings with relevant stakeholders (e.g., Muslim, Christian, and animist religious leaders; traditional and secular political leaders; business representatives, and NGOs) in all three states to (1) learn in detail how they see the stakes, (2) provide them with basic training in CR skills, and (3) prepare them for interaction with other stakeholders designed to prevent and resolve conflicts and disputes.
- Organizing joint stakeholder workshops to (1) share perspectives on conflicts and disputes; (2) identify any areas of potential agreement, particularly concerning disputes, where parties can settle the matter through problem solving, develop solutions that accommodate interests of all parties; (3) help stakeholders break the remaining set of conflicts and disputes into more discrete and more manageable issues and prioritize those issues; and (4) as necessary, help establish permanent committees of stakeholders that can provide ongoing frameworks for CR through transformation of structures, processes, and relationships underlying a given conflict in order to meet the basic human needs of all stakeholders.
- Supporting follow-on working groups responsible for analyzing individual conflicts and disputes and proposing solutions that can be presented to the full group of stakeholders for each geographic area.

- Supporting efforts by stakeholders to increase their capacity to implement these solutions by (1) providing further training;<sup>24</sup> (2) facilitating access to state or national government institutions; (3) financing development tourism in which representatives of one area travel to another to learn how other groups have dealt with problems similar to theirs; (4) facilitating policy dialogue and policy change; (5) facilitating partnerships with NGOs; and (6) encouraging collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders so that together they can begin to build a record of joint achievement, trust, and confidence in each other's good faith and willingness to work toward solutions.



<sup>24</sup> Two additional techniques are *witnessing*: undertaking nonviolent witness as a deterrent to violence and for the purpose of creating a safe, localized space (e.g., so free and fair elections can take place, or to enable that nonviolent activists can engage in nonviolent action) and *interpositioning*—that is, positioning nonviolent activists between conflicting parties to help prevent or halt violence by the physical act of placing a buffer force between opposing forces. These two, among other nonviolent action strategies and tactics, are valuable “tools” to add to the “toolboxes” of civil society CR organizations in general, because they are sometimes the only interventions that can be applied in the middle of a crisis—when the time is not ripe for mediation and discussion and other conventional CR interventions.

Opportunities for USAID to strengthen Nigerian conflict mitigation capacity exist at every intervention phase. A coherent capacity building program would operate at two levels: building a body of lessons learned in conflict intervention and developing the skills and organizational capacities of local facilitators in priority conflict areas. Multiple Nigerian resources could be drawn on for these activities. Universities with CR programs could be tapped to monitor and evaluate interventions, compile lessons learned, and develop training material to disseminate findings to practitioners. Practitioner skill development could be accomplished by supporting development of CRESNET and CRESNET members.

Under this rubric, USAID's CR activity would engage one or more Nigerian institutional partners whose strength lies in research and development of conflict mitigation knowledge (e.g., universities, think tanks, policy institutes, etc.). These partners would engage in knowledge acquisition and dissemination activities relevant to conflict mitigation and peacebuilding goals. Included here could be regular conferences of conflict mitigation personnel, organizations, scholars, and policy makers active in these areas. Such conferences would build on theme papers prepared by partner–organization staff that would focus participants' attention on the issues discussed above, facilitate exchange of knowledge, and develop analytical and applied techniques. Work would be organized around four priority issues:

- Enhancing understanding of the sources and dynamics that lie beneath complex conflicts;
- Integrating and disseminating the experience and learning of conflict mitigation professionals, and bringing these, as appropriate, to the attention of policy makers;
- Reporting relevant scholarly research on these topics to practitioners; and
- Developing new field materials and advanced training courses for practitioners.

As conflict mitigation develops further in Nigeria, it is critical that practitioners be well prepared to deal with the complex issues both of resolving immediate crises and successfully addressing underlying causes over the longer term. It is also important that their field learning not be lost or reduced to anecdotes. These and the following capacity-building activities should advance these goals.

To enhance CR skill levels in Nigeria, the CR IP would be responsible for promoting and supporting Nigerian producers of training for CR practitioners. Since most master trainers and those conducting research and analysis relevant to enhancing practitioners' CR skills would be based in the university CR centers (Ibadan, Jos, and possibly others), the IP would support the work of these centers as a priority. Support could take the form of funding for research, networking and training activities conducted by Nigerians and, where necessary, provision of technical assistance when required skills are not available in Nigeria.

## **1. Strengthening CRESNET**

As an organization, CRESNET has succeeded in drafting a constitution, registering with the government, establishing six zonal chapters, acquiring a dues-paying membership, and holding elections. Nevertheless, as noted above, it is still in the incubation stage. Although it has the potential to mature into a self-sustaining professional membership association, to do so, it will require further technical and material support at the national and zonal levels.

CRESNET and many of the organizations associated with it require further institutional capacity building in terms of training in the areas of strategic planning, management, administration, and monitoring and evaluation. Training in some of these areas, such as management and administration, is available through other programs and organizations in Nigeria. Others, such as evaluation of the content and performance of CR programs, may require international expertise, since the development of methods for evaluating CR programs and interventions is new within the CR field itself. In addition, members need more advanced training in CR—in terms of both depth and breadth. In particular, members need to expand their “toolbox” of interventions to include advocacy and other skills.

At present, CRESNET accepts only individual members. Reasons for this are rooted in its history. It is recommended, however, that this policy be revisited in the future, when the organization's continued existence seems more assured. Sustaining both individual and organizational memberships with different membership criteria, rights, and responsibilities would increase the organization's utility to individuals, CSOs, and CBOs. Organizational memberships, in particular, would enhance CRESNET's position in advocating on a broad range of issues, at national, state, and local levels on behalf of its members, its constituents, and its beneficiaries.

Although CRESNET should provide CR training to officials in the executive and legislative branches at all three levels of government, governments should not be permitted to join CRESNET as collective members. CRESNET needs to maintain a visible degree of autonomy from stakeholders of all sorts as a guarantee of its impartiality. Governments often either cause violence by officials' policies or actions or must play a role in stopping violence.

Most important, CRESNET requires considerable technical assistance in identifying activities and marketing strategies that will ensure its sustainability. Members will continue to pay dues only if they receive tangible benefits. To meet this requirement, CRESNET might provide members a variety of services, including:

- An information clearinghouse that draws in part on experiences of CRESNET members and in part on information developed by Nigerian university centers specializing in conflict mitigation.
- A newsletter presenting information (drawn in large part from the information clearinghouse) about CR events inside and outside Nigeria, including announcements of jobs, publications, educational and training opportunities, and conferences and workshops.
- An electronic newsletter with the same information described above, supplemented by on-line discussion groups addressing issues of importance pertaining to CR theory and practice.
- A directory of individual members and associated/member organizations that might be distributed to local, state and national governments, donors, and other potential users of CR training and intervention services.
- Databases with information about donors that fund peacebuilding and CR activities and scholarships for education and training in peace and conflict studies.
- An annual conference to bring together researchers, policy makers, and practitioners from the CR field to share best practices and lessons learned.
- Periodic training workshops on specific areas of CR, such as mediation, facilitation, advocacy, and so on.
- Strategic planning and evaluation services for associated/member organizations' CR and peacebuilding programs and interventions.

