

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA

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ABSTRACT

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This paper addresses major security and stability challenges in the Gulf of Guinea, including how the absence of peace serves as an impediment to development. Recommendations are offered regarding the best way to advance security and stability in the region surrounding the Gulf of Guinea.

SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA

The purpose of this paper is to discuss some major challenges inherent to security and stability in the Gulf of Guinea (GG), a large area encompassing 23 countries including: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The 8,200 km² of the GG is in majority plane level with high ground culminating in Mount Cameroon (4,095 m). The high ground constitutes a line of separation between the coastal and interior plane. The northern section of the GG is composed of semi-arid terrain (sahel), a transitional zone between the Sahara desert and the savannahs. Equatorial forest forms a third belt between the savannah and the coast.

Five major periods characterize the history of the GG. The first period is prehistory, in which the first human settlers arrived, agriculture developed, and contact was made with the Mediterranean civilization in the North. The second period, the iron age experienced consolidated trade and the development of a centralized form of government. Several empires and kingdoms, beginning with the Soninke Ghana Empire in the eighth century, developed a tradition of strong leadership that lasted until the fifteen century. Third period is the time of slave trading kingdoms, Muslim wars and colonial invasion. The colonial period is the fourth period, a time during which France, the U.K., Belgium, Portugal and Spain controlled the region and actually shaped the modern day countries. The fifth period is the current post colonial era. Following World War II, nationalist movements, starting with Nkwame Nkrumah of Ghana, led sub-Saharan Africa to independence from 1957 to 1975.

Since independence, many nations have been plagued by corruption, mismanagement, political instability, civil wars in Nigeria, Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, RDC, and Cote d'Ivoire, and successive military coups, with Senegal and Cameroon being exceptions. States have failed to develop their economies despite abundant natural resources, probably as a result of undemocratic and totalitarian regimes. HIV/AIDS, malaria, infectious diseases and famine constitute growing social problems. These countries are members of regional organizations such as African Union (AU),¹ Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS),² Economic Community of Central African States (CEMAC),³ that struggle to reach their economic goals because of strategic and geo-political issues.

Regional integration is the best approach to establish a foundation on which countries of the Gulf of Guinea can pursue policies grounded in their own interests and achieve

sustainable development. The will of leaders to adopt favorable political, economic, social and military measures that can bring trust and help to resolve conflicts among the States peacefully is foundation for regional integration and stability.

The analysis here addresses four points. The first effort is to present the strategic interest of the GG. The second step is to analyze the concept of security from the GG perspective. Third, the weaknesses that generate insecurity will be pointed out; and, lastly some options for a cooperative, pragmatic and a more efficient management will be presented.

Geo-strategic Issues

The Gulf of Guinea has been a playground for various interests throughout the history. With the end of the Cold War, the interests of world powers are: hegemony, economy, promotion of values, regional stability, and social welfare. The GG has many natural resources such as: oil, diamonds, gold, uranium, timber, bauxite, coal, and has a population of about 480,000,000 which constitutes a huge market. Securing access to these resources explains the active economic, diplomatic and military competition between the US, the European powers and even China in the region. The end of the Cold War, the coming of the Bush administration in 1991, and the events of September 11/2001 all help redefine US interests in the GG.

The national security strategy clearly define US interests⁴ as regional stability, Global economy, promotion of democracy, global war on terrorism and alleviation of human suffering. The US wants to remain engaged in critical regional disputes in an effort to avoid explosive escalations and also to minimize human suffering. The cases of Liberia, Sierra Leone and RDC illustrate this approach. The US support in peace keeping operations and peace process is unparalleled. Economically, the US is a privileged partner for oil as it intends to shift part of its energy security from its Arabic partners to the GG. The African Growth and opportunities Acts [AGOA]⁵ provides reforming African countries with the most liberal access to the US market and offers the full use of the benefits leading to democracy, free trade, and economic growth in the region. The US also works with other partners to promote the connection between trade and development while maintaining its vital energy security program in the region. Thousands of trained terrorists still remain in Africa; the US intends to coordinate efforts with its partners in order to isolate these terrorists. It also works with countries to deny sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists by convincing states to accept their sovereign responsibilities. The US conducts the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria to alleviate human suffering. The US is also committed to increasing the amount of development assistance that is provided in the form of grants instead of loans.

