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From Economic Greed to Reflections on the DRC-Rwanda Agreement: Myth or Reality of Lasting Peace?

NGOMA PHAKA Vincent de Paul[1], MASIALA Ephraïm[2]

1 Ph.D. candidate in International Relations at the National Pedagogical University (UPN), Member of the African Geopolitical Observatory

2 Researcher in Law

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ABSTRACT

This article critically examines U.S. intervention in the DRC-Rwanda conflict through a geo-economic and strategic lens, highlighting the interplay between diplomacy, security, and economic interests. It explores Washington's underlying motives, including geopolitical objectives, regional influence, and strategic repositioning in Central Africa. The study demonstrates that U.S. intervention is often preemptive and expedited to constrain rivals and rebalance economic power. The peace achieved is viewed as a strategic lever to secure access to critical Congolese resources. It also fosters regional stability conducive to U.S. investments. However, this mediation raises concerns about the sustainability of peace when it relies on external interests. The article concludes that U.S. mediation represents both an opportunity for stabilization and a mechanism for safeguarding economic interests, making the durability of peace relative and context dependent.

Keywords: Mediation, peace, agreement, intervention, strategic resources.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War, the African Great Lakes region has remained an area of intense geopolitical tension, where armed conflicts, state rivalries, and transnational economic interests intersect. At the heart of this persistent instability, relations between the DRC and the Republic of Rwanda constitute a major strategic flashpoint, marked by recurring crises, accusations of interference, and chronic insecurity in eastern Congo. This long-standing conflict has gradually moved beyond a strictly bilateral framework to become part of a regional and international dynamic, drawing the attention and intervention of numerous external actors.

In this context, international mediation emerges as a key tool for conflict management and resolution. However, in international relations, mediation cannot be viewed as a neutral or exclusively peacemaking endeavor. It also serves as a lever of influence, enabling mediating powers to advance their strategic, diplomatic, and economic interests in areas deemed sensitive. Consequently, mediation often operates within an ambivalent dynamic between the pursuit of stability and the advancement of national interests. U.S. mediation between the DRC and Rwanda fits precisely into this framework. Long characterized by an indirect presence in Central Africa, U.S. foreign policy has, since the 2010s, seen a renewed interest in this region, which is considered strategic from both a security and economic standpoint. This shift can be explained by the restructuring of the international system, characterized by rising rivalries among major powers and the growing centrality of natural resources in the global balance of power.

The DRC occupies a unique position in this regard. Endowed with exceptional mining potential, it holds a significant share of the world's strategic resources, notably cobalt, coltan, and copper, which are indispensable to high-tech industries, the energy transition, and the digital economy. This wealth confers major geo-economic importance on the country, but it also constitutes a structural factor of instability, fueling greed, interference, and armed conflicts.

From this perspective, peace in the DRC appears not only as a humanitarian and security imperative but also as an essential condition for securing foreign investment and ensuring the smooth flow of global supply chains. U.S. mediation between Kinshasa and Kigali can thus be interpreted as an attempt at regional stabilization aimed at creating an environment favorable to Western economic interests, against a backdrop of increased competition with other powers foremost among them China, whose economic presence in the DRC has grown significantly over the past two decades. This competitive dimension lends U.S. mediation a profoundly ambivalent character. On the one hand, it presents itself as a diplomatic initiative intended to reduce tensions between two states whose conflictual relations destabilize the entire Great Lakes region. On the other hand, it raises the question of whether peace is being instrumentalized viewed less as an end in itself than as a means of rebalancing economic and strategic influences in Central Africa.

Furthermore, the experience of previous peace processes in the DRC calls for a cautious analysis. Several agreements negotiated under the auspices of international actors have failed to establish lasting peace because they did not address the structural causes of the conflict, notably the poor governance of natural resources, porous borders, and regional dynamics of economic exploitation. In this context, mediation focused primarily on immediate stability risks producing a fragile, if not illusory, peace. Consequently, the central question of this study can be formulated as follows: Is the economic self-interest underlying the mediation of the peace agreement between the DRC and Rwanda a diplomatic myth or a reality capable of producing lasting peace? This question points to a classic dichotomy in international relations between an idealistic view of peace based on cooperation and the good faith of the actors and a realist approach, according to which states act primarily in accordance with their national interests.