The transition from OTI to USAID provides an opportunity for CRESNET to forge new linkages with CR organizations that are currently outside of its networks, including other NGOs, universities, think tanks, donors, and government agencies. Since CR is an applied field, establishing linkages with universities and think tanks with ongoing CR programs, such as CEPACS at the University of Ibadan, is critical to ensure feedback loops among theory, research, and practice.

## **2. Drawing on existing strengths in Nigerian universities**

University of Ibadan's CEPACS's CR center brings already developed capacity to critical subareas of conflict analysis and research. CEPACS's Professor Albert and its director, Professor Adekanye, have expressed interest in including USAID in CEPACS's list of collaborating institutions, along the lines of and for reasons outlined at the beginning of this section.

University of Jos's CPCR program, currently under development, should be strengthened through modest USAID grants and contracts. USAID's IP should meet regularly with the British Council, Bradford University, and any other institutions collaborating with CPCR to ensure that all contributions are mutually supportive and that all stakeholders have a clear, shared vision of the Center's objectives and future development path.

USAID should likewise seek to establish connections with other strategically located, interested universities that might develop CR support programs tailored to the requirements of particularly regions. It is important to recognize and respect the practical and political dimensions of CR training and research. As CRESNET has found, one package of CR techniques does not fit all local situations in Nigeria. For that reason, CRESNET leaders have begun efforts in each of the six zones to adapt general approaches to local conditions. Having several more universities involved in addition to Ibadan and Jos would make sense if the additional ones were located in geopolitical zones relatively remote from the first two centers (e.g., the Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, and South South).

### 3. Sensitivity to perceptions of religious or ethnic bias in implementing community interventions

To be effective, CR practitioners have to be above suspicion of partisanship, and stakeholders need to have confidence that CR practitioners are neutral parties. In a context where ethnic identity can send a signal freighted with significance, this is not a trivial issue. Because sides in conflicts have been chosen along religious and ethnic fault lines, it will be essential for staff of USAID's implementing partner and the Nigerian expertise they draw upon to adequately reflect the diversity within the communities in which they work. This can potentially strongly influence possibilities for furthering peacebuilding and development in Nigeria.

**Avoiding Perceptions of Partisanship:** A major issue for USAID's CR IP will be ensuring adequate representation on its staff of major groups in conflict in the wider society. This will be particularly true concerning religious and ethnic conflict.

### C. Linkages

These linkages address activities in other USAID/Nigeria portfolios whose activities affect prospects for CR in specific sectors, geographic areas, or both.

#### 1. Economic growth

Lack of economic opportunity directly contributes to the intensity of conflict in Nigeria; competition is not perceived just as zero-sum, but shrinking-sum. Unemployment makes youths more restive and frustrated. To combat this, USAID should consider targeting unemployed youth in conflict priority regions for skills training and small enterprise development, as well as supporting generation of employment opportunities for youth in these regions.

#### 2. Police

The USAID/OTI police team has recommended that police form Citizens Advisory Committees to enhance police–community dialogue. It is likely, however, that citizens selected to these Committees may not be representative of their communities. Rather than, or in addition to, the Citizens Advisory Committees, it is highly recommended that the police sponsor regular town hall meetings open to all interested community members as forums for dialogue about areas of mutual concern. This is a common practice in the United States. In Nigeria, it will be essential that the town hall meetings be facilitated by a third party perceived as neutral, such as a CSO.

#### 3. Justice

USAID/Nigeria has engaged the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) as its IP for support to the country's justice sector. NCSC personnel are pursuing a strategy of assisting Appeals court judges to acquire budgeting and management skills necessary to improve the efficiency of their operations. NCSC also supports improving judges' material and salary conditions. After Appeals court capacities have been strengthened, attention will be turned to courts of first instance to improve their performance and so reduce burden on Appeals courts. NCSC also sees value in encouraging alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms.

#### 4. Civil society

USAID is already providing considerable support to CSOs in Nigeria. There may be substantial room for combining efforts among Democracy and Governance (DG)-supported CSOs and CR-supported civil society organizations. For example, advocacy training, strategic planning, and evaluation and monitoring training can be offered to all of these organizations simultaneously. In addition, Nigerian CR organizations might offer CR training to advocacy organizations and vice versa.

Another potential area for linking the two programs is through the CEDPA-implemented Women in Politics program. CR and peacebuilding is an important political arena from which women have been excluded—whether as elected officials or as civil society leaders—and within which women could make significant contributions. In consequence, women peacebuilders often lack the political and advocacy skills to ensure that their initiatives have the type of high-level, far-reaching, and long-term impacts that they should. A strong start on remedying this problem could easily be made within the next two years.

## **5. Civil–military**

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has taken over responsibility for the civil–military portfolio in Nigeria. Nonetheless, given the salience of persistent, unresolved conflict as a potential justification for renewed intervention by the military in Nigerian politics, USAID/Nigeria and DoD should keep each other mutually informed of their operations so that each may take advantages of opportunities created by the other’s activities.

## VII. PLAN OF ACTION

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The team believes USAID should move on four fronts as it takes over responsibility from OTI for the CR portfolio in Nigeria.

- **First**, it should move as rapidly as humanly feasible to engage an IP with skills in CR and broader based development operations. Following the lead of the Kaduna governor, the Mission should view development skills as an indispensable key to sustainable resolutions of conflicts that, in Nigeria, almost always involve an underlying economic cause.
- **Second**, USAID should ensure that its IP for CR moves expeditiously to continue support for CRESNET and to develop appropriate relationships with universities and other institutions relevant to strengthening CR activities in Nigeria.
- **Third**, Mission managers should ensure that its IPs mutually reinforce each other's activities whenever that can contribute to peacebuilding in Nigeria.
- **Fourth**, USAID should continue and strengthen coordination efforts that OTI and the Mission have already initiated with other donors, including notably DFID, UNDP, and the UN Foundation.

### A. Avoiding Loss of Momentum in Conflict Resolution

The potential time lag between the end of OTI technical support to CR activities in Nigeria, including especially CRESNET, and the start of USAID technical support risks losing many of the gains achieved by CRESNET over the past six months. The team strongly recommends that at least one member of OTI's national program staff be retained by USAID during the transition from OTI to USAID responsibility for the CR portfolio. This individual will serve as CRESNET's institutional memory and, for CRESNET's members, will facilitate the transition from OTI to USAID.

### B. Supporting CRESNET, Universities, and Other Relevant Institutions

USAID's CR IP should rapidly connect with CRESNET officials at the national and zonal levels, universities already engaged in or interested in focusing on CR studies (research, analysis, training in conflict abatement and development), and other institutions, donor organizations included. This should involve a series of preliminary workshops culminating in a national level conflict stakeholders' workshop to establish an agenda for action during the two-year period of this initial follow-on to OTI's CR activities. This will ensure a shared vision and buy-in by Nigerian partners who must, inevitably, assume most of the burden of CR.

