Unarmed Civilian Protection/Nonviolent Peace Force, Enhance Truth and Reconciliation Efforts, and Employ Environmental Peacebuilding practices

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(This first recommendation relates to the Unarmed Civilian Protection/Nonviolent Peace Force proposal and the proposal about the importance of building a partnership of people and governments/intergovernmental orgs. It also relates to the proposal to strengthen the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding Nexus (suggested by the Peacebuilding Reflection Group)

1. Reform UN peacebuilding/conflict resolution and prevention practices to focus more on bottom-up (in addition to top-down) initiatives including all civil society organizations/actors (especially those representing minority groups) and using locally rooted ideas of peace to measure success (rather than imposing a peace framework). This includes women, who must play a key role in local (and international) peacebuilding and conflict resolution/prevention initiatives.

- Applicability limited because some argue that strength and effectiveness of civil society is directly proportional to strength of democracy – pre-existing democracy needed?
- Track II diplomacy (that includes civil society) can de-escalate great power tensions by decreasing polarizing rhetoric: Track II (Citizen) Diplomacy | Beyond Intractability
- ***Revenge of the Patriarchs: Why Autocrats Fear Women (foreignaffairs.com):*** *Aspiring autocrats and patriarchal authoritarians have good reason to fear women's political participation: when women participate in mass movements, those movements are both more likely to succeed and more likely to lead to more egalitarian democracy. In other words, fully free, politically active women are a threat to authoritarian and authoritarian-leaning leaders—* ***and so those leaders have a strategic reason to be sexist.***

- *Peace Processes Case Studies | CFR Interactives: Includes case studies of conflict zones in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Libya, etc. and shows how women's participation enhances the likelihood of durable peace and security.*

- Everyday Peace Indicators is a great organization that is promoting local peacebuilding initiatives based on locally-rooted peace measurements: What we do | Everyday Peace (everydaypeaceindicators.org)

2. Enhance Truth and Reconciliation Efforts:

Efforts in the US to establish a Truth and Reconciliation commission: Text - H.Con.Res.19 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Urging the establishment of a United States Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation. | Congress.gov | Library of Congress

Importance of Truth and Reconciliation Efforts: Truth and Memory | International Center for Transitional Justice (ictj.org)

3. **Employ Environmental Peacebuilding practices, which can:**

a) Support economic recovery

b) Promote sustainable livelihoods

c) Contribute to dialogue, cooperation, and confidence building

UNEP Link: [Environmental Cooperation and Peacebuilding | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)

Environmental peacebuilding could also prove to be an invaluable way to de-escalate great power tensions (for example, between the US and China), since the climate crisis and environmental conservation are shared global challenges: [Climate Change Cooperation — Committee for a SANE U.S.-China Policy (saneuschinapolicy.org)](#)

Interesting report about how climate change will increasingly pose a threat to national security (from the perspective of the US): [NIE_Climate_Change_and_National_Security.pdf (dni.gov)](#)

Appendix

Case Studies from the Peace Chart concerning each of the recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Reforming UN peacebuilding/conflict resolution to prioritize bottom-up initiatives and contributions from civil society (especially women.)

Success: Philippines Mindanao region, 2012: Incorporation of women and

women's issues in both formal and informal tracks.

Success: Guatemala, 1990s Civil Society Assembly running parallel to Track 1 negotiations, able to make recommendations in real time

Failure: Syria, Not included, current parties to conflict both have limited legitimacy

Failure: Sri Lanka, early 2000s: Limited to indirect, small-scale work

and internal divisions within civil society groups

Recommendation #2: Actively promoting Truth & Reconciliation efforts.

Success: South Africa. Although there were some criticisms associated with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, this policy has generally been effective. It brought in victims of Apartheid to share their experiences.

Failure: Columbia. The Colombian government has tried many policies to reduce conflict in Colombia, including a truth and reconciliation commission. However, conflict is still a major problem in Colombia.

Recommendation #3: Enhance environmental peacebuilding efforts around the world.

Success: Peru and Ecuador: Peace parks were established on either side of the border in the Cordillera del Cóndor region, fostering local economic development, strengthening bilateral cooperation on environmental conservation, and reducing political tensions.

Success: Sudan: A post-conflict environmental assessment (PCEA) process was established, featuring workshops that united political leaders from North and South Sudan to discuss environmental issues. These workshops gradually became platforms for discussing other political issues that were the cause of division in the country, fostering intergovernmental dialogue and reconciliation.

Success: Afghanistan: The UNEP conducted a post-conflict environmental assessment in Afghanistan in 2003, finding that the destruction of Afghanistan's natural resources was a key factor in driving poverty and endangering the livelihoods of people living in rural areas. The report also concluded that employment generation and investment in Afghanistan's rural sector would be key part of post- conflict reconstruction. In response, the government created the Afghanistan Conservation Corps (ACC) to work with local community leaders to provide environmental conservation jobs to low-income Afghans as a way to rebuild the natural resource base, including by planting trees. The sustainable management of natural resources as a way to promote sustainable livelihoods has been a core tenet of this employment program.

Failure: Iran-Iraq (2004): In 2004, the Iraqi government requested that the UNEP initiate a process uniting the Iraqi and the Iranian governments to discuss transboundary water issues related to the Mesopotamian marshes. A meeting was convened in Geneva to stimulate information sharing between the two governments and served as a powerful trust- building mechanism. Unfortunately, escalating political tensions between the two countries stalled progress.

Failure: Afghanistan-Iran: Climate change and mismanagement of the Sistan Basin contributed to the complete drying of the basin between 2001-2005, which escalated socioeconomic and political tension by spurring massive displacement and enhancing unemployment. In 2002, the UNEP got involved in promoting "environmental diplomacy" between the two countries. The subsequent intergovernmental meetings resulted in a mutual commitment to make the environmental sustainability of the Basin a priority and share information on the Basin's water level. Unfortunately, further cooperation broke down due to increasing instability.