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SPECIAL ISSUE

World at War

"The onslaught was relentless. I have never seen this in the last three decades of ethnic conflict."

Sri Lankan Villager,
April 2006

By Col. Daniel Smith, USA (Ret.), Special to CDI

No conventional, state-sponsored opposing armies took to the field of battle in 2006. Nonetheless, the number of overt armed interventions by outside powers in other nations civil wars increased, illustrating a trend away from conventional armed conflicts and toward more complex civil wars that increasingly transform into larger regional wars.

CIVIL WARS TURNED REGIONAL

- Civil strife in Sudan's western area of Darfur feeds unrest in Chad and the Central African Republic.
- Ugandan and Rwandan rebels continue to use southern Sudan and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo as bases to launch attacks.
- The never-ending Israeli-Palestinian conflict engulfs the Levant in a 33-day war between Hezbollah and Israel, with Lebanese and Israeli civilians bearing the brunt.
- Somalia's weak transitional government sweeps to power in the last two weeks of the year, propelled by Ethiopian tanks and planes.

Similarly, while luck, reason, and even loss of nerve have spared the world a repeat of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 2006 saw North Korea apparently testing and Iran steadily mastering the technology needed to construct a nuclear weapon. The Bush administration's response to North Korea and Iran, unlike in Iraq, has been diplomatic, not militaristic. The supreme irony is that no nuclear weapons existed or were actively being pursued in the war this White House chose to fight. Therefore, similar to the Cold War, conventional rather than nuclear arms continue to be the real weapons of mass destruction.

Indeed, throughout the world, war remained a consummate human experience in 2006, as the war count shows.

THE WAR COUNT

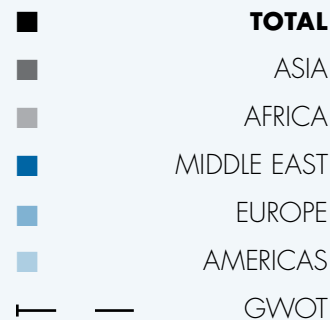
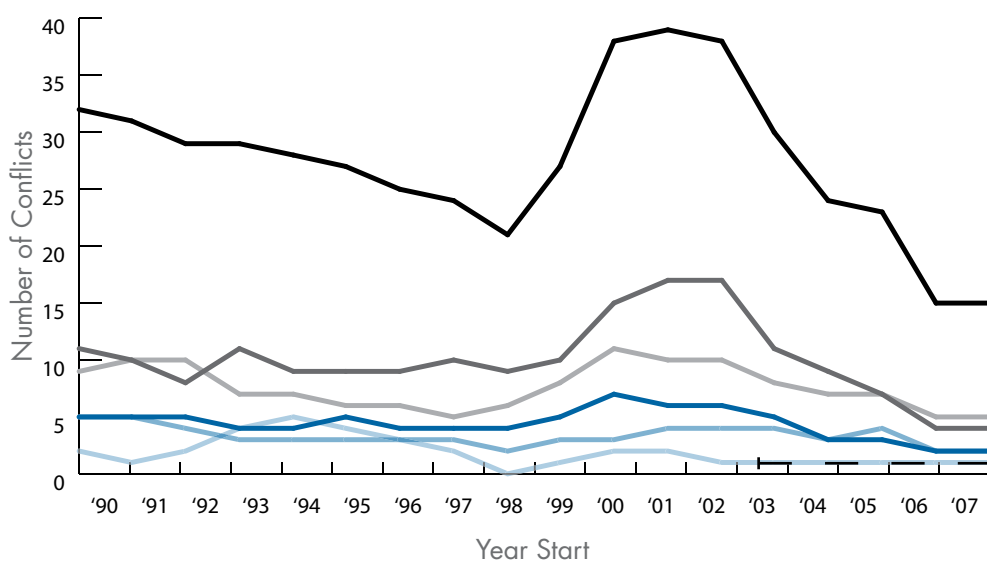
As 2007 began, the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) registered 15 significant ongoing armed conflicts (1,000 or more deaths) and another 21 "hot spots" that could slide into or revert to war. The total number of significant armed conflicts is the same as last year, which saw eight less than 2005.

The graph on page 2 illustrates the changing count.