The IP should be tasked and authorized to organize a fund to finance small grants and subcontracts with Nigerian partners appropriate for particular assignments running from crisis intervention to longer term development activities intended to address underlying causes of conflict. The funding mechanism should incorporate considerable flexibility to enable the IP to respond rapidly in an opportunistic manner when occasions arise to support CR and peacebuilding.

#### 1. Linkages

Mission personnel understand the opportunities for synergy involved in USAID/Nigeria's governance, civil society, and economic growth activities. Relevant partners are those IPs mandated to support improved governance by strengthening rule of law, policing, election, and advocacy functions (CSOs, CBOs, etc.) at LGA, state, and federal levels, and those that engage in broader economic development activities. As part of this effort, the Mission should consider having some of its staff participate in CR training courses to enable them to acquire a more hands-on feel for the kinds of problems the IP will face and the kinds of skills necessary to address those problems.

#### 2. Donor coordination

The British High Commissioner, in particular, as well as DFID staff, has expressed strong interest in coordinating donors' CR activities in Nigeria. They believe that the delicacy of the CR issues, particularly those centered on religious, economic-ethnic, and election-related violence, makes imperative regular exchanges and mutual support among donors if their CR and peacebuilding activities and investments are to achieve their intended results.

UNDP envisages supporting CR as part of its governance portfolio. As noted, the UN Foundation may support, among other programs, UNDP CR activities. If other donors (e.g., the Germans, the Canadians, or the French) develop significant CR programs, or begin to work more broadly in the area of governance, ensuring their full participation in donor coordination efforts should become a USAID priority.

At a later date, if the Mission pursues CR in the Delta, it may be appropriate to include in donor coordination meetings the oil companies that make social and economic development investments in that region.

## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Future Directions for USAID Support to Conflict Mitigation in Nigeria Scope of Work**

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#### **A. Purpose**

For the last 15 months, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives in Nigeria (OTI/Nigeria) has been implementing a successful program of support to civil society in mitigating a range of ethnic, communal, and resource-based conflicts. With OTI/Nigeria winding up its activities in the next six months, the purpose of this consultancy is to identify the major conflict areas that could potentially undermine Nigeria's democratic transition, review efforts undertaken thus far to mitigate these conflicts, and develop a set of recommendations for OTI/Nigeria and the USAID Mission (USAID/Nigeria) on how best to continue support for conflict mitigation activities in Nigeria and how to do so in a way that supports USAID/Nigeria's strategic objectives through December 2003.

#### **B. Background**

During their 15-year rule, the Nigeria's military systematically undermined the polity's ability to respond creatively to internal disputes. Not only did they view domestic conflicts as a threat and repression as the appropriate response, but also through a combination of neglect and manipulation, the military dissipated the capacity and legitimacy of political institutions at the federal, state, and local levels. The resumption of civilian rule in May 1999 brought with it an opening of political space that, in turn, gave room for forcibly repressed disputes to burst into the open. Unfortunately, even under democratic rule, Nigeria's weak and largely discredited political institutions have had difficulty serving as forums for airing disputes and responding to them in ways that are generally considered unbiased and legitimate.

The result has been that Nigeria's democratic transition has been marked by numerous conflicts that have turned violent, as disputants have shunned political solutions in favor of force. These violent conflicts pose a real threat to Nigeria's continued democratic transition. The inability of democratic rule to maintain civil peace and prevent death and destruction provides an argument for a return to the "order" of military rule. More subtly, the continued failure of political processes to respond to disputes further undermines faith in the rule of law and the institutions on which democracy depends.

To respond to the potentially destabilizing effects of violent conflict, in FY2000 OTI/Nigeria initiated a program of support to segments of civil society committed to promoting tolerance and seeking nonviolent resolution of disputes. During the year, OTI funded 48 grants valued at over \$1.6 million in support of conflict mitigation. These grants supported a range of interventions, including facilitated workshops, joint problem-solving sessions, organization of peace committees and other mechanisms for maintaining dialogue, and media campaigns promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence. These interventions have produced a number of successes.

Another emphasis of OTI's work has been increasing the numbers and skills of individuals and organizations interested in serving as facilitators and catalysts for peaceful conflict resolution (CR). In February 2000, OTI embarked on a program of conflict mitigation training of Nigerian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) covering all six sociopolitical zones. This training led to the formation of six zonal chapters and a national chapter of a Conflict Resolution Stakeholders Network (CRESNET).

OTI's mandate in Nigeria ends with the current fiscal year. As part of its exit strategy, OTI identified conflict mitigation as one of two programmatic areas deserving continuation beyond its departure. OTI also identified USAID/Nigeria as the most appropriate agency to support follow-on activities. Although the Mission has agreed in principle to assuming responsibility for supporting conflict mitigation activities, it is looking to this assessment and strategic planning exercise to help decide how best to go about it, bearing in mind its strategic objectives and budgetary constraints.

## C. Tasks

The Contractor will perform the following tasks as part of this consultancy:

1. Conduct interviews with an illustrative group of stakeholders in conflict mitigation/resolution in Nigeria, including:

- Staff in all four OTI regional offices (Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Kano);
- Staff of USAID implementing partners in the Democratic Governance sector (i.e., NDI, IRI, CEDPA, International Human Rights Law Group);
- Members of both the zonal and national chapters of CRESNET;
- Staff of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (GFRN) agencies with responsibilities for conflict mitigation/resolution (i.e., The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, the War College's Peace Center);
- Representatives of training programs focused on CR/peace studies (University of Ibadan, University of Jos);
- Representatives of other donors with interests in conflict mitigation (British High Commission); and
- Representatives of a sample of NGOs active in conflict mitigation. This sample should be regionally diverse and include organizations pursuing a range of conflict mitigation strategies.

2. Review a set of existing documents from OTI, other donors, NGOs, and the GFRN that pertain to the nature of conflict in Nigeria and various strategies for ensuring that it is managed peacefully. These documents will be assembled by OTI/Nigeria and USAID/Nigeria and made available to the team at the start of the consultancy.

3. Prepare an assessment of conflict mitigation/resolution in Nigeria that provides the context for understanding conflict in Nigeria, analyzes and synthesizes the results from the interviews and document review into lessons learned, and recommends a set of realistic and actionable programs that could be implemented by USAID to address the more significant conflicts in the country. The assessment should respond to the following questions:

- What is the nature of conflict in Nigeria? Why do conflicts so frequently become violent? Which of these conflicts are most likely to destabilize the ongoing democratic transition?
- What is the current policy environment for conflict mitigation? Are there laws or practices at the federal or state level that support or undermine conflict mitigation, especially facilitative interventions by civil society organizations?
- What are the lessons of past and present efforts to promote conflict mitigation activities in Nigeria, including those by OTI, other donors (especially the British High Commission), the GON, and NGOs?
- What resources currently exist in Nigeria to support conflict mitigation/CR activities and what is their capacity? These resources include think tanks (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, or IPCR), training programs, NGOs, and the zonal and national chapters of CRESNET.
- What more will it take to turn the zonal and national chapters of CRESNET into model resources for conflict mitigation/intervention, training, and advocacy? This assessment should include specific recommendations on organizational structure and needed areas of capacity building and training. Are there opportunities for synergy between OTI's support for conflict mitigation and the work of other USAID implementing partners (IPs)?
- Are there lessons to be learned from conflict mitigation strategies in other countries that should inform USAID's future support to conflict mitigation in Nigeria?

