CENTRAL AFRICA: SALIENT SECURITY ISSUES AND UNCERTAIN POLITICAL SOLUTIONS

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Since the independence era in the 1960s, the nation building process in Central Africa has never gained the expected momentum to further social and economic development. Insecurity is among those forces holding back the emergence of modern states in the sub region. No other part of the Continent is so torn and ravaged by conflicts, rebellions and social unrest as this one. Political organizations and security agreements thought to bring peace and stability are powerless. The sub region is entangled in unthinkable difficulties and outnumbers other African sub regions in numbers of past and current peace keeping operations and security initiatives but still pains to find its ways to peace and stability. The scope of security problems to resolve seems unfathomable and solutions unachievable. The paper explains the rationale behind the failures and setbacks of local, regional and international community security initiatives; it outlines the scope of problems and argues about the need for a local truly all encompassing security arrangement and presents the challenges to tackle such as human rights, civilian leadership of the military, good governance, free election and political legitimacy as the prerequisite to further security and stability in Central Africa.

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ABSTRACT

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Since the independence era in the 1960s, the nation building process in Central Africa has never gained the expected momentum to further social and economic development. Insecurity is among those forces holding back the emergence of modern states in the sub region. No other part of the Continent is so torn and ravaged by conflicts, rebellions and social unrest as this one. Political organizations and security agreements thought to bring peace and stability are powerless. The sub region is entangled in unthinkable difficulties and outnumbers other African sub regions in numbers of past and current peace keeping operations and security initiatives but still pains to find its ways to peace and stability. The scope of security problems to resolve seems unfathomable and solutions unachievable. The paper explains the rationale behind the failures and setbacks of local, regional and international community security initiatives; it outlines the scope of problems and argues about the need for a local truly all encompassing security arrangement and presents the challenges to tackle such as human rights, civilian leadership of the military, good governance, free election and political legitimacy as the prerequisite to further security and stability in Central Africa.

CENTRAL AFRICA:
SALIENT SECURITY ISSUES AND UNCERTAIN POLITICAL SOLUTIONS

The countries of Central Africa, as many others in the continent, are resource-rich nations which "have failed to realize their apparent economic potentials"[1] as Beno NDulu, Acting Country Manager for Tanzania and Sector Lead Specialist with the Macroeconomic Division of the World Bank has pointed out. All the governments are weak and gnawed by corruption, concussion, religious or ethnic antagonism. The abundance of mineral resources has not led to clearly defined policies of development. Unsolved socio-economic problems have turned the sub region into a theater of armed conflicts and turmoil of all kinds. The picture is worsened by the prevalence of deadly diseases such as AIDS, malaria, the toll of which is paid by the population. Security is a main concern. In desperation, African leaders looked for security strategies and placed their trust in a series of multilateral intra-regional or one-sided security agreements with their former colonial masters; these did not pay off.

Efforts in the sub region to modernize have been ineffective. The question of how to redress the situation is still unanswered. Regional security cooperation lacks the necessary impetus to achieve desired results. Between the will for greater security integration by leaders and the commitment to achieve the desired results there is a gap which impedes and hampers bringing overall peace to the Central African Region. This paper seeks to understand why the existing initiatives are failing. Starting with a survey of the sub region, this paper scrutinizes the current and ongoing security policies in Central Africa, analyzes the problems inherent to security approaches, and argues about a security organization truly based on core African interests.

<u>Regional Survey</u>

The human index of development in the countries of the region is among the lowest on earth.[2] This situation comes against a background of profuse natural resources.[3] Based on these resources Central Africa has a huge potential for socio-economic development: Angola, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Republic of Congo, and São Tomé and Principe are all oil producers[4], some with considerable deposits in the strategic Gulf of Guinea.[5] The Central African Republic (CAR) is rich in timber, uranium and diamonds.[6] Only Burundi[7] and Rwanda have few natural resources, and their economies are based mostly on semi-subsistence agriculture. [8]

Since the 1990s, there have been significant political changes in Central Africa. In almost all the countries of the sub region, the democratic process is in place with relative political openness. In this regard only two countries remain dictatorships: Rwanda and Angola where single-party "coalition-based" governments reject any kind of opposition. Both countries are democratically lagging and are truly repressive regimes. Not surprisingly, while in Luanda during her African tour, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged Angolan leaders to fight corruption and hold presidential elections.[9]

