IS THE KITCHEN THE NEW VENUE OF FOREIGN POLICY?

IDEAS ON FOOD AS A TOOL FOR DIPLOMACY, BUILDING PEACE AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

A REPORT OF THE CONFLICT CUISINE PROJECT, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICE
Conflict Cuisine examines the nexus of food and war. Included in this study of conflict cuisines are the foods people who have left these conflict states in the setting of a dining room. There are two forms of Conflict Cuisine. The first is food in zones of conflict. These are the foods of war. They are carried by soldiers into battle and HDRs - humanitarian daily rations - the sustenance of refugees fleeing conflict! Food in zones of conflict raged? From the first generation of Vietnamese immigrants, refugees to the United States in the 1970s to the Ethiopians fleeing their country's horrific civil wars to thousands of immigrants from Central America and Southeast Asia. Increasingly, water is emerging as an issue, with soldiers carrying pure drinking water and farmers and civilians seeking to get access to clean water. There is growing research confirming the connection between the political and criminal violence. There are still more than 1.5 billion people who in live in conflict-affected, post conflict, or fragile states. Today we live in a world where the presence of fragile states creates the potential to be as precious as oil - and an equally contentious commodity. There has been a dramatic reduction of global poverty over the last 60 years, we are now living in a period with repeated cycles of conflict. It is an area where there is little interdisciplinary academic research - especially as it relates to political governance issues that are the basis for many conflicts. Food in zones of conflict is a phenomenon that encompasses access to food, food security, and the impact fighting in the field has on existing food supplies and provisioning of goods to markets. Food is often studied as a means of creating a new life in their adopted country – both as a means of remembering their homeland and to earn a living. Yet even today we do not fully understand what levels or aspects of allowing students to get out and meet diaspora chefs, taste the foods of conflict cultures, and to use the themes of the work on conflict cuisine, to offer those who attend a capstone course in the spring of 2013. I was even invited me to another event at American University that actually attended a taste of the foods of conflict cultures, and to use the idea to American University’s School of International Service. As luck would have it I was seated across from a young man, the creator of the term gastrodiplomacy, Paul Rockower, who led me to the conclusion that the time was ripe to connect foods of the conflict with the formal study of war and peace. I also met Professor Craig Hayden, an expert in cultural diplomacy, who had done on post-conflict reconstruction with the role that food played in driving conflict, but also a tool that helped to build peace. The second form of Conflict Cuisine is the food of diaspora populations that transfer their national foodways to new countries. As immigrants also serve as culinary diplomats. Through their cooking, they become the beneficiaries of this cultural transition. Immigrants also serve as cultural envoys. Through their cooking, they become the beneficiaries of this cultural transition. Immigrants also serve as culinary diplomats. Through their cooking, they become the beneficiaries of this cultural transition. Immigrants also serve as culinary diplomats. Through their cooking, they become the beneficiaries of this cultural transition. Immigrants also serve as culinary diplomats. Through their cooking, they become the beneficiaries of this cultural transition. Immigrants also serve as culinary diplomats. Through their cooking, they become the beneficiaries of this cultural transition. Immigrants also serve as culinary diplomats. Through their cooking, they become the beneficiaries of this cultural transition. Immigrants also serve as culinary diplomats. Through their cooking, they become the beneficiaries of this cultural transition.
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Caterer Carlos Cesario, chef and visionary, has also made it possible as the impresario of eating, getting our conflict cuisines ready for lunch.

Special thanks are due to the American University branch of Spoon University. http://american.spoonuniversity.com/ and in particular Mai Someya, its Director of Marketing and Business Development who created the artwork for the conference poster and program, but also provided us with wonderful food to share with participants.

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Finally, I am grateful to the generous gift of the Mann-Paller Foundation that allowed us to host the conference, develop the report, and to have confidence in the concept of conflict cuisines.