The hypothesis put forward is that this mediation is relative: while it may contribute to a temporary de-escalation of tensions between the DRC and Rwanda, it remains largely conditioned by U.S. economic and geostrategic interests, which limits the scope and sustainability of the peace sought. Peace thus appears less as an end than as an instrument serving external interests, which may conflict with the deep-seated aspirations of local populations and the Congolese state's sovereignty imperatives.

To test this hypothesis, this analysis will focus on two main areas. The first will examine U.S. mediation between the DRC and Rwanda through a geo-economic lens, highlighting its strategic foundations and its role within the competition among foreign powers' "" (I). The second will evaluate U.S. mediation as a potential vehicle for lasting peace or, conversely, as a mechanism for securing economic interests, thereby revealing the relativity of a peace founded on exogenous interests (II).

2. U.S. MEDIATION BETWEEN THE DRC AND RWANDA: A GEO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

U.S. mediation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda takes place within an international context in which geo-economic considerations play an increasingly prominent role in the conduct of international relations. In a system marked by competition for access to strategic resources and by shifting power dynamics, diplomacy becomes an instrument for securing economic interests as much as a mechanism for conflict management. Central Africa, and the DRC in particular, thus emerges as a strategic region, given the importance of its mineral resources and its position at the heart of contemporary economic rivalries. The stability of this region is a major concern for the major powers notably the United States which are engaged in a process of strategic repositioning in the face of the rising influence of new international actors, foremost among them China.

From this perspective, U.S. mediation between Kinshasa and Kigali cannot be understood without an analysis of the strategic foundations of U.S. involvement, which stem not only from geopolitical and diplomatic interests but also from a desire to redeploy U.S. influence in Central Africa. Furthermore, this mediation must also be examined in light of competition among foreign powers, which transforms peace into an instrument for rebalancing economic influences in the region. The analysis in this first part is structured around these two axes: one focused on the internal logic of U.S. action (A), and the other on the international competitive environment (B).

2.1 The Strategic Foundations of U.S. Involvement

U.S. mediation in the DRC-Rwanda conflict cannot be viewed solely through a humanitarian or peacekeeping lens. On the contrary, it is part of a strategic framework that combines geopolitical objectives, the protection of economic interests, and the projection of power. As Philippe Hugon states, “U.S. diplomacy, in Africa as elsewhere, constantly combines security objectives, economic interests, and political influence.”

In the context of the Great Lakes region, this strategic involvement takes on its full significance: the DRC, due to the exceptional wealth of its mineral resources and its central geographic location, serves as a regional pivot, while Rwanda, through its stability and political influence, is a key player in resolving the conflict and securing economic corridors. Thus, U.S. mediation can only be understood through an analysis of its strategic foundations, which fall primarily into two categories: on the one hand, the geopolitical and diplomatic interests of the United States (1); on the other hand, mediation as an instrument for Washington’s strategic repositioning in Central Africa (2).

2.1.1 U.S. Geopolitical and Diplomatic Interests in DRC-Rwanda Mediation

U.S. involvement in DRC-Rwanda mediation is primarily driven by geopolitical and diplomatic motivations. The Great Lakes region has historically been unstable, and this instability poses a risk to all of Central Africa. As Roland POURTIER points out, “conflicts in eastern DRC are never isolated; they involve regional, cross-border, and international dynamics, drawing in neighboring states and non-state actors.”

For the United States, mediation is therefore a means of preventing the spread of instability, but also of strengthening its diplomatic influence. Bertrand BADIE explains that “the role of the mediator is never neutral; it shapes the conditions for conflict resolution and influences the decisions of the parties.” By intervening in the DRC-Rwanda conflict, Washington positions itself as a central actor, capable of steering negotiations and exercising recognized regional leadership.

Geopolitical interests also revolve around securing strategic corridors and sensitive border areas. The DRC, by virtue of its size and location, serves as a geopolitical pivot: its stability directly affects neighboring countries and the flow of regional traffic. By seeking to stabilize relations with Rwanda, U.S. mediation helps consolidate a predictable and controllable regional environment that is favorable to Western interests.