4. Develop a plan/recommendations for how best USAID can continue support to conflict mitigation through December 2003. This plan should be as specific as possible and include:

- Programmatic priorities and funding requirements;
- Activities that should be pursued during OTI's remaining presence and those to be supported by the Mission after hand-over;
- The level and nature of support to the national and zonal chapters of CRESNET and to other resources for conflict mitigation training and intervention; and
- Staffing and management requirements within USAID/Nigeria to oversee these activities.

5. Conduct a one-day strategic planning workshop with staff of OTI/Nigeria and USAID/Nigeria that would include a review of the proposed plan and would obtain commitment to future actions that would ensure a smooth hand-over of activities.

#### **D. Deliverables**

Prior to departing Nigeria, the contractor will submit five copies of a draft written report that responds to the tasks identified. Within two weeks of departure from Nigeria, the contractor will provide a final report, which incorporates comments of OTI/Nigeria and USAID/Nigeria.

The contractor will submit 10 copies of its final report to OTI/Nigeria within two weeks of completing the field activities. This final report shall contain both responses to the assessment questions and strategic plan and shall incorporate comments received by OTI/Nigeria and USAID/Nigeria.

The final report should contain at least the following headings for organization:

- Executive Summary;
- Background of Conflict in Nigeria;
- Policy Environment;
- Findings/Lessons Learned;
- Recommendations;
- A Plan of Action; and
- Contacts.

#### **E. Personnel**

The contractor will assemble a three-person team with the following technical skills:

- Strategic planning specialist with substantial past experience with USAID democratic governance programming and strong program design skills. This individual will serve as the Team Leader.
- Civil society specialist capable of analyzing the capacity of NGOs.
- Conflict mitigation/resolution specialist able to draw on both comparative experience and personal familiarity with facilitated approaches.

Prior to departure from the United States, the contractor will review the documentation provided by OTI/Nigeria and USAID/Nigeria. Upon arrival in Nigeria, the contractor will meet jointly with OTI/Nigeria and USAID/Nigeria for general orientation and clarification of expectations.

#### **F. Timeframe**

Fieldwork should begin no later than March 19, 2001, and is expected to last three weeks.

## APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHY (Partially Annotated)

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Obasanjo's regime. Notes that Obasanjo has opted for a political solution to the crisis rather than bringing a case in federal court challenging state-based *shari'a* initiatives because, of the 17 Federal High Court justices, 9 are Muslims.]

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### **C. Newspaper and Internet Articles**

[A quick skim on any day through any serious English-language newspaper published in Nigeria will reveal a minimum of five articles dealing with violent conflicts centered on political, economic, or ethnic issues. Such questions are well covered in the local press. Quality of reporting frequently appears quite reasonable; several persons interviewed asserted, however, that editors often dramatize and exaggerate incidents to increase sales. Such scandal mongering is not conducive to calming passions, but seems on balance a lesser evil than underreporting conflicts. Nigerian journalists and publications are patently not guilty of the latter.]

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Ali, Mohammed. "The Hand of Esau..." *Tell*. 7 May 2001a, pp. 32–33. [Account of riots in Gombe that killed between 10 and 20 people. 'Anti-Israeli' riots were allegedly fomented by opposition politicians in effort to destabilize government of Governor Abubakar Hashidu. Interviews with four hospitalized male victims, ages 20–30, who reported they were shot by mobile police without provocation as they were not participating in the riots. Shi'ite Muslim leader disclaims any responsibility; police assume motivation political, not religious.]

\_\_\_\_\_. "Who Leads the North?" *Tell*. 30 April 2001b, p. 51. [Interview with Maitama Sule, prominent Kano elder statesman, on politicians who might lead the North in 2003 presidential elections. Issue concerns whether Hausa–Fulani would back a northerner from a minority group, e.g., Atiku Abubakar, Federal Vice President.]

Askira, Aliyu (Kano). "Kano govt uncovers plot to destabilise the state." *Daily Times*, Tuesday, 15 May 2001, p. 5. [Kano State Governor Rabi'u Kwankwaso asserts some disgruntled *non-indigenes* have hatched strategy to provoke violence around application of *shari'a*.]

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## **APPENDIX C: PERSONS INTERVIEWED**

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### **ABUJA**

ANGELINI Mary  
Assistant Program Officer, Africa  
International Republican Institute (IRI)

BAGU, Chom  
Project Manager  
Office of Transition Initiatives  
USAID

BAXTER, Joe C.  
Country Director  
International Foundation for Election Systems [IFES]

BITRUS, Dr. Pogu  
Director, Defense and Security Studies  
Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution

DANIELS, Ugo  
Program Manager  
Democracy and Governance Team  
USAID

DAWSON, Kate  
Deputy Programme Officer  
Department for International Development (DFID)  
British High Commission

DE SOTO, Lisa  
Country Director  
Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)  
USAID

EITOKPAH, Bose  
Program Manager (Civil Society)  
Democracy and Governance Team  
USAID

EZE, Professor Osita C.  
Director, Democracy and Development Studies  
Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution

FOEHR, Mark C.  
Resident Program Officer  
International Republican Institute (IRI)

HART, Elizabeth, Ph.D.  
Democracy and Governance Advisor  
U.S. Agency for International Development

JACOBS, Yomi O.  
Program Assistant  
International Republican Institute (IRI)

JOHNSTON, Donald L.  
Member  
USAID/OTI/Nigeria Police Assessment Team  
Consultant

KOKUMO, Chief F. O.  
Director, Finance and Administration  
Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution

MASON, John  
Team Leader  
USAID/OTI/Nigeria Police Assessment Team  
(J Mason Associates)

MOSS, Mitchell  
Political Officer  
U.S. Embassy Office/Abuja

NZONGOLA-NTALAJA, Prof. Georges  
Senior Adviser for Governance  
United Nations Development Programme

OCHOICHE, Dr. Sunday  
Director General  
Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution

RAMSEY, Judge Henry, Jr. (Ret.)  
Chief of Party  
Nigeria Rule of Law Project  
National Center for State Courts

SOOS, Helen E.  
Member, USAID/OTI/Nigeria Police Assessment Team  
Independent Senior Consultant, International Development

THOMAS, Philip  
High Commissioner  
British High Commission

UCHE, Emmanuel  
Program Manager  
Civil Society  
USAID/Nigeria

UWECHUE, Raph, Ambassador  
Special Presidential Envoy for Conflict Resolution  
The Presidency

**AKURE**

POPOOLA, Abiodun  
OPC, member  
Osun State

ADESHOKAN, Evangelist Kunle  
OPC, General Secretary, Co-founder

ADEYEFA, Chief Samuel Taiwao  
OPC member  
Lagos, Lagos State

CHARLES, Adegur Gbengu  
OPC member

**DUTSE**

GALADIMA  
Court official  
(Emir of Dutse's older brother)  
Dutse Emirate

LUMU, Rt. Rev. Yusuf I.  
Anglican Church  
Chairman/Jigawa State Branch  
Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