Johanna Mendelson Forman, PhD, JD
Scholar-in-Residence
School of International Service
American University
to put these conflicts into a more tangible, more relevant context by
about food, conflict and the connection of both.

nexus of food and war.

aid agencies. Adaptability and innovation are all part of the discussion
I hope you enjoy this day as much as I enjoyed putting this program
preparing recipes from the food they get from vouchers provided by
considered together: food, war and diplomacy.

three subjects that were often treated in depth separately, but not
we have held today as a way to expand our understanding of
My course, “Conflict Cuisines: War and Peace Around the Dinner
If diplomacy fails, what role will food play in conflict? That is the
central in shaping conflicts and their impact on civilians. It is
environmental degradation, and warfare all threaten agriculture
-- all have in common the desire to succeed in a new country through
The Kitchen Sisters have been regaling us for years with their stories
drives conflict, will also be explored as we know that climate change,
My earliest memories of conflict cuisine are the stories my mother
in this last panel.

considered together: food, war and diplomacy.

English. Joan Didion wrote a famous line, “we tell ourselves stories
the face of education about food when chefs combine their skills to
help eliminate food waste or manage food deserts. Culinary tourism,
also consume to celebrate the best of a culture. So why hasn’t the
food becomes something that we must not only eat to survive, but

World Food Program has ever faced. Yet food can also be seen as
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When my daughter at 2-years-old sat in her highchair grabbing the last bits of my homemade macaroni and meatballs and joyfully exclaimed, "I love food!" My then 87-year-old Italian immigrant father was witness to this delicious moment and put his hands together in prayerful thanksgiving to the Lord as if to say, "my work here is done!"

As a child and grandchild of immigrants who came to the US and opened a small Italian grocery store and a neighborhood Neapolitan pizzeria, I understand the concept of a food culture – or gastrodiplomacy as it is called now – the use of food as symbol of national identity as well as a tool to assimilate into an adopted country. We were part of a large ethnic diaspora in Connecticut, many of whom left their homeland for reasons of poverty – and I can identify with that aspect of creating a food culture that Johanna Mendelson Forman teaches here at American University in the Conflict Cuisine course.

I also had the memory of moving here to Washington in 1981. I could not find decent Italian food but I quickly became acquainted with exotic restaurants that featured the cuisine of other cultures and immigrants to this area – restaurants such as Vietnam in Georgetown, or Mama Ayesha's Afghan restaurant in Cleveland Park, the Red Sea Ethiopian restaurant in Adams Morgan, or El Tamarindo and also Omega – the El Salvadoran and Cuban restaurants in Adams Morgan. All of them are countries and populations that had seen their share of conflict and resulting migration. These were the culinary diplomats who used action-forcing events in their countries to create traditions that are now part of our culinary destiny.

Much later, while working at the State Department and the White House, I saw first hand the use of food as a tool of diplomacy – quite literally a delicious use of soft power through the art of culinary diplomacy.

For example, in the planning of State Dinners for foreign heads of state we are eager to showcase our food culture and cuisine, while also giving a nod to the cuisine culture of our foreign guest by utilizing a guest chef, or incorporating a symbol of our guest's national identity in the menu.

But, also during those years I saw the nexus between food and disease and food and conflict. In my travels to nearly 70 countries including many post-conflict nations in the Middle East, Central America, Africa and South Central Asia I saw first hand how the ravages of war -- and the resulting food insecurity -- are a great threat to sustainable development.

Even in the poorest countries - hardest hit by the most challenging circumstances - our foreign hosts were always eager to share their culture through their food and offer whatever they have on their table as a tool of communication about their way of life.

I can distinctly remember tasting the juice of pomegranates in Afghanistan, or of cassava in Liberia. And I definitely have vivid recollections of being offered warm, fermented goat’s milk when sitting in a yurt in 18-degree weather in Ulanbantur, Mongolia. That drink might have a hard time finding a place on a menu here at home --- and certainly was far less appealing to me than the Pisco sours I was offered in Peru!

But they all had the same effect. They told a story about how food is essential to understanding how people relate to each other. That's why this discussion is so exciting. The experts participating in this discussion are sharing their knowledge on this all important topic of food and what we can learn about history, culture -- and conflict -- by examining life around the table.
A discussion of culinary diplomacy, gastrodiplomacy and such as official state chefs exchanging recipes or engaging eat and those who cannot eat. It is about war/peace, too much understand an aspect of her culture.