On the diplomatic front, U.S. intervention also helps reinforce the image of the United States as a regulatory power. In a multipolar world where the legitimacy of foreign interventions is constantly questioned, mediation offers Washington a form of legitimacy. It projects the idea that U.S. power can ensure stability and supporting peaceful solutions, thereby consolidating its role in the contemporary international order.

Finally, U.S. mediation serves a broader objective: to prepare a favorable environment for future economic and security engagements. By politically stabilizing the DRC and its relations with Rwanda, Washington can ensure the security of mineral flows and strategic investments by reducing the risks associated with armed conflicts and cross-border tensions. This geopolitical dimension clearly shows that mediation is

not merely a humanitarian initiative, but a calculated tool for projecting power.

The preceding analysis underscores that U.S. mediation is driven by a combination of diplomatic and geopolitical interests. However, mediation is not limited to these immediate objectives. It is also part of a broader strategy of strategic repositioning in Central Africa, aimed at consolidating U.S. influence in the face of regional and international competitors. This logic warrants a more in-depth examination of mediation as an instrument of repositioning.

2.1.2 Mediation as an Instrument of U.S. Strategic Repositioning in Central Africa

U.S. involvement in the DRC-Rwanda conflict can be understood as an instrument of strategic repositioning. Following a period of relative withdrawal in the early 21st century, the United States observed the rising influence of China and other economic actors in Africa, shifting the balance of power. François GAULME observes that "Africa has once again become an arena of international competition, where the presence of major powers is measured by their capacity for political and economic influence."

In this context, mediation emerges as a non-coercive tool for projecting power, allowing the United States to reposition itself without resorting to direct military interventions. Jean-François BAYART points out that "power can be exercised indirectly, through control of institutional and diplomatic processes, rather than through brute force." Mediation thus serves as a lever to strengthen the U.S. presence and reaffirm its ability to influence regional decisions. This repositioning takes concrete form through several actions: mobilizing regional partners, engaging in negotiation processes, funding security and development programs, and monitoring the commitments made by the parties to the conflict. These measures help create an environment favorable to U.S. interests while consolidating Washington's diplomatic influence.

This approach also reveals an element of long-term strategic planning. By stabilizing the DRC and facilitating dialogue with Rwanda, the United States seeks to secure areas rich in strategic resources, guarantee sustainable access to regional markets, and limit the influence of competitors, particularly China. In this vein, Samir AMIN notes that "the diplomatic interventions of major powers always serve to secure economic and strategic interests."

Finally, this repositioning is inextricably linked to a soft power strategy. U.S. mediation helps reinforce the image of the United States as a partner for stability and development, which facilitates future partnerships and consolidates its role in the regional architecture of security and economic cooperation.

Thus, the strategic foundations of U.S. involvement are clear: they combine geopolitical interests, diplomatic legitimacy, and the projection of power. However, this strategy cannot be analyzed independently of competition with other foreign powers, notably China, whose influence in the DRC is a determining factor in the timing and nature of U.S. mediation. The following analysis helps to understand how mediation fits into the context of international rivalry and competition for strategic resources.

2.2 Mediation in the Face of Competition from Foreign Powers

While the United States ostensibly intervenes to promote peace between the DRC and Rwanda, its mediation cannot be viewed in isolation from the dynamics of international rivalry and competition for regional influence. The DRC, with its immense mineral potential and strategic location in Central Africa, is today a battleground for indirect confrontation between major powers, notably the United States and China. "Africa has once again become an arena of competition where global and regional powers seek to consolidate their positions, particularly in the economic and security- " U.S. mediation is not limited to humanitarian or diplomatic objectives. It has become a tool for containing the influence of other powers, securing Western economic interests, and creating a strategic environment favorable to the United States. This logic is clearly evident in two dimensions: the urgency of mediation to limit Chinese influence, and peace as a means of rebalancing economic and political relations in the DRC.

Thus, U.S. mediation takes place in an international environment marked by multipolarity and great-power competition. China's increased presence in Central Africa and the diversification of international actors have transformed the role of U.S. diplomacy. According to Michel FOUCHER, "U.S. interventions in Africa must now be understood as strategic responses to the rise of other powers, and not merely as humanitarian actions."