Once again, the distribution pattern of warfare across the continents is unchanged with Africa accounting for fully one-third of the total and with Asia right behind with four ongoing armed conflicts. The Middle East and the Americas each registered two "wars," with Europe adding one. The U.S.-led "global war on terror," re-christened the "long war," rounds out the count at 15.



GLOBAL CONFLICTS 1990-2007



*GWOT refers to the "global war on terrorism"

Sources: BBC, AP, Reuters, AISA, SAIR

Ongoing Major Conflicts

IRAQ

Near the end of 2006, two events dominated the news from Iraq guaranteeing that the country would remain one of the "central fronts" in the Bush administration's "global war on terror" (GWOT) in 2007. First, Saddam Hussein was executed by the new Iraqi government on Dec. 30. Second, fatalities at year's end were the worst they had been all year. December's U.S. troop losses (113) were the highest for any month in 2006 and the third highest monthly total for the entire war, pushing overall U.S. fatalities in the Iraq war to 3,002 since March 19, 2003.

Thousands of others – Iraqis, foreign insurgents, coalition troops – have died since March 19, 2003. Sometimes even approximate numbers are hard to determine. In late summer, Iraq's Ministry of Health stopped reporting monthly fatality totals. What was their rationale? They believed such information contributed to poor morale among the public while en-

couraging insurgents. This left the UN's Baghdad office as the only official source for daily civilian casualty numbers across the country. Iraq's government dismissed the UN counts as "riddled with inaccuracies." More likely, Baghdad's rejection stemmed from embarrassment. UN statistics for the first 10 months of 2006 registered 1,000 or more fatalities every month except January, February, and May. Three months were particularly brutal: August (2,966), September (3,539), and November (3,709). (The UN also noted that 1.6 million Iraqis are internally displaced and another 1.5 million are refugees.)

Among nongovernmental organizations, the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count (ICCC) lists more than 18,500 Iraqi civilians and security personnel killed in 2006, with more than 1,000 deaths every month from June onward. The Iraq Body Count estimates that 57,700 civilians have died since the U.S.-led invasion in March 2003. But the most devastating

estimate of Iraqi fatalities is the 2006 interview-study done under the auspices of Johns Hopkins University and published in the British medical journal, *The Lancet*. The study estimated that since March 19, 2003, Iraq had suffered 655,000 more fatalities than would have occurred had the U.S. invasion and occupation never happened.

AFGHANISTAN

Perhaps the kindest comment about Afghanistan is that the Taliban, and its allied fighters from al-Qaida and other terror organizations, have not recaptured the Taliban's "capital" of Kandahar. But insurgent forces, concentrated in the south and the east along the Pakistan-Afghan border, continued to inflict a progressively heavy toll on Afghan army units and on NATO forces that replaced most of the U.S. troops operating in the border areas. The NATO contingent of approximately 30,000 troops includes about 8,000 U.S. troops, while the other 12,000 U.S. soldiers are under separate U.S. control. More than 4,000 deaths are attributed to insurgent actions that rose progressively

during 2006 to more than 600 per month.

Nonetheless, in October 2006, acting under a renewed UN mandate, NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) assumed responsibility for most operations in Afghanistan, including 25 provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) who are helping Afghans rebuild their country.

Adding to the pressure on allied forces is the truce between Islamabad and tribal elders who control most of Pakistan's province of Waziristan. Under the agreement, the Pakistan army leaves security and governance to tribal officials who, in return, agree not to extend the traditional offers of food, drink, and shelter to "visitors." What has emerged is a chain-letter effect. The Pakistani tribal heads are not constrained by Islamabad's military; the Taliban are not pressured by the Waziristan chiefs, which leaves them free to cross the border and employ more car bombs since there are more opportunities to get autos into Afghanistan and conduct attacks on government, NATO and U.S. forces. Intelligence reports continue to cite increases in the fighting strength of the Taliban and increased intimidation of rural villagers – armed incursions, destruction of schools and health clinics, and assassinations of government officials. In fact, with 4,000 civilian deaths attributed to terrorist violence or coalition operations, 2006 was the most lethal year since the Taliban lost political power at the end of 2001. U.S. fatalities came to 98 in 2006. Since Operation Enduring Freedom began in October 2001, 357 U.S. military personnel have died in Afghanistan; coalition dead total 159.