MADAKI  
Court official  
Dutse Emirate

SANUSI, Sarki Nuhu Muhammadu  
Emir of Dutse

**IBADAN**

ALBERT, Isaac Olawale, Ph.D  
Senior Research Fellow  
Consultant in Conflict Transformation  
Institute of African Studies  
University of Ibadan  
CRESNET member

ADEKANYE, Professor J. 'Bayo, Ph.D  
Department of Political Science  
University of Ibadan

**JOS**

ABDULRAHMAN, Imran  
Secretary, Conflict Management Committee  
University of Jos  
Executive Director  
Center for Peace Initiative and Development (CEPID)

GALAM, Z.D.  
Sociologist  
Registrar  
University of Jos

MANGUWAT, Monday  
Acting. Vice Chancellor  
University of Jos

OKOYE, Professor Z.S.C.  
Biochemistry Department  
Chairman, Linkages Committee (External Relations)  
University of Jos

ONYEKAJ, Professor Johnnie  
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies  
University of Jos

**KADUNA**

BARDE, Danjuma S., His Royal Highness Honorable Sa Gbagyi of Kaduna

BAYERO, Zainab  
Executive Director  
Zee Karatu Workshop  
CRESNET Member

DANGALA, Simon, Reverend  
Christian Muslim Forum  
Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)/Sokoto State  
CRESNET Member

ISYAKU, Bashir  
Director, Even Development Projects (EDP)  
CRESNET Member

MABERRA, Hussein Yusuf  
Center for Comparative Religious Studies and Propagation, Sokoto  
Christian Muslim Forum  
CRESNET Member

MAHMUD, Habib Umar  
Acting Director (Religion Affairs)  
Bureau for Religious Affairs (Islamic Matters)  
Office of the Executive Governor

ONOISE, Denys  
Senior Program Officer  
Strategic Empowerment and Mediation Agency (SEMA)  
CRESNET Member

SUKOLA, Hon. Justice Bashir U.  
High Court of Justice  
Kaduna State Judiciary.

YERO, E. Buba  
Permanent Secretary  
Bureau for Religious Affairs (Christian Matters)  
Office of the Executive Governor

WUYE, Evangelist James Movel  
Joint National Coordinator  
Inter-Faith Mediation Centre  
(Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum)

YAMAH, Mohammed  
Executive Director  
Prime Peace Project (PPP)  
CRESNET Member

#### **KANO**

ABIAHU, Ike  
Director  
Seat of Wisdom International School  
(Christian primary and secondary school)

AHMED, Rakia Sani  
Program Manager  
USAID/OTI

ALHAMDU, Jummai  
Program Manager  
USAID/OTI

COBHAM, Kury  
USAID/OTI

DAGACIN DAKATA  
Chief  
Dakata Urban District  
Metropolitan Kano

DANTIYE, Halilu  
Executive Secretary, Center for Democratic Journalism (CDJ)  
Editor, Weekend Triumph  
Kano State Government Newspaper  
Declined to join CRESNET

GAMBO, Mohamed  
Secretary of Hisba Committee  
Tarauni Ward

ISYAKU, Umar  
NGO Resource Center

KIRU, Hajia Amina  
Executive Director  
Hajia Atine Sule Association  
Sharia Commission

NNANDI, Igwe, Barrister and His Royal Highness  
Eze (Sarki) Ndi Igbo  
Ibo Community Leader  
Kano State

OJO. G. A., Reverend  
Chairman, Kano State Branch  
Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

SULE, Maitama  
Ex-Ambassador to the United Nations

WILLIAMS, General Ishola (Ret.)  
Secretary General, Transparency Nigeria  
African Strategic and Peace Research Group (AFSTRAG)

YAMAH, Mohammed  
Executive Director  
Prime Peace Project (PPP)  
CRESNET Member

YULA, Sheikh Malan Tijjani  
Chief Iman  
Murtala Mohammed Juma'a Mosque

**KATSINA**  
Magajin Gari E.H. Abdulmumuni Kabir Usuman  
District Head for Katsina City  
(Emir's eldest son)

KWASU, J. S.  
Rt. Reverend  
Anglican Communion  
Diocese of Katsina  
Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria

SULAIMAN, Sagir  
Coordinator, CAREFOR  
Katsina Reforestation Campaign

**LAGOS**

ADEGBITE, Dr. Lateef  
Secretary-General  
Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs  
Adebite and Co-Solicitor and Advocate  
Lagos, Lagos State

ADELUSI-ADELUYI, Prince J.A.  
National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies  
Lagos, Lagos State

BECERRA, Carmenza  
OTI/Nigeria – Lagos  
Louis Berger, Inc.

CHUKWUMA, Innocent  
Executive Director, Center for Law Enforcement Education  
Lagos, Lagos State

DAN ABIA, Christine  
Programs Manager  
OTI/Nigeria  
Lagos, Lagos State

DAY, Dick  
Senior Advisor  
Strategic Initiatives  
Africa Development Foundation

FASHEUN Dr. Frederick  
Founder AND Leader  
Oodudwa People's Congress (OPC)  
Lagos, Lagos State

FLOOK, Nathan D.  
United States Consulate General, Economic Affairs  
Lagos, Lagos State

HERRINGTON, James E.  
United Nations Foundation  
Washington, DC

LEVINTOW, Nicholas J.  
Second Secretary/Labor Attache  
United States Consulate General Lagos, Lagos State

MANGIN-NWANKWO, Sharon  
Project Director, Democracy and Governance Program  
US Embassy  
Lagos, Lagos State

OHAZURIKE, Eze H. N.  
Igbo Chief, Lagos State

OMIYI, Basil Efoise  
External Relations Director  
Shell Petroleum Development Corporation of Nigeria.  
Lagos, Lagos State

OSINGBAJO, Yemi  
Attorney-General, Lagos State  
Lagos, Lagos State

OWASANOYE, Prof. Bolaji  
Human Development Initiatives  
Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of Lagos Campus  
CRESNET member  
Lagos, Lagos State

OWAZURIKE  
Eze-Ndigbo of Lagos State  
(leader of the Igbo)  
Lagos, Lagos State

SHOPADE, Joseph Ola  
OTI/Nigeria – Lagos.

STROZIER, Maisha  
Deputy Country Director  
The Centre for Development and Population Activities  
Lagos, Lagos State

WALKER, Tjip  
Deputy Country Representative  
OTI/Nigeria  
Louis Berger, Inc.