Thus, U.S. mediation is part of a strategy to manage international competition, in which regional stability is both an objective (A) and a means of preserving U.S. interests in a competitive environment (B).

2.2.1 Hasty Mediation Aimed at Containing China's Presence on Congolese Soil

China has become a key player in the DRC thanks to its massive investments in infrastructure and the mining sector. Since the early 2000s, Beijing has positioned itself as a strategic economic partner, offering financing, construction projects, and industrial partnerships in key sectors such as cobalt, coltan, and copper. Jean-Marc BLANCHARD emphasizes that "China has transformed its economic presence into a strategic lever, enabling it to exert considerable political and diplomatic influence in Africa."

This Chinese expansion has altered the U.S. perception of Central Africa, prompting Washington to adopt a more rapid and proactive mediation strategy. The urgency of U.S. mediation stems from a desire to limit Beijing's ability to reshape the regional balance of power and to ensure that political and economic decisions remain favorable to Western interests.

In practice, this translates into immediate involvement in DRC-Rwanda negotiations, a strengthened diplomatic presence, and close monitoring of the commitments made by the parties. This approach allows for indirect control over the political and economic landscape, reducing the room for maneuvering of competing actors. François GAULME notes that "the major powers project their influence through mediation and diplomacy, controlling the rules of the game without directly resorting to military force." The haste with which the U.S. mediation was undertaken should therefore not be interpreted solely as a humanitarian effort, but as a strategic response to international competition, aimed at securing access to resources and maintaining a position of dominant influence.

While the haste of the mediation effort aims to contain Chinese influence, its objective goes beyond this simple rivalry. U.S. mediation also seeks to create a stable regional environment conducive to rebalancing economic and political relations, and to consolidate the United States' strategic position in the region. Peace thus becomes an instrument for projecting economic and diplomatic power, and not merely a humanitarian goal.

2.2.2 Peace as a Prerequisite for Rebalancing Economic Influences in the DRC

The political stabilization of the DRC and its relations with Rwanda is central to ensuring an environment conducive to U.S. interests. According to Susan Strange, "political security and economic stability are inseparable in the strategy of great powers. Peace becomes a means of projecting indirect power."

In the Congolese context, peace serves to:

- Securing Western investments: U.S. businesses and companies operating in the mining sector benefit directly from regional stability. Mediation therefore helps protect these investments and ensure the continuity of economic flows.
- Rebalancing the balance of influence: Stabilizing DRC-Rwanda relations limits the expansion of competing actors and reaffirms the U.S. position as a key partner in the region. Mediation thus becomes a strategic lever, allowing for the redrawing of alliances and strengthening the DRC's dependence on Western powers.
- Facilitating access to strategic resources: Peace and security are prerequisites for exploiting and controlling Congolese mineral resources—particularly cobalt and coltan—which are essential to the U.S. high-tech and defense industries. As François Grignon explains, "Control over strategic resources is inseparable from diplomacy and regional stability strategies."

Thus, U.S. mediation is not limited to a humanitarian objective; it becomes a tool for securing economic interests, restoring the balance of power, and consolidating U.S. influence in the face of international rivals.

The peace sought by the United States is thus instrumentalized to achieve strategic objectives, which raises questions about its sustainability and about the DRC's true independence in defining its political and economic choices. As Bertrand BADIE points out, "a peace built on exogenous interest's risks being fragile if it does not take into account local dynamics and the root causes of the conflict."

Overall, U.S. mediation in the face of competition from foreign powers reveals a dual objective: to contain the influence of competing actors, notably China, and to create a stable regional environment favorable to U.S. interests. U.S. diplomacy thus combines haste, strategic positioning, and economic security. This analysis sets the stage for Section II, which examines U.S. mediation as either a vehicle for lasting peace or a mechanism for protecting economic interests, highlighting the tensions between peaceful objectives and power politics.