In late January 2006, another Afghan donors' conference convened in London. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, noting that the United States had already poured more than \$10.3 billion into reconstruction in Afghanistan, said that Bush's fiscal year

2007 budget would ask Congress for \$1.1 billion more. In all, the London conference elicited new commitments of \$10.5 billion by the 70 countries in attendance. In return, Kabul presented a five-year "Compact" of domestic reform and development aimed at improving the quality of life of ordinary Afghans rather than committing resources toward institution building. One significant challenge to this government plan is weaning Afghan farmers away from opium production.

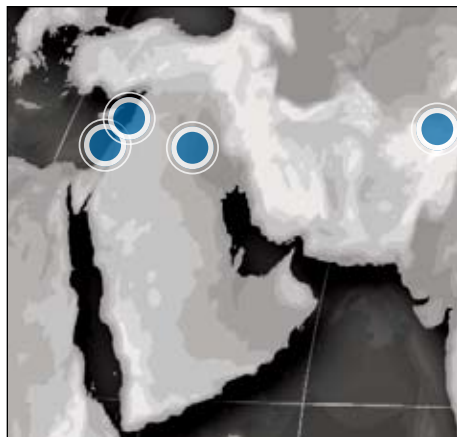
MIDDLE EAST

Major changes in the Middle East/Mediterranean basin took place in 2006 that have had a dramatic impact on the region. In January, **Israel's** Ariel Sharon suffered a massive stroke, leaving Ehud Olmert to run the new political party in the March elections. Meanwhile, **Palestinians** gave a parliamentary majority to the U.S. designated "terror" group Hamas, triggering Israeli and U.S. punitive measures aimed at overturning the choice of the Palestinians. In June, Palestinian militants seized an Israeli soldier during a deadly raid on an Israeli guard post. After a three-day delay, Israeli troops poured into the Gaza strip, methodically moving from one village to the

next, one refugee camp to the next. The Israeli action undercut Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas who had been working to get the various Palestinian factions to end their daily barrage of short-range Qassam rockets from Gaza into Israel. After five months of Israeli incursions into Gaza and the West Bank, the Israelis suddenly changed course. On Nov. 25, Olmert unexpectedly accepted a comprehensive cease-fire arrangement engineered by Abbas, which covered all militant Palestinian organizations. Olmert pledged that at 6:00 a.m., Nov. 26, all offensive Israeli activities in Gaza and the West Bank would cease and Israeli military forces would immediately begin to leave all Palestinian territory. Before the cease-fire went into effect, at least 403 people had died as a direct result of clashes – 400 Palestinians and three Israeli soldiers. The kidnapped soldier is still missing.

Far more devastating carnage began July 12 when an Israeli commando patrol was ambushed by the "radical" Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Eight Israelis were killed and two captured. This seemed at first to be just one more clash – albeit with more fatalities than usual – after which Hezbollah and Israel would swap prisoners. But this time, within a few short hours, Israel's air force launched what became a punishing assault on southern Lebanon, Beirut, part of northern **Lebanon** and the upper Beka Valley.

But just as Hezbollah miscalculated the Israeli reaction, Israel miscalculated the extensive war preparations Hezbollah had made over the previous five years. When Israeli troops precipitously withdrew from southern Lebanon in May 2000, Hezbollah, not the Lebanese government, became the dominant social, economic, security, and local political power in the area from the Litani River south to the Lebanon-Israeli border. Supported by Syria and Iran,



In Afghanistan, 2006 was the most lethal year since the Taliban lost political power at the end of 2001.

Hezbollah built an intricate array of military redoubts linked by covered tunnels and a complex of camouflaged rocket firing positions that could be remotely controlled. The extent and the intricacy of Hezbollah's preparations surprised Israeli intelligence professionals. For the first time in decades, the Israeli Defense Forces faced an opponent who knew the terrain better, who believed more strongly in its cause, and who refused to collapse even under Israel's superior firepower. After 33 days of meager military success, with Hezbollah still able to launch Katyusha rocket barrages into northern Israel, Olmert was ready to agree to a truce on the condition that the Lebanese army would deploy troops into the Litani basin and that the long-standing UN peacekeeping mission, UNIFIL, be sharply increased to 15,000, including troops from European nations. Fatalities from the 33 days of fighting came to 636 civilians, but the massive use of cluster munitions, primarily by Israel, continues to take a toll.