The European powers interests in the GG are defined by their hegemony, the will to maintain their political and economic achievements and historic ties, regional peace and social welfare. France, UK, Spain, Belgium and Portugal have continued to influence the economic, political, diplomatic and military life of the region which they have long considered as their sphere of influence within the framework of East West rivalry⁶. Strategic control by the masters is also maintained by language. There is no doubt that language is a very crucial factor of cultural identity as it helps maintain a continuous permanent influence over a people. A case in point is the creation of such organizations like “la Francophonie “or the commonwealth – two organizations whose main objective is to exercise permanent control over member States. The European Union (EU) has always responded significantly to deteriorating situations in the region. In the struggle to maintain market access, European powers are now competing not only with the US, but also with rising Asian powers like China, Japan and India. Social programs target improved education and health care, including treatment for HIV/AIDS. Military exercises and concept such as Reinforcement of African Capacity for Peace keepings Operations (RECAMP) seek to enhance regional stability.

China's phenomenal economic growth has elevated the country to world leadership status, causing many analysts to ponder its regional and international intentions and goals. China has changed its foreign policy over the years from one of confrontation to one of cooperation and economic development, from isolation to international engagement.⁷ It has capitalized its presence in the GG these last years through an increased level of exchanges in the form of trade and cooperation. China considers the GG as a partner in achieving its strategic goals.

Besides being well endowed with natural resources, the GG like much of Africa remains the poorest and most politically unstable region in the world. More than four decades after gaining independence, nations in the GG cannot continue to lay the blame for underdevelopment on the doorstep of former colonial masters and Western industrialized powers. Whereas it is true that some elements of that colonial past are largely to blame for some of Africa's economics and political predicaments today, Africans have refused to be masters of their own destinies. Mismanagement at the highest level is a major cause of regional insecurity.

Security Concept

The meaning given to the notion of stability varies depending on one's background. For instance, in the West, a stable state relates to a modern state, a state where rights are

respected on a daily basis and where a free market economy and good governance have been instituted. In a Western European State, stability is measured by the strength of a nation's political institutions, its capacity to respect the legal frame work for the transfer of power, and its defense capability and ability to manage its economic system. In short, it is determined by a country's level of democracy.

In Africa, the notion of stability can be traced to the history of big empires and traditional chieftaincies. Here, the chief remains in power for as long as the empire exists and imperial power is inextricably linked to the chief's autocratic powers. It is this concept that the Western powers propped up during the transfer of political sovereignty to independent Africa States. This concept of stability, symbolized by the sovereign rule of one person, has been adopted to serve strategic interests in Africa. If this system of government served the interest of the Cold War, it has ruined African Society. Dictatorship-- exemplified by its lack of tolerance for different views, its rejection of the principle of alternation of power, its abuse of human rights and freedoms and the mismanagement of resources-- has led to violent cleavages and to the dysfunction of states in Africa.

The continuous state of conflict in the GG maintains suspicion and creates fearful attitude within the States. This unfortunate situation serves to disadvantage the potential for regional development. Ethnic diversity, inequality, colonialism, neo-colonialism and lack of political culture are root causes of violence and conflicts that characterize the region.

Political Issues

The political life of the countries of the GG can be judged in several respects: their constitutions, the level of freedoms, the rule of law, and the political knowledge of opposition parties. The level of freedom is so low in some countries that the Media is not allowed to express the social realities. The rule of law is somewhat inexistent due to a corrupted judiciary system.

The fundamental law is the least respected among some of the States of the region. While everybody has a lot of respect for countries like the U.S. that have an old constitution of more than two centuries, the constitutions of the relatively young States in the region have changed many times. In the past this phenomenon was considered to be the preserve of military coup makers. Currently, however, it is perpetuated by those who are supposed to encourage democracy. Constitutions are shaped to meet the needs of the leaders rather than the people. For instance, the constitutions of Equatorial Guinea article 39 and Burkina Faso article 114, allow the dissolution of the parliament by the President without any specific conditions. There is

no real separation of powers between the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. The executive arm of the government dominates. Some people are above the law and it is virtually impossible to prosecute ministers, directors, and their cronies yet without the immunity status. Constitutions are sometimes in conflict with internal laws, an indication that they are not well conceived to reflect the realities of the communities.⁸ Some constitutions are written and adopted with deliberate omissions often exploited by the executive branch for self interest. The legislative branch seems to be more preoccupied by the interests of its members than the interests of the people they represent. The constitutions of most countries clearly define the three arms of government, namely, the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. Quite interestingly, some constitutions give the President the powers to appoint and fire court judges as well as dissolve parliament.⁹ Therefore, the overbearing power of the Head of State continues to be felt in all aspects of national life, giving the President totalitarian powers or, even more commonly, the status of a monarch minimizing the freedoms of the people.