3. U.S. MEDIATION: A VEHICLE FOR LASTING PEACE OR A MECHANISM FOR ECONOMIC INTERESTS

U.S. mediation in conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is officially presented as a diplomatic initiative aimed at promoting lasting peace, regional stability, and the prevention of armed crises. In diplomatic discourse, the United States positions itself as a neutral actor, committed to promoting dialogue, multilateralism, and the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with the principles of international law. This stance is part of a liberal tradition in international politics, according to which mediation is a preferred tool for pacifying relations between states and consolidating security.

However, a critical examination of this mediation reveals a fundamental ambivalence between the stated goal of lasting peace and the pursuit of strategic interests, particularly economic ones. Indeed, mediation cannot be analyzed independently of the power dynamics that shape the foreign policy of major powers. As Raymond Aron points out, all foreign policy is primarily guided by the defense of national interests, even when it claims to be based on universalist principles. Thus, U.S. mediation appears less as a mere humanitarian mechanism than as an instrument for projecting American influence in a strategic geopolitical space.

From this perspective, the peace sought can be interpreted as a functional peace that is, a minimal level of stability that allows for the continuity of economic exchanges, the security of foreign investments, and control over resource-rich areas. Samir Amin demonstrates that, within the global system, the interventions of dominant powers in peripheral countries are aimed above all at maintaining conditions favorable to capital accumulation and the dependent integration of these states into the global economy. Mediation thus becomes a mechanism for the political regulation of crises, rather than a genuine process of structural transformation of conflicts.

Consequently, U.S. mediation oscillates between two contradictory logics: on the one hand, a normative logic based on the pursuit of lasting peace; on the other, a realist logic guided by the defense of economic and strategic interests. This structural tension explains why the peace resulting from such mediations often remains fragile, dependent on international power dynamics, and insufficiently rooted in local social dynamics. As Bertrand BADIE asserts, peace imposed by the great powers tends to produce artificial stability, which masks the root causes of conflicts without truly resolving them.

In short, U.S. mediation can be understood as a hybrid mechanism both a potential vehicle for pacification and a mechanism for reproducing global economic interests which raises the fundamental question of the sincerity and true sustainability of the peace it claims to establish.

3.1 Securing U.S. Mineral Interests Under the Guise of Peace

Under the guise of a diplomatic commitment to peace and regional stability, U.S. mediation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is also part of a strategy to secure economic interests, particularly in the mining sector. Indeed, the DRC occupies a ly strategic position in the global economy due to its abundance of natural resources, notably cobalt, coltan, copper, and lithium, which are indispensable to contemporary technology and energy industries. This geoeconomic centrality gives the country particular importance in the strategies of major powers, including the United States, which are keen to ensure stable and secure access to these critical minerals.

From this perspective, the pursuit of peace appears less as an end than as a prerequisite for securing mining areas and protecting foreign investments. Political and security stability is thus presented as an imperative that is not only humanitarian but, above all, economic, as it guarantees the continuity of extractive activities and the reliability of supply chains. As Jean-François BAYART points out, external interventions in Africa are frequently justified by normative rhetoric, whereas they are fundamentally aimed at gaining access to strategic resources and controlling economic spaces.

U.S. mediation therefore functions as an instrument of political regulation designed to create an institutional environment favorable to U.S. mineral interests. It helps establish utilitarian peace, geared toward securing markets and investments, rather than an emancipatory peace based on the economic sovereignty of the states concerned. This instrumentalization of peace thus reveals the profoundly geoeconomic nature of U.S. diplomacy in regions rich in natural resources.

3.1.1 Mediation as a Means of Securing Strategic Congolese Resources

U.S. mediation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be interpreted as an indirect instrument for securing strategic resources, in a context where armed conflicts primarily affect regions with high concentrations of mineral deposits. Indeed, the eastern part of the country, a recurring hotbed of instability is rich in so-called critical minerals, which are indispensable

to contemporary industrial economies. In this context, mediation aims not only to bring about a cessation of hostilities but also to achieve political stabilization in mining areas to ensure the continuity of extractive activities and the protection of foreign interests.

U.S. diplomacy thus operates within a geoeconomic framework, where security becomes a central factor in accessing natural resources. Mediation helps reduce political uncertainty, prevent disruptions to supply chains, and strengthen an institutional environment conducive to investment. As Samir Amin points out, the stability sought in peripheral countries is above all a functional stability, intended to ensure the integration of these economies into the global capitalist system under asymmetrical terms.