On Nov. 21, the assassination of the Lebanese Minister of Industry Pierre Gemayel (of the Christian Phalange party), plunged the already shaky government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora into a deep crisis. At year's end, Siniora was still hanging on to power but reliant on the UN peacekeeping force to stabilize the border with Israel.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

December 2006 marked the second anniversary of the tsunami, which still remains the dominant influence on many Asian countries. Recovery has been slow – of the \$6.7 billion pledged to help rebuild countries hit by the tsunami, only \$3.3 billion has been obligated and spent. Many promises made by donors remain unfilled.

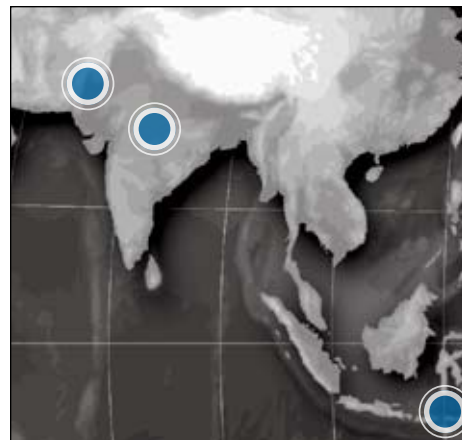
Indonesia

Dec. 19, 2006, almost exactly two

years after the 2004 tsunami struck, two nearly simultaneous earthquakes measuring 5.8 and 5.7 on the Richter scale rocked Sumatra, sending residents of Aceh province into the streets. Seven people died and 100 were injured, but this time there was no tsunami.

The geological earthquakes were not the only events that affected the people of Aceh in December. A week earlier, on Dec. 11, Aceh held its first provincial and local direct elections – the result of last year's post-tsunami peace agreement between rebels and Indonesia's central government. Official results will not be announced until sometime in January, but the process was considered free and fair.

As feared, warfare on the other island nation hit hardest by the 2004 tsunami intensified in 2006, moving **Sri Lanka** back on the active conflict list. The 28-year civil war between the country's majority ethnic Sinhalese and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) seemed headed for a peaceful resolution in 2002 and 2003. Since then the violence has steadily increased until 2006, when it re-ignited with a vengeance as negotiations in Geneva faltered. Both sides are attacking civilians, and access to humanitarian



In 2006, unfulfilled tsunami aid and increased conflict were barriers for many countries in Asia and the Pacific still rebuilding from the 2004 tsunami.

aid has become an issue. The Tigers want the government in Colombo to open and guarantee safe passage along Highway A-9 which connects the Tamil-dominated north to the rest of the island. The central government insists that ships be used to deliver supplies – but only when the LTTE guarantees safe passage into and out of ports under LTTE control. Neither side has been willing to compromise. Aid groups estimate that such “standing on principles” has left some 3,000 Sri Lankans dead in 2006, a toll that is sure to rise in 2007.

Nepal's descent into what I had termed “absolute chaos” in early 2005, upon the beginning of rule by royal decree, was more than reversed in 2006 when the multi-party parliament reached a peace accord with the Maoist rebels, completely freezing the monarch out of the political process. The initial breakthrough came in the spring with a provisional cease-fire followed by negotiations on forming a transitional administration that included Maoist leaders. Maoist fighters disarmed and some Royal Nepalese army units dissolved. Two key points that made the December 2006 peace accord a reality was the agreement that Maoist fighters would go into camps supervised by representatives of the UN, Nepal's government, and Maoist cadres; and the ending of the Nepalese army's 238-year allegiance to the monarch when the head of the armed forces pledged loyalty to the Nepalese parliament.

As the calendar turned to 2007, the transitional government was in place and the peace accord seemed to be holding. Political activity associated with the projected June elections for a new constituent assembly was underway. And the king? He and the entire monarchical apparatus are not mentioned anywhere in any of the agreements worked out in the second half of 2006.

While Nepal looked positive, **East Timor** continued to deteriorate.