But the sub region is sadly renowned for the worst and dramatic conflicts which took place in African continent. The Angolan civil war lasted almost four decade from 1963 to 2002.[10]Burundi has known three decades of ethnic conflict originated by 17 political parties and armed movements, with a high toll of 300,000 deaths.[11] Since its independence in 1960, the Central African Republic (CAR) has experienced dictatorial rule, corruption, and severe political instability cadenced by military coups, army

mutinies, and a constant state of rebellion.[12] Chad is a country where peace is a strange and unknown concept. According to some scholars, it is not "a true state, but rather a location on the planet where individuals and groups spend their lives", a Central African Tragedy.[13] Since 1960, this country is full of factions, and divisions, fueling the chaos which continues to exist. [14] After a successful democratic transition, the Republic of Congo once again plunged into a civil war, leading to instability in the nation until rebel groups signed a peace agreement in 2003.[15] "The war displaced many people and created a humanitarian crisis which is still a problem today".[16] Two wars ravaged the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1996 and in 1998.[17] Ethnic divisions, neighboring states and a variety of militias and national rebel groups fostered instability. During those wars, seven foreign armies and ethnic militias operated within the DRC as the central government lost control of large areas of the country; these armies and militias were attracted by DRC's rich natural resources.[18] The Rwandan genocide began in April 1994,[19] in presence of United Nation peacekeeping operation, the United Nations Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), which failed to stop it. More than 800,000 Tutsis were killed by Hutu militia.[20]

Following a ruling by the International Court of Justice, Cameroon gained full control of the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula but faces unrest from the 300,000 Nigerians living in the area who do not want to become Cameroonian.[21] Equatorial Guinea with a huge community of Nigerians, lives in continuous fear of its much bigger and stronger neighbor, one plausible explanation being the fear of domination, if not complete annexation by Nigeria.[22] While a joint oil exploration deal in the area was signed in 2004, a final maritime border has yet to be agreed upon.[23] The conflict with Gabon over

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off shore oil field was promptly resolved when the president of Gabon and Equatorial Guinea signed an agreement "on joint oil exploration and exploitation in the off shore area that was affected by the dispute".[24]

In general the countries of central Africa have plethora of pernicious ingredients for turmoil: a deadly combination of ethnic divisions, power hungry regimes, inequitable distributed oil wealth, unsolved social problems, and rigged democracy. "Against the odds, São Tomé and Príncipe may prove to be an African exception: a stable democratic state … managing its wealth transparently and responsibly for the benefit of its citizens".[25]

Threat Analysis

Performing a threat analysis, this paper intends to identify major groups of concerns: external issues related to foreign interests or inferences, boundary issues, invasion by emerging regional military powers, ethnic unrests or civil wars, refugees, and small arms trafficking within the sub region.

Foreign presence in Central Africa today is far from being motivated by humanitarian purpose. The prime motivations of the foreign countries pose a threat to the stability of the Sub Region because in most cases they are not in the best interests of the states. The interests of these external actors differ as follows: first, they are economically motivated for access to raw materials including the vast resources still to be tapped or utilized. Second, former colonizers further their interests and assure that they maintain the area under their influence; numerous French military interventions and the presence of French troops in the sub-region maintain French political influence and economic control. This situation poses many security worries for some of the member states. France has intervened in its former colonies to protect its lengthily entrenched

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socio-economic and strategic interests.[26] Third, for new comers like China, the rush for economic gains is achieved with little regard for democracy or human rights. China is now openly using its training programs for foreign officials to promote aspects of the Chinese model of development.[27]

The border difficulties of the countries of Central Africa make the situation even worse. The 1885 partitioning of Africa by the European powers disrupted the ethnic and cultural kinship patterns which existed at the time. Borders were arbitrarily drawn without regard to geography, ethnicity, or existing political structures. The European scramble for Africa brought about artificially drawn frontiers upon ethnic groups, and polarized the local populations. Large areas of land along with economic and political power were given to one tribe or grouper of; other tribes or groups would constitute the main recruits for the military and police forces. After independence, all the ingredients were ready for a disastrous rush for political power; perceived by the new elites to be the only source and provider of wealth.