Furthermore, this mediation helps legitimize the U.S. presence in the management of Congolese crises by giving economic intervention a political and normative dimension. By positioning itself as a mediator, the United States consolidates its role as a key player in the governance of strategic resources, while masking its self-interest behind a humanitarian and peacemaking narrative. Jean-Marc ELA points out in this regard that international strategies in Africa often combine moral rhetoric with economic rationality, transforming peace into a tool for indirect control over resources.

Thus, U.S. mediation appears less as a simple conflict-resolution mechanism than as a lever for geostrategic security, enabling the preservation of access to Congolese resources while strengthening U.S. influence in the African economic sphere.

3.1.2 Regional Stability as a Guarantee of Sustainable Access to Mineral Resources

U.S. mediation is not limited to the ad hoc management of internal Congolese crises but is part of a broader regional stabilization strategy aimed at securing sustainable access to mineral resources. Indeed, armed conflicts in the Great Lakes region have transnational effects, disrupting trade routes, weakening infrastructure, and jeopardizing long-term investments. From this perspective, regional stability is an essential condition for the reliability of supply chains for strategic minerals, which are indispensable to industrial economies.

The pursuit of this stability is based on the idea that bringing peace to the region would create a secure environment conducive to the continued exploitation of natural resources. U.S. mediation thus contributes to the construction of a minimal regional order, based on the prevention of interstate conflicts and security cooperation, but primarily oriented toward the protection of economic interests. As Bertrand BADIE points out, the stability promoted by the great powers is not an emancipatory stability, but a regulatory stability, intended to limit the systemic risks weighing on international markets.

Furthermore, this logic of regional stabilization tends to favor superficial peace, centered on the security-based management of tensions, without challenging the deep-seated structures of exploitation and economic dependence. Samir AMIN demonstrates that the pacification of the peripheries of the world system serves above all to guarantee the reproduction of unequal relations between industrial centers and extractive regions. Consequently, the regional stability promoted by U.S. mediation appears to be an instrumental condition for sustainable access to mineral resources, rather than a genuine project for autonomous development for the states concerned.

3.2 Lasting Peace Subordinated to U.S. Interests

The peace resulting from U.S. mediation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo appears to be fundamentally conditioned by the pursuit of U.S. strategic interests, which limits its structural scope and actual sustainability. Indeed, far from being based on a purely humanitarian or normative logic, this mediation is embedded in a geopolitical framework in which political stability serves as a means of securing economic areas deemed vital. As Raymond ARON points out, peace in the international system is never a neutral state, but rather the product of a balance of power among states seeking above all to preserve their fundamental interests.

From this perspective, the peace promoted by the United States is more of an instrumental peace than a transformative one. It aims primarily to create a political environment conducive to investment, the flow of capital, and the protection of strategic resources, rather than to resolve the root causes of conflict, such as social marginalization, state weakness, or structural inequalities. Samir Amin asserts in this regard that peacebuilding processes in peripheral countries serve primarily to stabilize the conditions of economic exploitation imposed by the center of the world system.

Consequently, this peace remains largely dependent on external interests and is characterized by an intrinsic fragility, as it is based neither on effective local ownership nor on a genuine transformation of structures of domination. Bertrand BADIE thus speaks of “peace under tutelage,” that is, a peace imposed from the outside, which maintains the existing international order without challenging the imbalances that

produced it. Lasting peace thus appears to be subordinate to U.S. interests, making it a conditional stability that serves global agendas but is insufficiently rooted in Congolese political and social realities.

3.2.1 Mediation Primarily Aimed at Serving U.S. Interests

U.S. mediation in conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo appears fundamentally geared toward serving the strategic interests of the United States, which calls into question its impartial and universal nature. Indeed, far from being a mere neutral mechanism for the peaceful resolution of disputes, mediation is part of a foreign policy framework in which geopolitical and economic considerations play a central role. As Raymond ARON points out, all diplomatic action is first and foremost determined by the hierarchy of national interests, even when it takes the form of a moral or humanitarian commitment.