WORLD AT WAR

ONGOING SIGNIFICANT CONFLICTS AS OF JAN. 1, 2007

MAIN WARRING PARTIES	YEAR BEGAN	CONTRIBUTING CAUSES*	OTHER FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT	
U.S. "global war on terror" vs. "terrorists with global reach"	2001	Sept. 11, 2001 attacks	UN, multiple countries	
Iraq government and multinational forces vs. Iraqi resistance and al-Qaida-in-Iraq	2003	Invasion and occupation	United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, S. Korea, Italy, Poland, Ukraine, Denmark, others	Middle East
Israel vs. Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, others	1975	Religious and territorial	United States, UN, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, individuals	
Afghanistan: Kabul government vs. al-Qaida and Taliban	1978	Ethnic, religious, and territorial	United States, UN, NATO, Russia, Iran, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan	Asia
India vs. Assam (ULFA) insurgents, others	1986	Independence	UN, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh	
Philippines vs. New People's Army (Communist)	1969	Criminal, terror	United States, Malaysia, Libya, Indonesia	
Sri Lanka vs. Tamil Eelam	1978-2002	Ethnic, religious, and independence	India	
Colombia vs. National Liberation Army (ELN)	1978	Drug trade, socio/economic, political	United States	Latin America
Colombia vs. Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)	1978	Drug trade, socio/economic, political	United States	
Russia vs. Chechnya	1994; 1996	Independence	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Georgia	Europe
Democratic Republic of Congo vs. indigenous insurgents and foreign renegades	1997	Political and socio/economic using ethnic divisions	Angola, Uganda, Rwanda, Chad, Zimbabwe, France, Burundi, South Africa, African Union, UN	
Nigeria: ethnic and religious communal violence	1970	Religious, ethnic and economic	None	Africa
Somalia: TFI vs. UIC Somaliland, Puntland, other factions	2005 1978	Power and ethnic	UN (humanitarian aid), United States, Ethiopia, Kenya	
Sudan vs. Sudan Liberation Army (splinter) and Justice and Equality Movement	2003	Autonomy and ethnic	UN, United States, EU, NATO	
Uganda vs. Lord's Army	1986	Power	Sudan	

* Causes are simplifications and should not be regarded as the full explanation for what is often a very complex set of circumstances.

Following a “strike” by 400 army personnel – about one-quarter of the entire force – regarding their pay and working conditions, the government dismissed 600 soldiers, sparking rioting and looting that left 30 dead and thousands fleeing the violence. Responding to appeals for help, Australia boosted its troop commitment to 2,200 soldiers, restoring order in July as a new government assumed power.

Pakistan-India

With some 50 separatist groups active in **India’s** remote northeast, the main wonder is why the perennial low-level fighting and dying does not claim more lives. In Assam state, promising moves toward peace discussions finally halted when New Delhi demanded a written commitment by the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) to negotiate in good faith and when ULFA demanded that five of their leaders be freed before talks began in late September. With the two sides at an impasse, Indian army operations resumed and ULFA responded with frequent grenade and bomb attacks in Assam’s capital.

In **Kashmir**, little progress occurred in 2006. In May, the main umbrella resistance group, the All Party Hurriyat Conference, broke off talks after two incidents killed 35 Kashmiris. In July, 180 Indians died in a series of rail bombings in Mumbai (Bombay). Nevertheless, at the September gathering of Non-Aligned countries held in Havana, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf pledged to re-invigorate the discussions. The foreign ministers of the two countries met in New Delhi in October to “continue the search for mutually acceptable options for a peaceful negotiated settlement of all issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.” Some analysts noted that the statement referred to “options” in lieu of “solutions,” interpreting this as an admis-

sion that much hard work remains ahead. Yet the statement also pointed to an assessment that automatic re-criminations after an incident helps neither side, for acts of terror from any source are the real danger to both governments. The peace initiative has helped lower the 2006 death toll from terrorist acts in Kashmir to 1,100, the lowest total since 1989.

Some long-running but low-level confrontations experienced contextual changes in 2006. In **Burma** (Myanmar), Bo Mya, who resigned in 2004 as leader of the rebel Karen National Union (KNU), died of natural causes in late 2006. Separately, the country’s ruling junta refused to lift the house arrest of another opposition figure, Nobel Peace laureate Aung Suu Kyi. Her current detention began in May 2003. Suu Kyi has been under house arrest for 10 of the past 16 years.

Separatist Islamic militants in southern **Thailand** have unexpectedly resumed sporadic operations against Thai forces. The shootings and burning of buildings came despite apologies from the new Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont, installed after a bloodless October coup, for the policies of the previous government. More than 1,500 people have died in violence in the country’s restive south since January 2004.