Most government in the region, have no respect for freedom and fundamental human rights. Without freedom of the press for example, there can be no meaningful democracy. The press acts not only as a watchdog, but also as the mouthpiece of the voiceless, it is a barometer of democracy.

The judicial branch is largely corrupted so that it exists for the good of the executive arm of government. The magistrates are not interested in truth for adjusting laws to favor corrupt parties they are rewarded with appointments to higher positions and with huge sums of state money. The rule of law is an element that gives confidence to people in a country. When people are no longer sure that their fundamental rights are protected, crime increases dramatically. The police corps is an accomplice to the corrupt syndrome. The police in the GG neglect the states' interest and resort to bribery and extortion of money from the poor and miserable masses. The security of states is endangered by the police who exploit rather than protect the citizens. Since all the branches of government are corrupted and unpatriotic, the police go unchecked in these malicious activities.

The role of opposition parties has not made matters any better. In the 1990's opposition parties over all the GG appeared serious. But those who succeeded in taking over power have performed poorly, leading to the conclusion that they are politically incompetent to assume leadership of states. Some show signs of hunger: the examples of Cameroon, Gabon, and Burkina Faso are instructive. Opposition leaders of these countries who violently opposed ruling regimes, became part of the very regimes they criticized, thus converting their political parties to almost simple associations. Such opposition leaders merely used their parties as platforms to

attain selfish political ends by being part of a government.¹⁰ Whereas democratic elections have been successfully conducted in some countries in the GG, which is not the case for others. Where multi-party elections have been organized and the opposition has lost, there have generally been unverified allegations of widespread vote rigging often in favor of the party in power. In some cases, this has led to outright war, while in others it has led to street demonstrations and violence.

The interventions of the Media and civil society have not been objective in most cases. They have sometimes misled the people rather than helped them to better understand and know the truth. Some international and local NGOs have also published wrong reports based on false information gotten from uneducated masses misled by manipulative media outlets. Both the Media and civil society should investigate from credible sources and contribute objectively to the well being of the people. An article published in the Cameroon info net November 6, 2005 carried a comparative story between two regimes in Cameroon, reporting that the external debt of Cameroon between 1982 and 2005 was different from earlier debts.¹¹ This is misleading because the Cameroonian debt of 2005 is merely a continuation of that of the 1980s. Debt crisis is a common phenomenon for developing countries. This situation as been made worse by adjustment programs of the International Financial Institutions. The omission of such clarifications is the results of either the will to mislead or ignorance. The experience of the *radio des collines*¹² that promoted hatred leading to genocide in neighboring Rwanda is still fresh. Partisan Media can mislead the population.

Economic Issues

The young democracies of the GG are built on extremely poor economies. This situation gets worse as the region is characterized by poor governance, lack of transparency and mechanisms of control, and diversion of public goods.

In the 1970's, the autocratic regimes embraced a vast macro-economic program with international financial institutions based in the fields of agriculture and other primary commodities. Those programs failed when the prices of primary commodities dropped, rendering them unable to repay their debt. The reliance on the importation of manufactured goods which African countries do not produce has increased imports to the detriment of exports thus aggravating the problem. Governments needed new loans to pay their outstanding debt and to meet domestic needs. Unable to borrow elsewhere, the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) became key providers for these countries. The solution was new loans and hard currency to insure repayment of their external debts and restore economic

stability. To give new loans, the WB and the IMF imposed “structural adjustment” with stringent majors, for example, the imposition of precipitated privatization to states.¹³ The WB and IMF performed a political function during the cold war, by subordinating development objectives to geo-strategic interests and maintained western dominance in the global economy. The Structural adjustment programs have impeded the Gulf of Guinea’s development by undermining health as an integral element of economic growth and human development.

