

Senior Political Advisor (F)

Contact Group

Background

You are currently a professor of political science at a top university in the United States. Before becoming a professor, you were a career diplomat with the US Department of State. During your time as a Foreign Service Officer you worked with a number of host governments on democracy and governance, stabilization, and conflict mitigation. You officially retired from the State Department about five years ago and have used your retirement to pursue a second career teaching university-level courses.

During your time at the State Department, you developed a reputation for yourself as a charismatic and politically savvy diplomat and earned respect from your peers and people you worked with around the world. You have had experience advising US delegations in other peace negotiations and have now been called in to be the political strategy advisor to the Contact Group, who is funding and providing technical support to the Joint Mediation team and the peace process as a whole.

While a final date and time has not been set for the formal peace talks to begin, the parties have agreed to meet in person at some point in time to discuss the power sharing provisions of the peace agreement. This meeting will take place in Abayo (the capital of Trumont) and will include the Joint Mediation Team, the parties, and members of the Contact Group as observers. This structure has been tentatively agreed upon by the parties, but is not set in stone. The Lead Mediator is generally against making any changes to the structure and/or configuration of actors present at the talks; any such changes would require agreement by the parties (and Contact Group).

What you hope to accomplish

Like the other members of the Contact Group, you would like to see this conflict come to an end via a robust peace agreement that incorporates the interests of all parties to the conflict.

Your primary role is to serve the members of the Contact Group and provide them with any technical support they need. However, you are aware that the members of the Contact Group have their own agendas based on national interest. You want to try to make sure those agendas don't overshadow the interests of the Danaanian people, which is necessary to achieve lasting peace. An important part of your role is to make sure the Contact Group takes into account the needs and interests of the people of Danaan, since those views may not be expressed by the parties to the conflict. Since time is limited, the best vehicle for that will be to meet with civil society representatives. In your experience, you've found women's civil society groups to be a particularly reliable resource for providing this kind of information.

Early on in your career, you believed women's participation in peace processes was a nice idea in theory but not something worth pushing at the expense of a peace accord. However, the more time you've spent working in the field, the more you've realized how women's involvement can truly result in more sustainable peace agreements. For example in Northern Ireland, South Africa, and Somalia, women participants developed a reputation for building trust, engaging all sides, and fostering dialogue in otherwise acrimonious settings. When you supported the Liberian peace

process, you saw the instrumental role that women played in expressing the concerns of the Liberian people at the peace talks and pushing the parties toward agreement.

You hope to convey the added value of women's inclusion to Contact Group members, in the hope of supporting lasting peace in Danaan. This could require setting up meetings between Contact Group members and the most organized and well-spoken civil society organizations. But the Contact Group members are very busy, so you want to make sure that any civil society groups you bring (1) reflect Danaanian society and (2) have succinct recommendations for the Contact Group.

You recently learned that the ROEI Commission on Gender has an office in Danaan. You're familiar with their work in other ROEI conflict areas; they typically have strong connections to women's civil society on the ground, but also have a reputation for working only with elite women. You may want to reach out to the Commission as a way to start building your relationship with civil society.

Although you are supporting the Contact Group as a whole, there is some pressure from back home to make sure the US interests are represented. You see these talks as an important opportunity for the US to gain increased influence in this region. As former British colonies, Danaan and its neighbors have been important economic partners for the UK for many years, but with its rich oil reserves, Danaan could be a good partner for the US as well. Your role here is not to push for US interests, but this economic opportunity does influence your view of the conflict and forthcoming peace agreement.

Capacity to create change

Your political strategy savvy is your biggest asset. As advisor to the Contact Group, you have the opportunity to connect the Contact Group to the people of Danaan and to show them, and their home governments, that the needs of the Danaanian people must be addressed in order to resolve the conflict. Your biggest capacity for change is your ability to decide which civil society groups should meet with the Contact Group in order to shape their agendas.

Relationships with other roles

You worked with the US Special Envoy during your time at the State Department and have a good relationship with him. You are less familiar with the UK Special Envoy and worry that you could be perceived as being more partial to US interests. You have gotten to know the Trumonian Minister of Foreign Affairs through your work in the Contact Group, but are less familiar with him as well.

You have also met with the Joint Mediation Team and have a strong working relationship with them.