These borders remain a permanent source of conflict. Major ethnic groups are divided into more than one country in the sub region. As traditional boundaries were removed, severing the ties of kith and kin, colonialism further tramped upon African traditions by superimposing "European concepts of political, social, and economic stratification."[28] Diversities and disparities provided breeding grounds for political factionalism, and power struggle continue to cause instability particularly acute in this increasingly democratic era. In the last decade all states have had territorial disputes with their neighbors, making border clashes a source of concerns: as an example, the Angolan military is known for patrolling of southern areas of the DRC in search of militia

men of the Cabinda Enclave Liberation Front (FLEC).[29] Most of these borders are poorly demarcated, adding to the complexities of the situation. Because of inadequate border patrols, smuggling is a constant and grave problem.

Invasion by emerging regional military powers is a very serious threat. Rwanda has continuously used the weakness of the DRC to conduct invasions of this country[30]. Uganda and Rwanda have clashed inside the DRC over the exploitation of raw materials. Both countries hide their true intentions behind security reasons: the desire to get rid of respective armed opposition groups operating from the Congolese North eastern provinces.[31] "Kigali's increasing power centralization and intolerance of dissent, the nagging Hutu extremist insurgency across the border, and Rwandan involvement in two wars in recent years in the neighboring DRC continue to hinder Rwanda's efforts to escape its bloody legacy."[32] Angola has intervened in the Republic of Congo in 1997, and contributed to the fall of the democratically elected president. Angola supported a rebellion faction because the Congo government was providing safe haven to the Angolan rebellion militia leader Jonas Savimbi, the western backed rebel battling the pro soviet regime in power in Angola until its death in 2002.

These interventions are intended to induce political changes in neighboring countries or to gain economic benefits. The very sound principles of the African Union, which include respect for territorial integrity, the stability of borders, and noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries, self-determination, and recourse to the African union (UA) to mediate disputes[33], appear to be increasingly challenged. Nascent African imperialism represented by emerging regional military powers generates a credible

threat. Uneven military growth tends to promote the chances of armed conflict as the stronger powers may seek military solutions to their perceived security concerns.

All rebellions wreaking havoc in the Congolese eastern originated in Rwanda from 1996 until the present, claiming themselves to be "liberation movements" [34], while in fact they are merely "about access, control and trade of five key mineral resources: coltan, diamonds, copper, cobalt and gold."[35] The war those rebels conduct in the Congo is about looting natural resources. What has been less publicized is the cooperation of Western companies in this looting. A UN report lists about 30 mining companies from the U.S., Canada and Europe[36], together with financial houses, such as Citibank[37], who cooperated in this looting with some sub regional political backing. The "CNDP (National Congress for the Defense of the People) – the most prominent anti DRC rebellion in the Kivu - has political and financial support networks that are active throughout the Great Lakes region and span Europe and America. "Representatives of the CNDP are active in Kigali and Kampala, where they meet regularly with embassies."[38]

Equatorial Guinea has a history of recurrent violent attempted invasions by mercenaries acting for dissidents[39]. Sponsored invasions have taken place or are still going on in the Southeastern part of Chad, the northeastern part of the DRC, and the southeastern part of the CAR. The weak military institutions of these countries could not prevent or confront theses threats. The Charter of the African Union (AU) opposes foreign intervention anywhere in the continent thus any such exercise must be viewed as a threat to peace and stability.[40]

Civil wars and social turmoil have created large numbers of refuges in the sub region, adding to the woes of this area. There are two types of refugees symptomatic of security concerns of the sub region: internally displaced persons (IDPs) - approximately 2,600,000 - and war refugees who number 700,000.[41] The fluidity of borders makes it possible for refugees to pour into neighboring countries, some of which may be more affluent or appear to offer security or economic hope. All the countries in the sub region are concerned by this problem. Subversive elements can easily infiltrate into porous borders creating economic chaos and security risks for recipient nations. The dilemma is that Africans have traditionally been their "brothers' keepers" who open their doors and communities. Ethnic bonds with religious fervor make the refugee issue more complex and emotional in resolving the moral and security aspects it brings. In fact, the troubles in the eastern regions of the DRC, and in the north eastern part of the CAR, are attributed to these refugees. The refugee issue contributes to and aggravates the threat, economically, and socially. Overpopulated Rwanda is home to a total of 55,645 refugees, out of whom 52,083 are Congolese, while 2,831 (5.5 percent) are Burundians"[42]. Some 100,000 refugees who fled to the Republic of Congo to escape armed clashes in Equateur Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo constitute "a lot of pressure on the local resources, on bio-diversity and there is a big potential for conflict despite the fact that the local population and the government have been very, very welcoming".[43]