In recent years, the IMF and WB proclaim a great commitment to “poverty reduction.” They have made it a requirement for countries to present Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers (PRSPs) as a condition to receive new loans or debt relief.¹⁴ The WB has also increased funding for health and HIV/AIDS programs in the region. While countries say that debt cancellation should be the first step in enabling them to tackle their social development challenges, economic freedom is needed to help achieve a high per capita economic growth even in the low income countries.¹⁵

In reality most of the countries in the GG are beset by poor economic policies, corruption, heavy state intervention, fiscal burden, theft and capital flight blamed on short-sighted and poor leadership in Africa. Most African leaders lack statesmanship. On most occasions, they think and act irrationally due to greed. Because of this, many countries are characterized by the following tendencies: over concentration of powers at the center, inverted priorities, nepotism, tribalism, corruption and gross mismanagement. Going hand-in-hand with the fiasco of inverted priorities is the gross mismanagement.

The more serious problem of governments is their utter disregard for accountability, especially with respect to fiscal discipline. State records are totally unreliable. Governmental spend-thrift habits remain unchanged. Because of the lack of a democratic culture, there is hardly any accountability or transparency in the conduct of public affairs. As a result, huge sums of money meant for development in the various states are diverted and stacked in foreign banks by leadership or its political cronies.¹⁶ The case of the late President of Zaire is still fresh in our memories.¹⁷ A good management of the little that was borrowed would have helped to maintain an acceptable level of economies, and would not have led countries to failure.

Social Issues

The double effect of mismanagement and structural adjustment led to the depression of education and health care systems, resulting in misery and spread of diseases and HIV/AIDS. The poor economies do not permit building and sustaining the schools which lead to an illiterate and irresponsible youth who are jobless and have unsatisfied social needs. Such youth have no choice but join militias or bandit groups.

The lack of health education largely accounts for the spread of HIV/AIDS. Malaria and infectious diseases kill or disable a population unable to afford health care. Ebola fever, cholera and tuberculosis are the most lethal infectious diseases in the Gulf of Guinea. The association of these diseases with HIV/AIDS has been a serious concern. The ever increasing population in the area due to incoming refugees is unsafe with infections. This is where poverty is seen in its widest dimension. The efforts by government towards the eradication of poverty and hunger, greater equity in income distribution and human resource development remain challenges everywhere. The struggle against poverty is the responsibility of all governments. On poverty, B.R. Schiller states,

If the poor are culturally bound to poverty, then the task of eliminating poverty becomes infinitely more difficult and time consuming.... Hence, the culture of poverty thesis cannot be dismissed lightly.¹⁸

Poverty is a threat to the GG's political and social stability. Poverty and unemployment are obstacles to social integration of the most vulnerable population. Refugees constitute a special category of poor people: homeless, and dependent on the host countries or the international community. Their massive presence in a country is a source of new problems like health, education, job opportunities and potential terrorism.

Military Issues

Abandoned by their governments due to the economic environment after the cold war, and also because of the obsessive fear of the phenomenon of "military coup," the armies of the GG were unable to carry out their statutory missions to protect the sovereignty of their respective countries. Some governments were unable to pay their soldiers, resulting in an inability to acquire more military skills. The confidence and loyalty they had in their governments deteriorated. Above all, the lack of logistics during military operations was fatal especially with governments under the democratization pressure and which were unable to provide security to their people against organized bandit groups or armed insurgents.

The emergence of militias¹⁹ armed by powerful opposition leaders with external support and the combined resurgence of mercenaries has weakened the defense system in the GG. The lack of maintenance of military equipment is the greatest weakness of the military throughout the region. The islands of peace in the area are those countries that were able to maintain an effective care of peacekeeping and security forces.

The weak military forces in the region can hardly guarantee efficient control over their waters and territories which often fall prey to illegal exploitation, or violation.²⁰ Moreover, the

military inadequately provides the security needed by their people and their property. The immediate consequence is the corruption of the security officers.

Insecurity Outcome

The permanent state of conflicts in the GG not only threatens human security but also every effort at sustainable development. As Robin Sharp notes:

The concept of sustainable development embodies a belief that people should be able to alter and improve their lives in accordance with criteria which takes (*sic*) account of the needs of others and which protect the planet and future generations.²¹

According to U. Kirdar, sustainable development must be rooted in the culture, values and priorities of a society.²² The GG is trapped in a web of wanton destruction, fratricidal carnage and appalling human catastrophe resulting in unmitigated disaster and human misery as evidenced by mass poverty, diseases, death, malnutrition, starvation, socio-economic decline and moral deterioration. The increasing ferocity of these conflicts would hardly attract foreign investors as they see their interests at risk in the GG. For instance, the armed militia attack on oil workers in Nigeria led to the temporary shut down of production of 800,000 barrels per day in March 2000, and 100,000 barrels per day in 2005.²³ In 2004, the International Maritime Organization rated the GG second only to the Straits of Malacca in piracy attacks.²⁴