The **Philippine** government continues to launch occasional operations in Jolo against remnants of the al-Qaida-affiliated Abu Sayyaf (estimated 400 fighters) and Jemaah Islamiyah group, whose hard core fighters are estimated to number no more than 400. Manila claimed in late December that Abu Sayyaf’s leader, Khaddafy Janjalani, died in the government’s sustained offensive against the Jolo-based criminals. But while the government claims “progress” against these elements, Manila seems to be facing a resurgent New People’s Army.

Violence flared again in the **Solomon Islands** in April as rioters pro-

testing rigged elections toppled the newly-installed government of Snyder Rini. His successor, Manasseh Sogavare, pledged he would end widespread official corruption. Lastly, on Dec. 5, **Fiji** experienced its fourth and least violent military coup in 20 years.

AFRICA

The two main story lines for Africa at the beginning of 2007 are the Pentagon’s plans to create a new regional combatant command encompassing the entire continent, and the continuing – some would say increasingly more interrelated – chaos in the continent’s east and southeast.

Somalia

For most of 2006, Somalia’s de facto rulers were the fundamentalist Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) – also known as the Somali Islamic Courts Council (SICC) – backed by Eritrea, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, Syria and Libya. Opposing the UIC was the UN-recognized Transitional Federal Institutions (TFI) government, a “moderate” if ineffective coalition whose writ for most of the last six months ran only slightly beyond the borders of Baidoa, the one town in central/south Somalia that they controlled.

As autumn advanced, so too did the UIC forces. The TFI seemed on the verge of collapse when, in mid-December, Ethiopia shed all pretense of “training” TFI soldiers and took a direct hand in the fighting. Ethiopian airplanes struck Mogadishu’s airport and ground troops forced UIC fighters back and eventually out of Mogadishu, Kismayo, and smaller coastal towns and villages. As the Ethiopian offensive moved into gear, the TFI parliament endorsed a UN plan for African Union peacekeepers to deploy to Somalia to replace Ethiopian troops. But with neighboring countries excluded from the UN force, the source of troops for the UN mission remains a major stumbling bloc. Moreover, when – and if – the

TFI consolidates its new position of power, it will have to address the separatist regions of Somaliland and Puntland if Somalia is to emerge as a single nation.

Sudan

The killing fields of Darfur in western Sudan remain active despite the African Union's 7,000 under-funded, under-equipped, under-staffed, and under-mandated force. In early May 2006, Khartoum agreed to a cease-fire with the main Darfur resistance and agreed to curtail the depredations of the Janjaweed, but the violence did not stop. In late December, after months of negotiations among the members of the UN Security Council and growing international pressure, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir agreed to accept new UN staff and equipment to bolster the AU force and a larger, follow-on "support" package. What al-Bashir left in the air was acceptance of the third part of the UN proposal: the size and the command structure of the enlarged UN-AU hybrid peace-keeping force. Its fate rests with the UN-AU-Sudan "Tripartite Committee" that Khartoum has demanded be established to oversee implementation of the international plan. Meanwhile, in Darfur alone, the number of

dead now stands at 400,000. Another 1.5 million are refugees with a similar number of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad

Like a vortex, violence in Sudan is pulling neighboring countries into conflict. In a late November 2006 speech, the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees highlighted the intertwined rebellions against authoritarian rulers in Darfur, CAR, and Chad that each government funds. Poor communications and the remote locations where the fighting occurs contribute to the uncertainty about what is happening and which claims of which side are true.

In CAR, rebels belonging to the Union of Democratic Forces for the Rally (UFDR) seized three towns before being repulsed by French-supported ("logistics and intelligence") CAR troops. Some government soldiers have been accused of burning down whole villages.

In Chad, conditions deteriorated so much that the UN and nongovernmental organizations evacuated their international workers from the eastern part of the country to avoid rebels from the Rally of Democratic Forces (RAFD) and Union of Forces for Development and Democracy (UFDD). Still, Chad's Prime Minister Pascal Yoadimnadj offered to send troops to help the besieged CAR regime of President Francois Bozizé, who seized power in a 2003 coup with the support from some who are now opposed to his rule.

Overall, the UN estimates that there are 150,000 IDPs in CAR while another 50,000 have left the country. Chadian officials say that since October, at least 300 people have been killed in the fighting and another 70,000 have fled their homes to escape the violence. Chad is home to at least 200,000 Darfur refugees. CAR may return to the active war list in

2008, as might Chad, although in very late December one rebel group signed a peace accord with the Chadian government. But that still leaves three other groups warring against the government.