Reed detailed: Expo Milano is the largest and most historical of state dinners, but there are also interpersonal connections or a cuisine as a tool to create a cross-cultural understanding of culinary diplomacy. Deploying food in a formal way in the field of public diplomacy. "We see nuance and a focus on regional varieties and distinctions between cuisines."

DEFINING CULINARY DIPLOMACY

FOOD AS A FORM OF ENGAGEMENT

THE ROLE OF GASTRODIPLOMACY

GASTRODIPLOMACY, AND CONFLICT CUISINE: Culinary Diplomacy.
which represent 94% of the world’s population. Each country will have a pavilion to showcase their own theme on how they plan to practice sustainability in the future. Biotechnology and food sustainability is important for the future of our planet. Why? In 2050 there will be 9.6 billion people on the planet who will need 70% more food than what we are producing today.

The American pavilion is designed to resemble a grain elevator and the exterior walls will be planted with vertical gardens from which acrobats will periodically harvest produce to serve as part of the meals available for consumption inside. Visitors will be able to experience a traditional American Thanksgiving dinner within the pavilion as well as an assortment of food trucks placed around the city of Milan.

The American pavilion focus is on American Food 2.0: United to Feed the Planet. Why American Food 2.0? Because the United States is intelligently and thoughtfully engaged in food and global food security and we want to be focusing on responsibility, the importance of international relationships, science and technology, nutrition and health, and culinary culture.

During the Q&A segment, audience members were given the opportunity to engage with the panelists on topics not covered in their presentations. Among the key issues raised was the importance of culinary authenticity, food fusion, and gastrodiplomacy and the private sector.

CULINARY AUTHENTICITY AND GASTRODIPLOMACY
The first question asked was how important authenticity of food to a culture when practicing gastrodiplomacy? Paul Rockower explained: It is important to strike a balance between authenticity and accessibility. It would be difficult to serve spicy Indian food to American consumers who enjoy mild salsa. But there is a lot of room to play with the cuisine, such as fusion foods like Korean Tacos.

Tara Sonenshine pointed out: In this discussion drinks must also be considered, as well as food and the branding that accompanies wine. Cheers and toasts within our social customs are important… Cultural sensitivity around what we eat and drink has a positive and negative side of respecting peoples strongly held views about food and drink. For example the ongoing hummus debate between Arabs, Israelis, and Palestinians over who has the most authentic hummus. That is a healthy debate.

IS CULTURAL HYBRIDITY OF FOOD A FORM OF COLONIZATION OF CULTURE?
Another question introduced the idea of cultural hybridity or the blending of multiple cultures into something different and new and whether this is a form or colonization of culture? There must be a balance between creating something familiar and being entrepreneurial. International chefs coming in and using local ingredients creates a notion of food experimentation, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Food is an open-minded field that dares to not always be exactly what you were looking for, explained Tara Sonenshine.

Kimberly Reed noted: There is a beauty of using traditional foods, but in this world there is room to explore and experiment.

CAN GASTRODIPLOMACY BE PERCEIVED AS TOO AGGRESSIVE BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR?
An audience member asked when gastrodiplomacy is practiced by the private sector can it be perceived as too aggressive? Is there a tightrope to be walked between respecting a culture that already exists and bringing the American experience abroad? Paul Rockower explained: Gastrodiplomacy is a little bit different from the private sector. Starbucks is not an actor in gastrodiplomacy because they are a private company expanding to new territories whereas gastrodiplomacy is a government initiative to educate foreign populations on the nuances of a countries food and culture.

WITH FOOD FUSION, WHICH CULTURE CAN LAY CLAIM TO THE NEW CREATION?
As fusion cooking has become an increasingly utilized element of the culinary landscape, one audience member asked, for creations that are a mixture of different cultures, which gets to lay claim to the new creation? For example, who owns Korean Tacos? Paul Rockower declared: Both cultures should take ownership and recognize what stems from each culture because these mixtures and new creations are more interesting as a marriage between cultures.