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) has hosted a roundtable discussion about Africa's strategic importance with regard to oil during a time that US foreign policy makers are seeking to increase investments in security in Africa. A report from the task force of that center on the GG reveals the repercussion of insecurity in the region. The report states that the waters of the GG are among the world's richest marine eco system, yet the region's fisheries are among the most weakly protected and are extremely vulnerable to illicit commercial fishing and over fishing. This marine basin is also home to crime syndicates that have successfully stolen large volumes of Nigerian crude oil since 2000. Clearly, it appears that there is a total absence of the rule of law even in a country like Nigeria which could be an example in the region.

This grand enterprise, emanating from the Niger delta, has led directly to the proliferation of weapons throughout the region, the enlargement of armed militias with considerable lethal fire power, extensive and sophisticated money laundering capabilities, and alleged linkages to Nigerian political parties. This instability can prevent the region from benefiting from foreign investments that usually give support to developing countries.

Terrorist groups seek to recruit members among those who have no more hope. Knowing that those people are psychologically weak, they use a religious approach to draw them in their group. The large Muslim community in the GG is a favorable environment for terrorist activities. Moreover, the growing Western interests in the region could become terrorist target in a weak security environment. According to the CSIS report, the threat of anti-western terrorism is credible and present, though opinion varies on the precise level and the nature of the threat. In northern Nigeria, Islamic groups following Osama Bin Laden's exhortation in 2003 to focus on Nigeria might seek to exploit rising discontent with the government in Abuja and its close ties to the West.²⁵

Regional development is compromised by the permanent state of insecurity. Regional initiatives like the Commission of the Gulf Region promoted by Nigeria cannot move because of the lack of cooperation among unstable states. The GG Commission represents a geographic zone that cuts politically across other regions such that none of the existing organizations can claim membership in all the coastal states with oil resources.²⁶ Regional integration recommends honesty, respect for international law, and a political will that will build confidence within the group.

Proposed Solutions

Regional integration is the best way for the states of the GG to face the challenges of globalization and preserve their interests. As it attempts to spur economic growth through regional markets and exchange between states, regional integration helps to achieve stability through a democratic platform, sustained economic growth, and a well conducted social development plan. Each individual state does not represent a significant market by itself, and cannot be an isolated island inside an ocean of disorder. Some political, economic, social and military measures are essential for building confidence and trust among states.

Politically, the countries of the GG need to harmonize their political values. Democracy, good governance and the rule of law offer a very good platform for achieving that objective. Economically, a regional market should be the goal. Countries should seek to increase economic growth rates through expanded trade and foreign investment, financial and corporate restructuring and improved economic governance. Corruption must end. Social measures target the re-orientation of education towards creative and scientific sectors. Simultaneously, it is important to adopt measures that help to fight HIV/AIDS and provide access to health care. Military measures should be oriented towards defense reform, including the establishment of

alliances in the area. Combating terrorism and peace keeping will remain the primary focus of a professional military.

Political Measures

Dependable constitutions, good governance, the rule of law and respect for individual freedoms, are the right way to build a long lasting peace. It is difficult, however, to evaluate the progress of democratization in the GG, but the current instability and the incapacity to build a strong block reveals discrepancies among the states. Moreover, some problems common to all states require a common solution.

Most states in the GG are on their way to democracy. This process needs to be strengthened by good and respectable constitutions that clearly determine the rules and that are not subject to change by individuals, but only to interests of the people. The different arms of power need to be clearly independent so that their action may complement each other. The parliaments should normally play big roles in the control of the democracy. The twin concept of transparency and secrecy must be respected during elections to avoid possible violence, and to make the elections and their outcome credible and legitimate. The secrecy of individual choice and the open transparency of the process will help to shape electoral process and its civic outcome.

A responsible and uncorrupted judiciary branch is needed to establish the rule of law and respect for individual rights and freedoms. It should be clearly stated that everybody should obey the law. Cameroon is currently taking a serious step in that direction with the prosecution of Ministers and Directors General of state companies for corruption, bad governance and money laundering²⁷. The rule of law should give everyone the right to act freely as well as responsibility. In the sub-region, Nigeria which could be the leading country is failing to show respect for international law and thereby fails to build trust and confidence. More than three years after a ruling by the International Court of Justice in favor of Cameroon on the Bakassi Peninsula, Nigeria does not understand the implication of such a position in its own domestic problems. The rule of law is essential for peace and trust among states.