From this perspective, U.S. mediation aims primarily to preserve a regional environment compatible with U.S. strategic objectives, notably securing investments, controlling spheres of influence, and protecting supply chains for strategic resources. Peace thus becomes an instrument of political regulation, serving to limit the risks of instability that could threaten U.S. economic interests. Samir Amin demonstrates that great powers frequently employ rhetoric of pacification to stabilize the peripheries of the world system and ensure the reproduction of relations of economic domination.

Furthermore, this strategic orientation of mediation tends to marginalize local dynamics of conflict resolution by favoring institutional solutions that conform to international standards but are often disconnected from internal social realities. Bertrand BADIE asserts in this regard that contemporary diplomacy produces forms of imposed peace, constructed according to the interests of the dominant powers rather than the actual needs of the societies concerned. U.S. mediation thus appears less as a process of political emancipation than as a strategic tool serving U.S. interests.

3.2.2 The Relativity of a Lasting Peace Based on Exogenous Interests

Peace resulting from U.S. mediation appears fundamentally relative insofar as it rests on a s of exogenous interests that is, interests external to Congolese social, political, and economic dynamics. Indeed, when a peace process is primarily guided by the strategic priorities of foreign actors, it tends to produce artificial stability, disconnected from the structural causes of conflict. As Jean-François BAYART points out, forms of peace imposed from the outside are part of a logic of international governance that prioritizes order and predictability at the expense of genuine sovereignty and the internal aspirations of the societies concerned.

From this perspective, peace becomes a provisional political arrangement, dependent on international power dynamics and the enduring interests of the mediating powers. As soon as these interests evolve or shift toward other strategic areas, the stability achieved can quickly become fragile. Samir AMIN asserts in this regard that the peripheries of the world system never enjoy autonomous peace, but rather a conditional peace, subordinate to the economic and geopolitical needs of the center.

Furthermore, this exogenous peace tends to overshadow local demands related to social justice, the redistribution of resources, and the reconstruction of the state—demands that are, in fact, the foundations of a truly sustainable peace. Bertrand BADIE thus speaks of “peace under dependency,” characterized by a lack of internal ownership and the reproduction of the imbalances that fueled the conflicts. The peace promoted by U.S. mediation thus appears to be a relative, fragile, and structurally unstable peace, as it is based on external interests rather than on an endogenous transformation of Congolese realities.

CONCLUSION

From economic greed to the mediation of the peace agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, this analysis highlights the profound ambivalence that characterizes contemporary peacebuilding processes in Central Africa. While international mediation and more specifically U.S. mediation is officially presented as an instrument for peaceful conflict resolution and regional stabilization, it appears inseparable from the economic and geostrategic logics that shape the international order. Peace is therefore not only a humanitarian or political objective but also a major economic stake, closely linked to access to and control over strategic natural resources.

The DRC–Rwanda peace agreement is part of this paradoxical dynamic: on the one hand, it embodies the hope for a normalization of bilateral relations, a reduction in security tensions in the Great Lakes region, and an improvement in the living conditions of populations affected by decades of conflict. On the other hand, it reveals the limitations of a peace largely shaped by external actors, whose priorities do not always align with the structural needs of local societies. Mediation thus appears less as an effort to profoundly transform the causes of the conflict than as a mechanism for

the political management of crises, aimed at producing a minimal level of stability in the interests of the major powers.

Consequently, the central question is not merely whether peace is real or illusory, but rather to understand the very nature of this peace. It is a functional peace, geared toward securing economic spaces and ensuring the continuity of strategic flows, rather than an emancipatory peace based on social justice, economic sovereignty, and the effective reconstruction of the state. This form of peace, while capable of temporarily reducing armed violence, remains fragile, conditional, and dependent on international geopolitical balances.

Ultimately, the mediation of the DRC–Rwanda agreement straddles the line between myth and reality: reality, insofar as it helps establish a framework for dialogue and regional cooperation; myth, insofar as it does not challenge the underlying dynamics of economic exploitation and structural dependence that fuel the conflicts. Truly sustainable peace, therefore, cannot be imported or imposed from the outside, but must be built on internal dynamics, sovereign control over resources, and the genuine participation of the affected populations. Without this endogenous ownership, any peace will remain relative, temporary, and vulnerable to shifts in international interests.

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