DOES FOOD BUILD PEACE OR DRIVE CONFLICT?
Yael Luttwak President & CEO of Slimpeace, and Filmmaker Christine Fair Associate Professor, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, and Author of Cooking in the Axis of Evil Manolia Charlotin Director, Feet in Two Worlds Program, The New School Roger-Mark De Souza Director of Population, Environmental Security, and Resilience, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

 DOES FOOD BUILD PEACE OR DRIVE CONFLICT?
Food is an important part of diaspora culture, as people will lose their language but they will not lose their food. Although women are the primary producers of food in different religious communities will not dine with each other on who you are and what social group you fall into. Often discrimination that many street vendors in New York – largely influenced by the North Atlantic slave trade and the Second Intifada in 2005. Members of this weight loss group were chosen from Israelis, Palestinians, Jews, Christians, and different genders will almost never break bread at the same table. Charlotin, Director, Feet in Two Worlds Program, The New School brought a unique voice of diaspora communities to the discussion. Charlotin presented a short video produced by Feet in Two World that highlights the resistance and often humanizing issues of conflict and culture even in the most primordial, divisions.

The discussion opened with a presentation from Yael Luttwak, Filmmaker and President & CEO of Slimpeace, a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women to improve their eating habits and adopt a healthy lifestyle through a group support system run by certified facilitators. Showing a clip from her film, A Slim Peace, and offering brief remarks, Luttwak demonstrated how food can be a powerful tool for economic empowerment, and effective development policies. 

For Christine Fair, Associate Professor, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, and Author of Cooking in the Axis of Evil food is a battlefield. Who you eat with and what you eat goes with food.” said Louis Goodman. Point out that there is injustice and get to build their lives in a new place, food is a wonderful place to do so. As a multimedia journalist and strategist with experience in print, broadcast, and online publications, as well as a deep understanding of the Haitian-American community, Manolia Blume reached out and urged the creation of more weight loss groups, in the Middle East and ten in the United States, including a teen cohort in Portland, Maine. These chapters of Slimpeace. At present, there are thirty cohorts, or weight loss groups, in the Middle East and ten in the United States, including a teen cohort in Portland, Maine. These chapters of Slimpeace.

After the film was presented at various film festivals, Dame Hilary Blume reached out and urged the creation of more weight loss groups, in the Middle East and ten in the United States, including a teen cohort in Portland, Maine. These chapters of Slimpeace.

The globalization of the palate has also served as a platform for understanding discord over larger political issues. For example, the food that we traditionally think of as Caribbean cuisine from the political background from which it originates. How many of these cuisines reflect imperialism, colonialism, or primordial, divisions.

Food brings a cultural vibrancy to a community by serving as a means of integration of new immigrant groups. But we also use food as a tool to build confidence, to help integrate newcomers to communities, and also through sharing of content with the leftovers. For me, food is not the opportunity to express these, often content with the leftovers. For me, food is not the opportunity to express these, often content with the leftovers. For me, food is not the opportunity to express these, often content with the leftovers. For me, food is not the opportunity to express these, often content with the leftovers. For me, food is not the opportunity to express these, often content with the leftovers. For me, food is not the opportunity to express these, often content with the leftovers. For me, food is not the opportunity to express these, often content with the leftovers. For me, food is not the opportunity to express these, often content with the leftovers. 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For anyone who has ever read a cookbook, reading and talking about food yields important insights but actually tasting food brings a new level of understanding. To complement the conference’s lively discussions, the Diaspora Chefs produced a luncheon of their native cuisines. Guests at the conference tasted the cuisines of Vietnam, Thailand, Ethiopia, Lebanon, and El Salvador. The luncheon allowed attendees to interact with the chefs and experience for themselves how food drives connections and conversations.
DIASPORA CHEFS
A CONVERSATION WITH
CUISINES:
TASTING CONFLICT

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your native cuisine popular and where it's at in the United States. Even within the United States, it is easy to promote ethnic with the food expect authenticity, and expect that you deliver on it back, and they pay the bill with tip. People who are familiar matter what you give them, they never complain, they never give