The role of free media is absolutely relevant to freedom of expression. The free media should investigate social and public issues instead of working mainly with rumors. Freedom is essential in a democracy and helps to achieve good governance. There are no other ways but to assimilate globalization. Information and communication technology needs to be exploited so that it can help leverage the economic development in the GG.

Economic Measures

The creation of regional markets with unique currency and economic cooperation with world economic powers can stimulate competition in an environment where private investment will strongly be encouraged. In this context, states would be expected to work on domestic barriers in order to open the market. No state constitutes a significant market by itself.

Regional markets have the advantage of promoting competition. But in order for regional markets to be successful, they require maximum participation from the private sector and an orientation toward private loans. After substantial amelioration of the quality of its commodities, the region could seek to increase its exports. The NEPAD²⁸ approach is relevant for the GG, as it is based on Washington Consensus²⁹ and promotes economic growth and poverty³⁰ reduction. States members will be required to fulfill the requirements of the international financial institutions.

The requirements called codes of standards have been developed by a number of international organizations through consultative processes and according to the NEPAD resolutions. Those codes are the following: code of good practices on transparency in monetary and financial policies; code of good practices on fiscal transparency; best practices for budget transparency; guidelines for public debt management; principle of corporate governance; international accounting standards; international standards on accounting; and the core principle for effective banking supervision. Although NEPAD relies unrealistically on external finance (it relies heavily on the WB and IMF to have funds), its approach creates favorable conditions to foreign investment and debt relief.

Investment from the private sector is a key factor for job opportunities and a significant step towards poverty reduction. Foreign investment has contributed greatly to the major advances of East Asian countries today. Foreign investors have influenced the trade balance in favor of countries in that part of the world, resulting in an amelioration of their respective economies. The US strategic goals to promote economic growth³¹ in that region remain clear.

The AGOA is a golden opportunity given to African countries to bolster their economy. It has helped to spur economic growth, bolster economic reforms and foster stronger economic ties between the countries of the Sub-Saharan Africa and the United States.³² The result is that export from the US to Sub-Saharan Africa reached record levels after the enactment of the Act, while exports from sub-Saharan Africa to the US have increased considerably. The disposal of a preferential treatment offers a special advantage on export. The promotion of small and medium size enterprises is essential to help local businessmen to hold ownership and benefit from globalization. Governments need to show technological initiatives. Technology is the base

line for globalization. No sustainable development can be made without a serious scientific program. Technology can help to diversify the bases of economy.

Social Measures

A reform of the educational system is essential for scientific research and creativity. In a region where 80% of the population lives in the rural area, the education system needs to be oriented towards useful sectors. Health care and the fight against HIV/AIDS remain the primary objectives.

The education curricula have to be revised in order to meet the needs of the region in quality and in quantity. Rural based populations should be educated in fields such as agronomy, arts and basic industries with an emphasis on low cost of production and good quality. The focus should be training graduates to create jobs or who are inventive. In order to encourage scientific research, special loans or scholarships should be awarded to those who graduate in science. This is also applicable to the health sector where transformation from traditional to modern medicine is to be encouraged in order to take great advantage of the available local resources that can be modernized. It certainly appears that poverty and insecurity are mutually tied and that the link between development and security is important. Child labor and militias are clearly a result of poverty. School could be an appropriate remedy.

HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and infectious diseases remain a great problem. The people need to be educated on the prevention of those diseases. The objective should be to provide healthcare to everybody.

Military Measures

The reorientation of the institutions of the countries towards democracy implies a reorganization of the defense systems in the region. Professionalism of military forces, a balance of power and the orientation towards regional alliances appear to be relevant. Moreover, the global war on terrorism and peace keeping need to be conducted carefully.

A reform of military forces is imperative in order to respond to the geo-strategic needs of the region. The reform of military forces should be part of a reform of the defense system. The military forces are in fact an important part of global defense that includes military defense, civil defense, political and diplomatic defense, economic defense, and cultural and technological defense. The change in the state's political shape should normally involve a change of defense system. The result of the defense policy at the regional level should be the establishment of defense alliances, and the build up of a regional peace keeping force that will build confidence within the GG, and give way to a real economic development and regional long term stability.

