

## Chimera™

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Chimera™ is interested in original manuscripts concerning US-African relations within the following core areas: diplomacy, health, technology, economic development, education and culture. The Institute reserves the right to select, reject or edit contributions. Contributions may be sent via e-mail to [Chimera@usafrica.org](mailto:Chimera@usafrica.org). The Institute accepts no responsibility for unsolicited materials.

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## Publisher's Note

Thank you for all of your supportive letters and acknowledgements. The Institute is certainly proud of what we have been able to accomplish with Chimera™. This issue furthers our mission, which is to stimulate thought and discussion.

Civil strife in any form desecrates more than just life; it desecrates institutions, conventions and other constructs that humans have evolved to extend life. Frequently the reasons for civil unrest are not adequately considered in resolving the conflict and the result that follows is a continuation or exacerbation of previous conditions. Even more frequently, the institutions, conventions and protocols that remain are not adequate to cope with the stress of the conflict and so reconstruction is hampered. The conclusion of all of this is that countries are unable to transform themselves.

Nations in Africa have taken many steps to move beyond this cycle and it is our hope that the African Union and counterpart organizations such as NEPAD, ECOWAS and SADC provide the leadership needed to move beyond this cycle. We must begin to understand that useful solutions start with knowing the root causes and meeting the expectations of the people. Civil conflict occurs when the ordinary people lack fundamental trust in the institutions, conventions and other mechanisms that are the pillars of civil society. These establishments must reflect local culture and customs, local assessments, local requirements and local intentions. They cannot solely be driven by outside influences. This is what will create the trust and support necessary for sustainability and make exchanges more valuable.

In this issue, Counsel to the Central Bank of Liberia, Negbalee Warner

writes about the nature of legal systems as the cause of civil strife in Africa, and the effect of that strife on legal systems, using Liberia as the example. Dr. Habib Sesay takes a three-pronged approach to understanding the causes of strife, the human costs associated with them and the lessons to be learned. Dr. Jones Kyazze, of UNESCO, furthers the conversation by discussing the widely and increasingly recognized importance of culture, defined as a set of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and artistic characteristics and values that define a society or social group. Alice Shemi and Beatrice Magembe of the University of Botswana recommend creating successful groupings by the use of strategic alliances and collaborations between and among entities such as the African Union, Economic Community of West African States, South African Development Community, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and business and government leaders to provide the best platform for sharing best e-commerce practices. Femi Olawole, calls on us to rely on the experience and expertise of the wider African Diaspora to assist in the development of Africa and its resources; and, Drs. Moshi and Ojo of the University of Georgia discuss the importance of language and culture as the power behind politics.

We must understand the past and its customs and the roles of governance to cope with the present and design the future. We must create sustainable institutions based on the people and their inspirations and our system of laws must reflect this to have meaning. African economies will never fully articulate African wealth if the system of laws are not respected, resulting in civil strife and non participation in global markets.