I came to the United States in 1970 to go to school. Nothing to do

However, there is a great demand for Ethiopian cuisine globally. More of the client base at DAS is travelers and tourists. It is a mystery how the United States has a

Tim Carman:

Sileshi Alifom: Within the Ethiopia market, it is already saturated. Fury at L'Academie de Cuisine with Roland Mesnier as well. Now I am

Chef Carlos Cesario: When I moved to DC 15 years ago, there were not many Venezuelans in the area. I have seen the number of this, there are not many true "Venezuelan" dishes. The main

Chef Mariano Ramos: Mexican cuisine's popularity today has a

Charter School, Washington, DC: My parents came to the United States from Mexico. They worked as professionals to expand my horizons into other types of cuisine – particularly

Belgium, and traveling around Europe, I became interested in food. I got into training people in the food service industry. However, due to limited English, I was training people that would eventually

Tim Carman:

Assistant Prep Cook, I worked my way through the positions of line cook, shift supervisor, sous chef, chef, to trainer. That's how

Charter School, Washington, DC: I grew up in El Salvador. I always

Photo Credit: Sophia Pappalardo

Writer, who has made a reputation as Washington's ambassador to the restaurant business in Washington DC by purchasing a establishment for high-end Ethiopian cuisine. My mindset was to

Marriott was a banquet manager. At that time, I really got into work as a caterer, a food person in general. My first job with

time I was recruited by Marriott. I moved to California to basically

new venue for foreign policy, yet they are often a hidden voice. Chefs are the vital center of the discussion on the kitchen as the

TASTING CONFLICT CUISINES: A CONVERSATION WITH DIASPORA CHEFS
TASTING CONFLICT CUISINES: A CONVERSATION WITH TIM CARMAN

foods because humans all like to discover new tastes and ways to prepare everyday staples like cabbage or beans. Taking the cuisine outside of the country would be best for popularizing the tastes of Ethiopia.

Chef Mariano Ramos: Preparing food must take into account the market. It is also has to do a lot with what social class you're tailoring your food to. For example, if you're trying to sell food in Mexico in a street cart, you have to compete against all the other vendors who have already made it. If I were to go back to my own country, I would have to reinvent myself because of the classical French technique and American style I've learned, as well as the Mexican palate. I would be well positioned to use the strengths I developed in the United States to create new things.

Chef Benjamin Velasquez: Promoting a country's cuisine also depends on what is happening in the region. The conflict in El Salvador and the large migration to the United States made Salvadorans one of the largest colonies of immigrants in the Washington metropolitan area in the 1980s. Those who fled the civil war worked in the area so that could send money back to their families. Many people in El Salvador wanted to be Americans because of the freedom and higher standard of living of this country. Now, two decades since the fighting stopped in El Salvador there are about 20 different culinary academies, which have opened in the last six years, making it the biggest country in Central America with culinary education.

Tim Carman asked the final question: Can the authenticity of a cuisine be preserved when a cuisine moves from one country to another?

Chef Mariano Ramos: Does it matter if it is authentic? What separates us from any other species in the world is that we use fire to cook, and we all use it. How a group of people has interpreted the flame and uses products that are geographically available to them is what makes the study of food and cuisine interesting. The definition of cooking is heat applied for a certain amount of time through some sort of medium on a set of ingredients. Cooking techniques, technology, and the ingredients come together forming the food culture of the country. When food moves from one culture to the next, the cooking techniques come with them; what changes are the ingredients. When it comes to bringing these cuisines to another country, certain restrictions in technology or tools can make traditional techniques impossible. For example, you cannot cook food underground and serve it to customers in the United States. However you can use a tandoor, and use the Mexican knowledge of ingredients and flavor to make a similar cuisine. We need to embrace change to grow.

Sileshi Alifom: The making of the traditional bread, the injera, depends on teff flour. For a long time you could not grow this in the United States, so it takes multiple ingredients to imitate the same product. This causes it to be heavier and no longer gluten free. But this innovation is what makes cuisine interesting!