WENDT, Amy R.  
US Embassy, Third Secretary  
Lagos, Lagos State

**LOBURO**

ADEBOYE, Pastor E.A.  
General Overseer  
The Redeemed Christian Church of Christ  
Redemption City, Loburo

**PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE**

AMAKIRI, S.F.  
Friends of the Niger Delta Environment (FEPEN)

ANTHONY, George-Hill  
National President  
Commonwealth of Niger Delta Youths for Peace

ARCHIBONG, Professor Patrick  
Department of Economics  
University of Ilho  
Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

ASHBY, Judith  
OTI/Nigeria – Port Harcourt

BOER, Wiebe  
Doctoral Candidate in African History  
Yale University  
Fullbright Fellow  
Jos, Plateau State

CHRISTIAN, Akani  
Executive Director  
Institute of Academic Freedom in Nigeria (IAFN)  
Port Harcourt, Rivers State

EPELLE, Peace  
The Centre for Responsive Politics  
Port Harcourt, Rivers State

FELANA, Femi  
Center for Advanced Social Science  
Port Harcourt

ISAAC, Ikenna Ebubechukwu  
Dessney Law Firm

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

BROWN, Melissa  
USAID  
(Formerly Democracy and Governance Officer USAID/Nigeria)

DOUGLAS, Jennifer J.  
Policy Analyst

JOSHI, Ajit V.  
Team Leader  
Conflict Prevention, Mitigation, Resolution/Reconciliation  
Office of Sustainable Development  
Bureau for Africa [AFR/SD/CMR]  
USAID

LEAVITT, Bob  
Team Member  
Conflict Prevention, Mitigation, Resolution/Reconciliation  
Office of Sustainable Development  
Bureau for Africa [AFR/SD/CMR]  
USAID

LEWIS, Peter M.  
Woodrow Wilson Fellow  
Woodrow Wilson Center

LYONS, Terrence  
Institute of Conflict Analysis and Resolution  
George Mason University

PADEN, Professor John  
George Mason University

RENISON, Bill  
Senior Advisor  
Humanitarian Assistance  
USAID

**YENAGOA**

*(South-South Region: Participants at CRESNET Zonal TOT, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State)*

ASINI, Godwin  
Urhobo Progressive Union  
CRESNET member

DADIOWEI, Tarilayefa E.  
Secretary General  
Gbaran Oil Fields' Landlords Association  
CRESNET member  
Yenagoa, Bayelsa State

DIRI, Douye  
Center for Youth Development  
CRESNET member  
Yenagoa, Bayelsa State

EKANEM, Grace  
Founder and National Coordinator  
Women's Affirmative Action Group  
CRESNET member  
Calabar, Cross River State

ERE-IMANAGHA, Vivien  
Representative  
Yenagoa State House Assembly  
CRESNET member  
Yenagoa, Bayelsa State

ESEZOBO, Obaseme  
Faculty of Law,  
University of Benin  
CRESNET member  
Benin City, Edo State

FELANA, Femi  
Center for Advanced Social Science  
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## **APPENDIX D: METHODOLOGY**

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The conflict assessment was conducted April 30–May 18, 2001, by a four-person team:

- Wendy Marshall, USAID/Global/DG Center, democracy specialist;
- Mary Hope Schwoebel, conflict resolution specialist;
- James T. Thomson, West African institutional specialist and team leader; and
- James S. Wunsch, professor of political science and Nigeria specialist.

Investigative methods used included a literature and document review coupled with individual interviews. Documents consulted are listed in the bibliography (Appendix B). Interviews were held with 125 people in 13 locations (Appendix C, Persons Interviewed). Persons interviewed included representatives of USAID/Washington, USAID/Nigeria, USAID/OTI/Washington, USAID/OTI/Nigeria, USAID implementing partners in Nigeria, US Embassy in Nigeria, Nigerian federal government, state government, local government, judiciary, youth groups, ethnic organizations, religious organizations, university faculty, NGOs, media, industry, and other donors. Interviews were held in the following locations:

- South South zone (Yenagoa, Bayelsa State; Port Harcourt, Rivers State);
- Southwest zone (Lagos and Loburo, Lagos State; Ibadan, Oyo State; Akure, Ondo State);
- Northwest zone (Katsina, Katsina State; Kano, Kano State; Kaduna, Kaduna State; Dutse, Jigawa State);
- North Central zone (Jos, Plateau State) and the Federal Capitol Territory (Abuja); and
- Washington, DC.

The team did not reach either the Southeast or Northeast zones.

In the course of their consultations, the team sought to understand conflict dynamics in Nigeria by identifying and exploring:

- Underlying sources of conflict;
- Current issues;
- Parties to conflicts;
- Interests and needs of the parties;
- Roles played by various parties; and
- Relationships between parties.

Particular attention was paid to how local conflict issues are connected to policy issues at state and national levels.

In addition to investigating conflict dynamics, the team recorded both donor and Nigerian initiatives to mitigate conflict, noting opportunities, challenges, and outcomes.

On the basis of their understanding of conflict dynamics, history of interventions, and USAID strategic objectives, the team made recommendations on how to prioritize conflicts, how to intervene programmatically in priority conflicts to address current issues and underlying sources, and how to build Nigerian conflict management capacity. Additional recommendations were made for linkages to USAID programming in economic growth, police, justice, civil society, and civil–military relations.

## **APPENDIX E: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON KEY AREAS**

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### **A. Religious Conflict in Kaduna State**

After the Kaduna religious riots of February and May 2000—riots that cost at least 2,000 lives—the Executive Governor of the State, El Haji Ahmed Makarfi, pursued two related strategies to calm the situation. Some background is necessary to understand the significance of Markarfi’s moves.

Usman Dan Fodio’s *jihad*, or religious war, 1804–1810, ended with the establishment of the Sokoto sultanate. This Islamic theocratic empire extended from what is now extreme northwest Nigeria in a broad swath southeast into contemporary northwest Cameroon. Armed forces of the emirate of Zazzau, based in present-day Zaria in north-central Kaduna State, continued intermittent warfare and slave raiding in the southern half of contemporary Kaduna State, an area populated by some 15 Middle Belt minority ethnic groups. The emir claimed suzerainty over this area.

After colonization, a number of the minorities, including the Gbagyi, who are the indigenes (first occupants) of the area where Kaduna city developed, converted to Catholicism and various Protestant sects. The emir of Zazzau, however, continued to assert his jurisdiction over Middle Belt minorities.

Following the adoption of the *shari’a* criminal code by Zamfara State in October 1999, northern Muslim political and religious leaders established the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN), an organization designed to promote adoption of *shari’a* in other Nigerian states. Christian groups in the southern half of the country and in the Middle Belt reacted sharply to what they perceived as a Muslim, northern effort to lay the foundations for an Islamic, theocratic state.

Kaduna city burst into rioting in February 2000, when some Christian leaders urged their followers to publicly protest against the threat that the state government would impose *shari’a* law in the state. A largely Catholic march through Muslim neighborhoods elicited the predictable violent response. Unemployed youth of both religions joined in the battles that amounted to efforts at the religious equivalent of ethnic cleansing in a number of neighborhoods within the city. Violence erupted again in May 2000. The combined death toll on both sides in the two riots exceeded 2,000.