Uganda

Negotiations to end 20 years of warfare in Uganda began in August in Juba, south Sudan's capital, between Uganda's government and Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). However, it has not been smooth sailing, as talks have been punctuated by armed clashes between the two sides. Although LRA fighters were supposed to have left their hideouts in northeast DRC, Uganda, and south Sudan and enter two temporary holding camps, not all complied. In December, negotiations were suspended after Kony blamed the Ugandan army for the deaths of three of his men. Nonetheless, Uganda extended the August truce for a second time, until February 2007, and at year's end talks had reconvened. In two decades, some 2 million people, 80 percent of northern Uganda's population, have been displaced by hostilities, tens of thousands killed, and an estimated 30,000 children kidnapped.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Next door in the DRC, October's second round of balloting for president saw the incumbent, Joseph Kabila, garner 58 percent of the vote compared to 42 percent for his opponent Jean-Pierre Bemba. Although fighting between partisans broke out after the results were announced, in the nation's capital of Kinshasa, Bemba's supporters finally returned to their barracks outside the city.

Meanwhile, battles continued to be waged in the north and east. Two dissident army brigades seized and held for two days the eastern town of Sake before UN troops in the area



The Pentagon plans to create a new regional combatant command encompassing the entire African continent.

regained control. At least 120 rebel soldiers were reported dead in the fighting. UN forces also discovered mass graves with at least 30 bodies in a government training camp in Ituri province. But there was some good news from the east as well. As had been expected, the last holdout, an indigenous Ituri warlord, signed an accord with Kinshasa ending his opposition in return for the integration of his 1,000 fighters into a national army following reconciliation. Unexpectedly, 1,000 Mayi-Mayi warriors, among the fiercest opponents of the national government, also voluntarily entered government reception and reconciliation camps in the east. The 1.7 million IDPs seem willing to rely a little longer on the 17,000 UN troops for protection, perhaps unsure whether Bemba will retreat to the bush and reignite civil war.

Elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, **Liberia** continues its political reconciliation process, but it still does not control adequately its diamond mines, prompting the UN Security Council to extend into 2007 the embargo on "blood diamonds." Similarly cursed by "blood diamonds" during its civil war, **Sierra Leone** can now market its gems. This, along with efforts to reduce poverty and curtail corruption, prompted creditors to write-off 90 percent of the country's foreign debt. In the **Ivory Coast**, divided by warring factions since 2002, a renewed UN effort to find a basis for disarmament talks succeeded in getting government and rebel military leaders together for new discussions.

In April 2007, Africa's most populous nation, **Nigeria**, is to hold presidential and legislative ballots. But the never-ending ethnic and religious conflicts, fed by extreme poverty (despite the country's petroleum-rich delta), always counsel caution about elections actually occurring when scheduled. This year there is added interest because one candidate is a former leader of secessionist forces

The brutal eight-year Chechan war continues, but the deaths of "political" and "combat" leaders in 2005-06 seem to have sapped insurgent morale.



that fought for an independent Biafra in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Chechnya

The eight-year brutal war continues, but the deaths of both "political" and "combat" leaders in 2005 and 2006 seem to have sapped insurgent morale. With their organization splintering, more and more guerrillas are accepting amnesty and, reportedly, assisting Russian troops hunting for rebel logistics stockpiles and base camps. Some Russian analysts point to a significant decrease in terror attacks in Russia and Chechnya as proof of growing Russian success against insurgents, but others say that tight controls on media reports conceal the true level of violence and death. Still, some predict that the Chechen opposition will reorganize in the first few months of 2007 or that conflict will become more common in the North Caucasus – or both. For example, Karachay-Cherkessia, Ingushetia, and Dagestan continue to experience "cross-over" violence from operations in Chechnya.