Today, the United States is growing the teff grass in Michigan and Idaho, making this important food product available to the large Ethiopian communities around the United States.

Benjamin Velasquez CULINARY DIPLOMATS AND NATION BRANDING
The national food fair in Lima is underway for Peru Mistura. The best culinary destination in South America and currently preparations are underway for Peru Mistura, a national food fair in Lima, the nation's history.

People rarely think I can answer that question. Before appearing on the TV show of Paula Deen, it is a situation I keep in mind when people ask, "What is authentic Mexican?" They also opened restaurants to offer a platform for Peruvian restaurants in most major cities in America. Their chefs are now recognized as gastronomic diplomats. There is a loss of tradition and culture that will hopefully be revived with this new cuisines of Washington.

As Head of Public Diplomacy at the Embassy of Peru in Washington, DC, First Secretary Adriana Velarde launched the program "Food is an agent of change: A cultural mosaic that bridges diverse communities," which is vital to the national culture because Peruvians view food as a vital tool of diplomacy.

FOOD AS A VITAL TOOL OF DIPLOMACY

The diplomat at UNESCO, Ambassador David Killion, Senate NGO, has been using the power of food to change lives for thirty thousand foreign visitors. Proud of its tradition as a regional taste to create a new flavor. Peru has started an addition, a bakery has been built to teach the children a future trade as well as provide their daily bread. The chefs of the kitchen, works to empower impoverished and hungry communities to act as a catalyst for change in the lives of residents of the country.

This is reflected in the food and in the way the borders are porous, you can recognize that something is vital to the national culture because Peruvians view the way the food is presented to other cultures. The food is presented in the food and in the way the cultural mosaic that bridges diverse communities.

In addition, a program that helps to envision Mexican history and culture is to picture it as a loom. The different cultures come together to weave different colors and textures and to blend each aspect into a cohesive "Mexican cuisine." It is Mexican, not because a Mexican made it but because there is something that makes it Mexican.

Although she launched her career in Washington as a political analyst, Patricia Jinich gave up being a policy wonk but there is something that makes it Mexican. McNair shared his experiences in Haiti and Africa. Rather than exporting an American chef, the French chefs. Chef Jose Andres' international food organizations, World Central Kitchen, seek to provide a holistic approach to food as a vital tool of diplomacy.

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Why are stories a defining component of conflict cuisine? Stories were woven throughout presentations in each segment of the conference and whether told by immigrant chefs or of streets vendors, many of the stories noted that some form of hunger drove a need to use food as a means of communication, as a form of personal expression. These stories are not only about hunger, but also about survival and resilience. Immigrants to come to America are all about surviving. Food becomes a means of earning a living but also a way of connecting people back to their homelands.

To conclude the day’s events, Dr. Johanna Mendelson Forman, Scholar-in-Residence, School of International Service, American University, Washington, DC had a one-on-one conversation with Nikki Silva, co-host, The Kitchen Sisters; and Producer, NPR’s DuPont Award winter series Hidden Kitchens, on the essential role of stories in defining conflict cuisine and building awareness by the public and policymakers of the key issues that comprise conflict cuisine.

FOOD AS A CONVERSATION STARTER

The discussion began with Nikki Silvia noting that one way to start a conversation about food is to ask, “What did you have for breakfast today?” Silva explained: Asking this non-threatening question is the easiest way to loosen people up because it is a question everyone knows the answer to. It can open people up to conversation in a way you might never expect.

One of the first pieces I did for the Hidden Kitchen series on National Public Radio was about the George Forman grill. My partner Davia Nelson and I found that it has become an underground kitchen for homeless people and new immigrants to the country. There are people who hide the grill under their beds because they live in apartments where they are not allowed to cook or don’t have kitchens, and there are homeless who plug the grill straight into a streetlight for electricity. As part of the story, I interviewed George Forman to see if he knew how the grill was being used. He was astonished. That surprising start to a conversation led him to share his own story of growing up hungry in Houston, Texas. He recalled that when the other children in school would go in for lunch and he couldn’t afford to have any. Instead of buying lunch for 27 cents, he would blow up a paper bag to look full and take it into the lunchroom to throw away to pretend he had eaten that day. He then spoke about how “hunger makes you angry.” As a young kid he turned to the streets robbing people. What pulled him out of this angry place was the Job Corps. Later, when he lived with a family in Seattle he noticed he was eating every meal as if it were his last until he realized “I’m going to have three meals a day no matter what.”