Another serious security threat is generated from indigenous conflicts. These internal conflicts are nurtured by the uneven implementation of democracy, by those who strive for power, and by ethnic rivalry. Only Cameroun, Gabon and Equatorial

Guinea have enjoyed relative stability, with no known armed rebellion. The deficit of democracy also fuels local instability: as Nelson Alusala from the South African Institute for Security Studies has stated, the fact of democracy not being fully implemented, leaders manipulate the state apparatus to prolong their stay in power and in an attempt to repress them the government uses intimidations and assassinations.[44] This type of threat places more strain on sub regional cooperation. Some of these conflicts are state-sponsored, by leaders who nurture territorial ambitions. Sadly enough, "African stability continues to be threatened by the internal forces of the 1960s and 1970s, forces caused by and acting as obstacles to economic development."[45] They are the inability to control and manage a country's affairs and the ever-present dominance of ethnic, tribal, and religious factors in domestic politics.

The prevalence of small weapons and light arms in Central Africa adds another aspect to the challenge to peace and security in the sub region. This situation is sadly depicted by Nelson Alusala: "the ease availability of arms across the region has almost demystified the lethality of the weapon and has, in some cases given the weapons a cultural significance."[46] Small weapons are now part of the necessary attire in the African attire in the country side.

<u>Peace Initiatives in Central Africa</u>

The sub region has undergone a broad range of peace and security activities in the framework of existing political organizations and with the commitment and support of the international community.

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) is an organization established for the promotion of regional economic co-operation in Central Africa. The countries members of the community have created an organization for the promotion,

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maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in Central Africa: the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX). They have established technical institutions whose standing orders were adopted in June 2002 at the 10th Ordinary Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

The Central African Early-Warning System (MARAC) collects and analyses data for the early detection and prevention of crises. The Defense and Security Commission (CDS), the meeting of chiefs of staff of national armies and commanders-in-chief of police and gendarmerie forces from the different member states, plans, organizes and provides advice to the decision-making bodies of the community in order to initiate military operations if needed. The field practicum is achieved by The Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC), which is a non-permanent force consisting of military contingents from member states, whose purpose is to accomplish Peacekeeping missions, peace support and security missions and humanitarian assistance.[47]

Created in 1999, the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) comprises Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. The GGC is a mechanism of joint security aimed at challenging terrorism, criminality and banditry actions. It aims at promoting dialogue and consultation for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts connected to the delimitation of borders, economic and commercial exploitation of natural resources within the territories of Member States; and most importantly promote non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States and the peaceful settlement of disputes.[48]

In addition to sub regional security initiatives, significant is the involvement of France and the United States, with two complementary policies yet much more competing security undertakings strained with underlying important self interests.

France leads the Reinforcement of African Peace-Keeping Capacities program (RECAMP). This concept brings together a growing number of African nations as well as European countries to work peace-keeping operations and conduct relevant training. The design is too much detached from the African needs so it raises a lot of doubt among the participants about its efficiency. The French approach seems clear: France has found a way to maintain its powerful military presence in Africa and pursue its interests there by reflagging its forces, placing them under the banner of multilateral institutions and thereby lending them a legitimacy that cannot be enjoyed by acting unilaterally. RECAMP also "lifts France above the fray, allowing it to be everyone's friend, while validating France's indispensability. RECAMP gives France a role in Africa that it would like to enjoy elsewhere."[49]

The U.S. response to African security concern is more subtle than the French approach. First of all it utilizes African recommendations as entry points and pillars for engagement; secondly it is deeply in the line of U.S. security priorities; thirdly and most importantly the African ownership of the plan is granted and the engagement and cooperation plan reflect African concerns and priorities.