In the wake of these riots, President Olusegun Obasanjo visited the state and urged Governor Makarfi to establish a peace and reconciliation committee. That eventually occurred with material support and lobbying from an NGO, Even Development Group. But Christian fears remained. To address them, Makarfi followed a strategy of according a number of ethnic groups in the heavily Christian southern half of the state recognition as chieftaincies independent of the Muslim Emirate of Zazzau. He reinforced this political innovation—for which Middle Belt groups had long lobbied—by in effect recognizing the “customary” laws of each one of these groups and empowering the new chieftaincies to organize their own “customary” judicial systems in addition to the Islamic *shari’a* and state magistrate court systems. This system may lead to a certain confusion and conflict of laws cases among the three systems, but it offers the great advantage of providing Christians and animists in the new chieftaincies with an effective shield against the application of the *shari’a* legal code, much less its criminal elements, within their jurisdictions.

The Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna, P.Y. Jatau, strongly approves Governor Makarfi’s efforts to defuse the situation. Moreover, he supports Governor Makarfi, whom he sees as a fair, honest, and equitable broker of political interests working for the good of the common man, and believes the new state three-law legal system will contribute to peace in Kaduna.

Makarfi has moved forward with efforts to promote reconciliation, in part through establishing public offices, attached to the governorate, for Muslim and Christian affairs. He has also made significant efforts to promote development within the state jurisdiction by investing in rehabilitation of rural roads, rural electrification, and so on. Makarfi’s strategy suggests that he takes seriously the importance of attacking the economic underpinnings of religious violence in the state, and that he intends to do this partially by injecting new economic resources into rural areas to create opportunities and incentives for both Muslim and Christian youth to remain in their home areas, rather than migrating into the state’s urban centers.

## B. Kano: Muslim/Christian Relations

The situation in Kano is both simpler and more complex than that in other locations in northern Nigeria. Although the vast majority of the population is Muslim (perhaps as much as 90–95 %), many different Islamic sects coexist in the city. The traditional sects, all of which are followers of Sunni Islam, include the Qadriyya, the Tijaniyya, the Tariqa, the Malikiya, the Ahmadiya, and the Islamiya. Another group is the Da'awa (some respondents used the term to designate a separate sect, some used it as a synonym for *hisba*—the group that enforces *shari'a* provisions—while still others used it to denote the preaching arm of the *hisba*).

The newer and more fundamentalist sects include the Izala and the Shiites. The Izala in particular tend to attract educated young people, both men and women. The Shiites and sometimes the Izala are said to oppose applying *shari'a* in Nigeria until such time as religious leaders have taken over political leadership of the country. Whereas the *hisba* includes representatives of all sects, in Kano it tends to be dominated by Izalas and Da'awa. One respondent reported that just as NGOs have sprung up to take advantage of opportunities created by Western donors' calls for civil society partners, so Muslim sects have arisen in response to the calls for faith-based partners issued by Islamic governments and religious groups from Libya, Sudan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries.

Some respondents referred to themselves as liberal Muslims. These individuals are generally opposed to a nonsecular form of government and the implementation of *shari'a*. The parallel governance structures—traditional and elected—are less cohesive than they appear initially. The Emir of Kano is by all reports relatively liberal, as is at least one of his wives, who is educated and has traveled. No one is sure the extent to which the Governor is liberal, because for political reasons he is reported to be “keeping quiet.”

Respondents reported that the *hisba* in Kano plays primarily an educational role, and is designed to generate Islamic “enlightenment,” rather than policing and punishing infractions of the *shari'a* code. Both a traditional, neighborhood leader and an educated, young Izala, the latter Secretary of his neighborhood *hisba*, described a type of *hisba* that is a far cry from the militant and violent Muslim youth described by Christian southerners. Both men described recruitment criteria—the former informal, the latter formal—that would appear to bar undisciplined, aggressive youth from entering the *hisba*. To be admitted to the *hisba*, a man or woman (both are eligible) must meet the following formal recruitment criteria by being:

- A member of an ethnic group indigenous to the state (this criterion has recently been eliminated from the list, but its use initially reflects the persistent links between ethnicity and religion);
- A practicing Muslim;
- At least primary school educated, whether Western or Islamic;
- Employed or otherwise legitimately occupied in earning a livelihood; and
- Married or single.

*Hisba* members volunteer about an hour a week of their time. During that hour, they circulate in their neighborhood seeking solutions to social problems. The Secretary of the neighborhood *hisba* provided several cases that highlight the roles *hisba* members have played in this regard. These related mainly to the issue of insecurity. Judicial corruption engenders insecurity because offenders have been able, in the past, to buy their release from custody. Such offenders behave with impunity, abusing the rights of others in the society. To combat this phenomenon, *hisba* members monitor the judicial process from arrest through sentencing to ensure that judges impose sentences appropriate to crimes committed. The most serious threat to security, however, is the presence of the ‘*Yan daba*, organized neighborhood youth gangs who engage in gang warfare and routinely rob, assault, rape, and murder citizens unfortunate enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. For the most part members of the ‘*Yan daba* employ knives or sticks, rather than firearms. They can be either Christian or Muslim, but they are not faith-based. Rather, they are disenfranchised young men, without educational or employment prospects.

When one of these youths causes trouble—for example, by engaging in public drunkenness—the *hisba* will first go to the neighborhood traditional leader to identify the individual's parents. They then appeal to the parents to exert greater control over the child. If *hisba* members learn that lack of employment or educational opportunities explains the individual's antisocial behavior, they attempt to find solutions. For example, the *hisba* Secretary mentioned one case in which members of the *hisba* had pooled their money to send a young man to school, and another in which the *hisba* had matched several young people in minor trouble with a businessman seeking employees. If a young person is caught again, however, especially if the economic reasons for misbehavior have

been addressed, than the *hisba* turn the individual over to the police. According to the respondent, it is left up to the police to determine whether to bring the accused before the Alkali (*shari'a* court) or the Magistrate's court. The *hisba* has also intervened in gang warfare by bringing the leaders of gangs together to resolve conflicts and solve common problems.

Part of the resentment felt for “settlers” (members of southern tribes, as opposed to “indigenes”) residing (and often born in) Kano stems from indigenes' feeling that settlers are simply in Kano to make money. Settlers are perceived to be unwilling to adapt to the culture of Kano and to reject the values of Kano's indigenous population. Indigenes see settlers as failing to commit or contribute to the community in either material or nonmaterial senses. On top of this, indigenes believe settlers look down on the indigenous Kano population. To some extent, Muslims feel marginalized on their own turf, which fuels their sense of grievance against the southern Christian settlers in their midst.

Similarly, Kano counts a large number of Christian denominations. Christians span the full spectrum, from militant born-again proselytizers to merely born-into-Christianity liquor sellers. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) members whom team members interviewed may not have represented either extreme, but they expressed clear determination to continue their religious missions, even if martyrdom might be the price of doing so.

Pastors of three different Protestant sects, one of whom is the Chairman of the Kano State Chapter of CAN, were among the respondents. They described their sense of powerlessness in the face of what they perceive to be discrimination on the part of the local authorities. They have engaged in backroom conversations with both the Council of *Ulamaa* and the *Shari'a* Commission. Local government officials promised them that they would receive permission to build churches. However, they have continually encountered “Catch 22” provisions (e.g., Kano government officials assert that they cannot issue a church construction permit until a specific form is completed, submitted, and approved, but the form in question is never available). Christian congregations have been provided with an area on the outskirts of the city, well away from Kano Muslim areas, in which they are to build churches. The authorities have assured church leaders that if they build in these areas, the authorities will guarantee them protection; however, if they build in Muslim areas, the authorities will be unable to guarantee their security. The respondents expressed their recognition of their own powerlessness in the face of an overwhelming Muslim majority in Kano and conceded that they are in a position of having “to trade justice for peace.”