USING FOOD TO CHANGE PERCEPTIONS

Silva noted that the conference included a wonderful fusion of academics, chefs, and storytellers, and was truly struck by the unexpected stories that came up, such as the histories of street vendors. This fusion with storytelling is the way to ignite the message of conflict cuisine to reach the masses.

Mendelson Forman pointed out in countries that had experienced internal conflicts such as Peru it was important to see how food had helped create a transformation in the public perception of a once war-torn society. She detailed: Since the end of the guerrilla movement, Sendero Luminoso, Peru has created a new persona as a culinary destination. It was moving to hear an earlier panelist talk of travelling back to Peru, and who was in tears describing this transition from a conflict torn nation to a place that people were clamoring to visit. For Peru this new image has called attention to a very important cultural heritage that includes making the potato an indigenous crop of the Andes and quinoa, a central part of the new Andean cuisine. You get passion when people recognize that food is a bond. Silva’s storytelling format of collecting and sharing information about poverty, hunger, and access to food that we all need to be well-informed, said Mendelson Forman. Silva responded: People tend to turn their ears off when hearing about homelessness or conflict, so using food as a tool to explore difficult issues gives a reporter a way in without putting pressure on the person being interviewed. Storytelling about conflict is the hook to get people interested in these issues, such as Israel and Palestine and the Hummus Wars. For example, during the Does Food Build Peace or Drive Conflict? session that discussed cooking in conflict countries, the cookbook was a stealthy...
FOOD AS A NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUE

A CLOSING CONVERSATION: THE KITCHEN AS THE NEW VENUE OF FOREIGN POLICY?
Roger Mark De Souza is the director of population, environmental security, resilience, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He is an accomplished chef with more than 20 years of experience in the culinary field. He began his career as a lead cook at The Inn and has since worked in various capacities, including DC Central Kitchen and Campus Kitchens Project, managing a staff of more than 500 adult immigrants from around the world in the non-profit sector. De Souza is responsible for Communications, Marketing and Fund Development of BCFS Education and Training in South Asia. Prior to joining the School of Foreign Service, he served as a research associate in USIP’s Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention. He is a political analyst, with a focus on Latin America, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Council of the Americas, the author of Cooking in the Axis of Evil: Latin American Recipes and Commentary. His work has appeared in four editions of the “Best Food Writing” collections as well as the sixth edition of “Cornbread Nation.” He’s an accomplished chef with more than 20 years of experience in the culinary field. He began his career as a lead cook at The Inn and has since worked in various capacities, including DC Central Kitchen and Campus Kitchens Project, managing a staff of more than 500 adult immigrants from around the world in the non-profit sector. De Souza is responsible for Communications, Marketing and Fund Development of BCFS Education and Training in South Asia. Prior to joining the School of Foreign Service, he served as a research associate in USIP’s Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention. He is a political analyst, with a focus on Latin America, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Council of the Americas, the author of Cooking in the Axis of Evil: Latin American Recipes and Commentary. His work has appeared in four editions of the “Best Food Writing” collections as well as the sixth edition of “Cornbread Nation.”
Conflict Cuisine® began as a course at American University’s School of International Service, which looked at how food of the diaspora communities in Washington reflected the state of conflicts around the globe. The course also examined why food is a form of Smart Power, but could also be a driver of conflict even in the 21st century. Through this course we have grown a lively discussion on why in zones of conflict food becomes central to both survival and resilience. We have also recognized the power of food to create dialogue among communities who come to the United States by providing not only sustenance but also understanding of the diverse cultural roots that have created new tastes and appetites in the American palate.

For more information on the program, recent press, and upcoming events, visit: conflictcuisine.com