The Africa Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), launched in the 1996, by Former Secretary of State Warren Christopher, was managed by the U.S. State Department and Defense Department. The purpose of the Initiative was to work with international partners and African nations to enhance African peacekeeping and humanitarian relief

capacity. Through the ACRI program, the United States offered training and equipment to African nations who tried to enhance their peacekeeping capabilities and was committed to democratic progress, principles, and civilian rule.[50] It was replaced by ACOTA as it lacked "appropriately tailored packages, because of the perishable nature of the training, and due to the absence of peace-enforcement training. Nonetheless the ACOTA program maintained the main features of the ACRI program[51]: enhance the peacekeeping capability of military forces from a number of African nations, which would retain operational control of their units, and receive logistical support by the U.S. DoD. "ACOTA's immediate goal is to support the establishment of the AU's African Standby Force/Brigades by June 2010, which is of great importance to African nations. ACOTA's long-term objective is to assist the AU, the regional brigades and individual Troop Contributing Countries in their peacekeeping operations for as long as it is needed."[52] After it withdrew from peacekeeping operations in Africa, the genocide in Rwanda and the worsening of the security situation in the continent prompted the United States government to create the African Command (AFRICOM), and element of the Department of Defense (DOD)[53]. "Established in 2008, AFRICOM works with various African states to create highly effective, rapidly-deployable peacekeeping units, which can operate jointly in the event of humanitarian crisis or a traditional peacekeeping operation."[54] AFRICOM promotes common doctrine, interoperability and standards among African forces. General Ward, the AFRICOM Commander stated in 2008 that "AFRICOM was created to provide a strategic, holistic DoD approach to security on the African continent. Our past command organization did not facilitate an in-depth understanding of, or attention to, African security issues. Establishing

AFRICOM will enable DoD expertise and capabilities to be better applied to Africa's unique security environment.[55] Upon completion, AFRICOM's broader program will contribute to stability in current zones of conflict, addressing conditions that contribute to instability, and will foster security cooperation.[56]

The objectives of AFRICOM are appealing. African countries and organizations providing for their own security and contributing to security on the continent; possessing the capability to mitigate the threat of violent extremism; and maintaining professional militaries responsive to civilian authorities, and respecting the Rule of Law and international human rights norms. The AFRICOM security goals and effects work to prevent attacks emanating from Africa against Americans, to secure U.S. strategic access, and to preserve unhindered movement along the lines of communication.[57] The greatest merit of AFRICOM is also to recognize that the continent is no longer strategically isolated.

In addition to French and U.S., the United Nations help bring about peace in the sub region. It has deployed four peacekeeping operations with mitigating success: the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) [58] and the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB)[59] The intrinsic complexity of problems faced in the field is preventing any rapid peaceful achievement.

Scope of the Problems

There are a lot of constraints, obstacles, and problems that inhibit the movement of the sub region towards collective defense. These range from foreign dependency,

political, diplomatic, economic, cultural, and military reasons.

The Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) is dependent upon French logistics for its deployment and shows its limits. It was unable to prevent the taking of power by Bozize Francois in the CAR, but on the contrary paved the road for this puppet of French interests, overthrowing an elected president. In another area, the Gulf Of Guinea Commission is relying on hypothetical U.S. backing to gain momentum. The leaders of the sub region are hoping that Washington will assist with training and logistics[60].

There is a diversity of political systems in central Africa. Some political regimes in the area rely on constabulary forces to secure their power; others depend on their military forces. Democratic elections, when they are organized are often stained by fraud and lead to the victory of the ruling party. It is doubtful that these types of countries would welcome a regional force intervening in case of the unrest or rebellion following violence or rebellion to fraudulent elections contest.

Some countries in the region rely on defense agreements signed with France to protect and prolong their regime. In case of aggression, their posture is just to resist until the "friendly" French armies come to salvation. That is particularly the case of Gabon, Chad and CAR to some extent although France has been renegotiating some of its defense agreements on the continent in the past months.

The regional organizations established to address security concerns also face financial problems and are not always able to establish working headquarters with appropriate levels of staffing. Member countries have difficulties financing these

regional institutions, thus incapacitating any significant political or diplomatic achievement.

Several countries in the sub region are characterized by the lack of rule of law and weak political institutions. Political, economic, and military power is mostly embedded in the ruler and the president. Ethnicity is a principal determinant in political acquisition and distribution of public "goodies" in the sub region. It provokes frustration which results in crises, violent clashes and other manifestations of instability. Security problems surface from time to time in the form of demands for greater distribution of national wealth, as well as resulting from territorial claims.