OTI has supported dialogue between Christian groups and liberal Muslims in Kano and elsewhere in Nigeria. But achieving sustainable peace requires engaging the more mainstream Muslims—the majority in Kano—in dialogue to work toward obtaining their involvement and commitment to a solution. The Chief Iman of one of the main Friday prayer mosques in Kano quickly pointed out in an interview that he is “conservative.” However, he also said that if he were approached properly (following proper protocol and with transparency), that he would be willing to participate in USAID-sponsored training or dialogues. Nevertheless, there is considerable suspicion about US government motivations in Kano, so a significant amount of preliminary relationship building and trust building will be essential. One way to accomplish this is to ensure that the majority of USAID national staff are from the region and are members of the indigenous, mainstream Muslim community.

### **C. Southwest: Ethnic–Economic Rivalries**

As in other regions of Nigeria, conflicts in the Southwest tend to spring from social and economic roots. Such disputes are potent because they can easily be transformed into ethnic conflicts if people on opposite sides of an issue are predominately of different ethnic groups. Defining a conflict in ethnic terms greatly increases the potential for destabilization through overt violence, loss of life, property damage, and then generation of “ricochet riot” conflicts elsewhere in the country. Ricochet riots can go either way—a conflict in the North may spark one in the Southwest, or one in the Southwest may spark a riot in the North. Several factors underlie these conflict dynamics: a strong sense of Yoruba grievance against the North; strong Yoruba organizational capacity; the dominance of ethnic identity over religious identity; poor governance; and poverty, economic decline, and congestion.

The strong sense of grievance among Yoruba against the North and resultant tension between Yoruba and Hausa–Fulani predisposes people of the Southwest to redefine economic and social disputes in terms of ethnicity. Although mistrust between the two ethnic groups has deep historical roots, its current intensity can be traced to Ibrahim Babangida's annulment of the 1993 election won by the Yoruba candidate, M.K.O. Abiola, and Abiola's subsequent imprisonment and death. Many Yoruba people feel the 1993 election was the most free

and fair Nigeria has ever held. In their view, its annulment by the northern military ruler proved that the North would never let a Yoruba be president, a feeling that has not been assuaged by election of the Yoruba Olusegun Obasanjo, for he was viewed as a pawn of northern leaders.

Added to this sense of grievance is general frustration and anger with poor governance and the resultant economic decline, decaying infrastructure, congestion, and sharp drop in standards of living. These conditions make the situation ripe for any dispute to escalate into violent conflict. This was seen in Lagos in October 2000, when members of the Yoruba Oodudwa People's Congress (OPC) vigilantes suspected a Hausa of harboring a criminal. The dispute became ethnically polarized and led to riots. Comparable disputes have flared over rights to stalls in markets, levying local fees on vehicles registered in other states, parking rights for tanker trucks, and respect for ethnic holidays.

Conflicts in the Southwest can also be sparked by violence in the North when Yorubas are on one side and Hausa-Fulani on the other. In such instances, what may have begun as religious conflict is redefined along ethnic lines, as was the case when violence erupted over the introduction of *shari'a* in Kaduna. It is important to note that religious conflict, as such, does not occur in the Southwest. Yorubas follow either Islam or Christianity, with many families counting members in both faiths. Religious tolerance is deeply entrenched in Yoruba culture. When violence in the North sparks violence in the Southwest, the conflict becomes defined along ethnic lines, not religious ones. Those involved attack on the basis of ethnicity, readily visible in the case of those who bear tribal marks, without pausing to determine whether Hausa victims are Moslem or Yoruba victims Christians.

#### **D. Conflict in the South South (Delta)**

Although many observers of the South South think primarily of youths invading oil company properties when they think of conflict there, in fact the roots of South South conflicts lie deeper in history and in the contemporary social circumstances of the area. Contemporary history of the Delta can be summarized as economic decline and broken promises. Historically, Delta communities prospered as "middlemen" controlling trade with the interior, particularly palm oil products and slaves. But with the development of the colonial state and independence, the region experienced a steady decline and stagnation, for no new sources of wealth developed there to replace these activities. More recently, the failure of the early independent Nigerian government to follow through on a promise to treat the Delta as a special development area, the steady reduction in the share of oil royalties that states in the Delta have received, and, finally, the habitual disregard of state needs by non-indigenous military state governors, continued and worsened Delta problems. The FGRN's neglect of the Delta's development (roads, schools, electricity, and health services all ended well inland before reaching coastal communities), Nigeria's overall economic decline since the mid-1980s, and the tendency of educated Delta youths to leave the area, have confirmed its status as an economic backwater. The people who remained behind simply lacked prospects elsewhere.

Today, the complexity of issues and number of stakeholders involved exacerbate South South problems. The Delta, in part because of its riverine/swamp topography, has historically been politically extremely fragmented, and subject to frequent and at times violent disputes over land and fishing rights, as well as over traditional leaders' political jurisdictions. These all lead to cycles of "revenge violence." As more powerful weapons became available in the Delta in the mid- and late-1990s, disputes became more violent. Youth gangs became more powerful who were willing and able to protect their villages and elders. As democratic competition returned in 1998-1999, some of these same youths took up a new line of activity, paid disruption of campaign events, and/or provided candidates protection from such unwanted attentions. Finally, traditional leaders have lost much credibility and respect as they have been corrupted by payments from the military government and the oil companies.

In this culture of cynicism about government, economic stagnation and hopelessness, historical political fragmentation, and low-grade violent conflict, pre-existing political fragmentation became institutional disintegration. Small groups of youths with weapons went unchallenged and found oil companies easy targets for hold-up and ransom. As the oil companies paid off the first gangs, others were inspired and soon followed suit. Throughout the 1990s, incidents of youth gangs extorting payments from oil companies and engaging in violence escalated, until they leveled off and began dropping in 1999.

What might turn this area into a more fruitful development path? Already oil companies are trying to reduce their exposure to opportunistic attack by offering more valuable rewards to communities that “partner” with them for broader scale and in fact more costly public-good type improvements. However, such investments are unlikely to alter the competitive and fragmentary dynamic among communities. Oil company efforts are still largely single-community focused and relatively limited in scale and coverage.

Something is needed to encourage multiple and historically competing/conflicting communities to start working together, to bring more moderate and mature leaders back into the centers of decision making, to co-opt or marginalize violent youths, and to find constructive and promising avenues of activity for a currently “lost generation.” If the promised 13% royalties on oil production are actually paid to the states and spent in the Delta, and if the new Nigeria Delta Development Corporation (NDDC) comes on line, they might offer enough funds to leverage meaningful local cooperation in the development and implementation of “area development plans.” Should this occur, USAID might well find helping them, via conflict mediation and institutional development, to be an excellent “target of opportunity,” with payoffs for both its governance and economic development strategic objectives.