The Americas

Continuation of the gradual voluntary demobilization and disarmament of **Colombia's** rightist Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC)

paramilitaries – which reached 33,000 fighters – has been thrown in jeopardy as the result of information on a captured computer that detailed links between AUC death squads and more than a dozen members of Colombia's legislature and close associates of President Alvaro Uribe. AUC leaders, who had surrendered with promises of limited sentences served in "upscale" prisons, were suddenly transferred to "ordinary" jails in what many observers see as an attempt by Uribe's inner circle to distance itself from the growing scandal. Since 2000, when the United States launched the anti-drug initiative "Plan Colombia," \$4.7 billion has been spent to eliminate armed insurgent organizations that today are little more than narco-terrorist criminal gangs. Diminished violence in the last few years was initially thought to reflect success against the drug cartels and Washington's steadfast backing of Uribe – witness the 350 military and 750 contractors that work out of the U.S. embassy and train Colombian military and police units. This mirage was shattered when an elite police unit on a raid was gunned down by an army unit whose commanders are now believed to be partners of the narco-traffickers. Meanwhile, in the United States, a federal judge declared a mistrial in the prosecution of Colombian drug lord Ricardo Palmera after the jury could not reach agreement on a verdict. Prosecutors say a new trial will be held. Back in Colombia, the government began peace talks in October with the leftist National Liberation Army (ELN) which has some 3,000 fighters. The far larger (16,000) drug-tainted Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has also expressed interest in negotiating, but the government appears intent on trying to settle with the ELN before turning to the FARC.

In **Haiti**, former president René Préval (1996-2001) won the February 2006 presidential election, inheriting

Low-Level Political Violence or Conflicts in Suspension

	PARTIES TO CONFLICT	DURATION	CONTRIBUTING CAUSES*	FOREIGN MEDIATION/INVOLVEMENT	
	Iran vs. Kurds	1961-	Independence	None	Middle East
	Turkey vs. Kurds (CPCK)	1961-	Independence	None	
	Israel vs. Palestinian Authority	1948-94, 2000	Independent State	U.S., UN, European Union, Russia, Egypt, Jordan	
	Israel vs. Syria & Lebanon	2001-	Water, land and peace	UN, U.S., Turkey	
	India vs. Assam Rebels (NDFB)	1982-	Independence	UN, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh	
	India vs. All-Party Hurriyat Conference Kashmiri militants	1989	Ethnic and religious	UN, Pakistan, U.S.	
	India vs. Insurgents in Arunachal Pradesh & Tripura, and Nagaland	1980-	Ethnic unification in separate states	None	
	Myanmar (Burma) junta vs. minorities, Indian Assam rebels, & National League for Democracy	1942-2003, 1988	Ethnic and drug trade, borders, democracy	U.S., UN, Association of South East Asian Nations	Asia
	Nepal vs. Maoist insurgents	1996	Ideological	None	
	People's Republic of China vs. Uigher East Turkistan independence movement	1982	Independence	None	
	East Timor vs. army rebels	2006	Power	Australia	Africa
	Philippines vs. Abu Sayyaf	1999	Ideological and independence	None	
	Thailand vs. Barisan Revolusi Nasional and Mujahideen Islam Pattani	2003-	Economic and religious	Malaysia	
	Côte d'Ivoire vs. army rebels	2002-	Power	France, UN	
	Central African Republic vs. insurgents	2005-	Power	France	
	Chad vs. insurgents	2005-	Power	France	
	Ethiopia vs. Eritrea	1998-2000	Territory	African Union, UN, U.S.	
	Sudan vs. Sudanese People's Liberation Army	1983-2002	Ethnic and religious	U.S., Iran, Uganda	Americas
	Zimbabwe: racial strife	2000-	Political, using ethnic and racial divides	None	
	Republic of Georgia vs. Abkhazia & S. Ossetia	1992-93	Independence	UN, OSCE, Russia, U.S.	
Europe	Haiti government vs. former army and police factions and Aristide supporters	2004-	Economic and power	U.S., UN, Organization of American States	

*Causes are simplifications and should not be regarded as the full explanation for what is often a very complex set of circumstances.

what one analyst termed a perpetual failed state. Even the presence of the UN-approved, Brazilian-led peace-keeping contingent of more than 9,000 cannot quell, let alone prevent, outbreaks of violence that threaten the government. What has changed is the motivation for the violence: more criminal and gang-related than

political, although this makes no difference to those killed.

CONCLUSION

And what of the “global war on terror?” Many say the United States is “losing” even when it “wins” on the battlefield.

The United States no longer has

an “enemy” on which to focus, as it had in the Cold War. Washington, however, fills that role for others, and will continue to do so until the United States puts more concerted effort into creating international institutions that are effective at preventing armed conflict than it puts into creating the national institutions of war. ■



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