The armed forces of member states come from diverse colonial backgrounds, and have different traditions, languages, doctrine, training, and sources of equipment. They are subjectively and intrinsically linked to the political system of their own country. True civilian leadership of the armed forces is achieved only in Gabon; military forces in other countries do not possess a democratic culture. Intra-military factors, such as military cohesion, recruitment, and biased promotion undermine the cohesion necessary to have proficient military.

Bilateral military agreements between some states and foreign powers seem not to encourage central African military cooperation, because of pressures from their ex-colonial masters to safeguard existing defense arrangements. France is the greatest culprit in this regard. Gabon and Central African Republic have close ties to France that may be costly for them to overlook, as the agreements may be said to be reliable and hard to replace by any sub region military alliance. In fact, in the case of France, it has managed to give a morale aspect by involving the states of the sub region in a peace

keeping operation in Central African Republic which appears more like support to a puppet regime it brought to power with Chadian Army involvement.

An absence of mutual confidence amongst member states and the membership of two or three financially and military stronger countries within the organization who can provide the needed "leadership" for the others does not contribute to enhance the integration. This can be attributed to fear of what some leaders of the Community perceive as "loss of sovereignty" as well as the very different political and economic background of the states. This attitude leads to a lack of commitment and the wordy security talks in the sub region sound more like the development of a policy to prevent a neighbor from supporting a cross border rebellion than developing some form of regional security cooperation. The diversity of culture, religion, history and language among the countries of the sub region is an additional potential source of misunderstanding, which often leads to tensions and could rock the very foundation of local or regional security initiatives.

Membership in various international or regional bodies can also be used for domestic political purposes, without bringing value to these bodies or changing internal conditions. One example is Rwanda, which joined the Commonwealth Club of Nations in November 2009. It was thought that Commonwealth accession would help to consolidate democratization, respect for human rights, and the promotion of free enterprise in Rwanda.[61] Yet Rwanda is unanimously condemned by many Central African countries for its backing of forces undermining peace and stability in northeastern part of Democratic Republic of Congo. The membership of Rwanda in the

Commonwealth did not bring value-added to any security and stability processes in the region.

There is a standardization problem among central African military weaponry. A constraint of significance is the variety of diverse weapons systems. Due to the existing logistics problems within the Community, maintenance and resupply capabilities, the technical expertise are prevalently inadequate. This is not a conducive atmosphere for military cooperation

The Need for an Independent Regional Defense Organization

Existing local security initiatives have been powerless due to a combination of logistical constraints and financial shortfalls; in addition while there is peace to be made there has been very little peace to keep. Matters are further exacerbated by a wide range of refuges issues. Some opinion makers and opposition members consider the existing security agreements as "trade unions" to preserve the powers of existing regional leaders, with no real impact on the life of the nations' populations.

The need for a defense organization exists. To tackle the tremendous tasks of creating a prosperous economic and political space for the citizens of the sub region, security and peace for all is one of the most important prerequisites. Too much help or concern from outside partner does not take in consideration African interest. Interestingly enough is the case of Chad. A few months before the attack on the capital Ndjamena by rebel forces, French troops and African countries conducted peace keeping maneuvers in the framework of RECAMP depicting the very situation which occurred months later. There was no African intervention but France provided aerial intelligence and ground support to Chadian forces. Ultimately, the rebellion was expelled and defeated. France has just protected a regime which favors its interest.

The American security approach through AFRICOM reflects the defense of strategic U.S. interest in the sub region and particularly prevents the disruption of oil sea lines of communications (SLOCs). AFRICOM conducts tailored security initiatives to meet African demands as well as serve American interests. The Africa Partnership Station is a collaborative program designed to help coastal nations in West and Central Africa achieve safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea, with the aim of providing global maritime security to coastal African states.[62]

Future Prospects

Mark Malan, former head of the Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution department of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra, Ghana, has relevantly stated that "any forceful conflict resolution action in Africa will have to be undertaken by Africans themselves."[63] Therefore solutions to central African security challenges should be found and developed by the local leaders. The key problem is to find an answer to this question: what to defend against what? Populations are more often victims and not only spectators to conflicts for power by challengers against aspiring dictators or "people saviors". The first to be concerned by peace are those living in the sub region. Foreign actors' commitment is to achieve expected results for regional integration as long as it does not take place at the expense of improvements in domestic political governance. "For peace to be sustainable over the long run, the root causes of conflict need to be addressed."[64]

A problem facing the sub region is lack of a clear security agenda and priorities on which to focus efforts. Success will depend on the ability of leaders to sharply focus on a few predominant areas - good governance, financial sector development, macro convergence, and infrastructure development. The sub region must possess the

wherewithal to protect its exceptional riches and heritage. For Central Africa could be, especially in terms of its biodiversity, an invaluable source of global public goods for all of us. Security, peace, prosperity and democratic society have to be laid as foundations from which central Africa will arise. There are some issues to be addressed for the coming of this new era in the sub region, the problem being to tackle the causes of insecurity.

Firstly, the countries of the sub region should invest in their people and in institutions at national and sub-regional level. The organizations must require commitment to democratic processes with freely elected representative legislatures from all members; application of the rule of law and independence of the judiciary system; good governance, and protection of human rights, and much more important , equality of opportunity to defeat the demons of ethnicity.

Secondly, responsible leaderships should develop policies in their respective countries, which will provide free basic democratic rights for all citizens, establish the rule of law, banish any kind of injustice on social basis, provide overall peace and promote good governance. Nation building is to be achieved on a democratic basis because, as Benno NDulu has pointed out, only democracies can offset ethno linguistic heterogeneity and make sure it will not impact either on overall growth or on microeconomic efficiency.[65] "Africa's underlying proneness to rebellion and hence to civil war, is strongly related to economic conditions."[66] Of a greater importance will be the involvement of the civil society.[67]

Thirdly, in all these countries, the military should undergo profound changes to place it at the service of the strategic security interest of its country, a situation entirely

different of today's armed forces which are at the service of the ruling party. It is unthinkable to expect the military to intervene in another country while its primary mission is to be the fortress of the existing power structure. To be followed would be at the sub regional level, the implementation of a pre-doctrine for all the states. This task could be accomplished by the existing summit of Chiefs of Defense. The common Doctrine would unify and influences the preparation, training, and conduct of sub regional defense activities by guiding procurement and weapon acquisition, rationalizing organizational structure, and guiding employment in battle operations. This doctrine would take in account the local environment and cultural background

Fourthly, the problems of logistics, standardization of weapons and training programs, will be best tackled within a collective defense system, not outside of it. The first units established will constitute the lead elements of the African Union Central Africa Stand Force Unite, and must become organized and standardized before achieving really efficient military cooperation. At this stage, collaboration or partnership with countries in Europe, the USA, and with the support of the United Nations will be very beneficial if well coordinated.

Conclusions

Political decay and distorted military integration characterize Central African states. The existing sub regional military institutions are very weak and without the logistics from France or the USA, they could not pretend to any kind of practicum.

Conflicts in the sub region are human centered. They have a number of complex sources and reasons, including conflicts about access and control over rich minerals and other resources as well as the promotion of various political agendas. These conflicts are fueled and supported by various national and international corporations

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and other regimes which have an interest in their outcome which may not be in the best strategic interest of the countries and their populations.

These countries ought to transform their natural resources into wealth to sustain human security and provide the wherewithal to finance their common security organizations. Insecurity is fueled by unsolved human centered concerns. The involvement of the international community and major world powers will benefit the sub region when prosperous democratic states arise in Central Africa, states sharing the same values and with organizations which promote those vital values. However, this involvement and support should not be done at the expense of sub regional cohesion. The security agreements should focus on providing common defense of core interests. They will therefore lie upon solid foundations of legitimacy, moral responsibility. Peace is achievable; the prerequisite would be all the policy in the sub region to be human concerns centered.

The security challenges of the countries in Central Africa are daunting. These are in addition to the issues of human security, development, respect for rule of law, and good governance. This paper has outlined many of the issues underlying the current situation and has identified several of the attempts to develop regional solutions. It has pointed out the limitations of "home-grown" solutions as well as bilateral agreements. Only a collaborative and collective effort on the part of the countries in the sub region and international partners, working in unison, can bring peace and stability to the peoples of Central Africa, assure their development and well-being. Peace and stability will also assure the continued flow of a wide range of important economic resources onto the world market, helping Central African countries join in the success and benefits

of globalization. Let us hope that these efforts can be undertaken without delay and at

last give hope to populations which have suffered the uneven progress of their countries

in the years since independence.

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