The reform of the military defense and security forces is a necessity. Every state needs to have an efficient instrument that can repel or deter any external aggression, and handle internal security, in other words protect its sovereignty. Besides state protection, it is also necessary to establish a peace keeping force for the AU or the United Nations.

Democracy by itself is not sufficient to instill peace: maintaining that peace is imperative. It is also necessary to instill peace where it does not exist. It is obvious that no development is possible if peace, security and confidence are not instilled in the mind of citizens. Public affairs cannot be carried out in an atmosphere of insecurity. Security of the people and their property brings social peace which is an essential factor to political, economic and social development. Without security, no foreign investment is possible, and there is no foundation for progress and development for everybody. Investors and workers are protected by security forces. In the new environment of democracy, military and security forces should be oriented to loyalty and the republican concept of the nation and therefore help the government to achieve economic and development goals. The security of investors can help to increase production, increase financial capabilities, ameliorate the payment and trade balances, and solve social problems.

The reform of military and security forces should be future oriented, but should not be done without an understanding of the past. The military instrument primarily serves state interests. Its transformation should be shaped to fit the overall national objectives. The limited means of African military forces cannot permit a total coverage of the area. Therefore, it is imperative for forces in the region to cooperate. In the agenda, initiatives from the western defense forces like the French,³³ and the Americans would be instructive. The US European Command³⁴ has begun the development of coastal security program entitled the GG Guard in 2004.³⁵ These programs help to create an environment of peace, deter violence and instability, and re-enforce confidence.

The reform should consider the international threat to terrorism. The presence of Western investors in the region can attract terrorists. Principally the strategic interest of the USA related to energy security. War against terror is special and requires special dispositions and cooperation. Reliance on intelligence in this special type of war is vital. Secret services should seek training and cooperation from Western military.

Governments should also encourage the creation of centers for research, studies and analysis. These centers will deal with strategic issues related to the potential defense alliances. In addition, the organization of civil protection, especially in light of the geographic structure of the region must be carefully considered.

The initiative of both the AU and the UN to create regional peace keeping forces should find a fertile terrain in the region. Africa should take care of their defense and help in making and maintaining peace in the continent. States should check the proliferation of light weapons that are every where in the area and eliminate the presence of private militias by applying the rule of law.

Conclusion

Regional initiatives for development are faint in an environment characterized by general mistrust between states and resistance to changes by some countries. Once more, opportunities to build strong economies are delayed by lack of will to establish peaceful framework. There is a logical link between political management, economic growth, social emancipation and security.

Politically, statesmen need to build strong democracy. The rule of law and the respect of individual freedoms bring order and peace in a state and therefore constitute reliable elements of stability. Democracy shape conditions for a secure environment where economic activities can prosper. The economic growth of the countries helps to reduce poverty, to ameliorate the lifestyle of the people and to sustain security forces. States need to form a common market. Doing so will allow them to be competitive and to increase trading capabilities. The international financial institutions appreciate the progress of some countries of the Gulf of Guinea toward the reach of the completion point. This is a sign of significant changes in the internal policies of those countries that still need improvement. An appropriate education program is needed in the region in order to adapt to the needs of the people. Access to technology will be possible through a vast scientific program and initiatives. Medical care and fight against HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases remain a major objective.

Hope lies in the real will of a cooperative development of a new partnership in the region. Efforts could be made in terms of the Washington Consensus and more aid given to countries, but poverty alleviation cannot be achieved only through those means. They remain, nevertheless a foundation.³⁶ The development of the GG needs the involvement of all the players, including oil companies and the private sector in general. Stability in the Gulf, which is worrisome, is normally a priority for African people and their partners as well. Thomas Barnett expressed the tie between the Core and the Gap, and how much the situation of the second will affect the first in these terms: "...a lot of people will move from the gap to the Core to keep globalization on track³⁷ ...overpopulation and underperforming economies in the gap will lead to explosive situations that spill over to the Core."³⁸

The GG needs initiatives from its leaders to develop a new peace environment and to forge development. It is difficult to imagine that many African countries are not able to make glass from sand or transform iron, yet some signs of iron civilization were found in the history in East and South Africa by archeologists.³⁹ Initiative is highly needed as well as the will of the West and other partners. Involvement of the United States in the area will be a determinant factor with regard to peace and stability.

Endnotes

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²⁴ Goldwyn and Morrison, 3.

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³⁴ US European command, which have the responsibility over Africa.

³⁵ Goldwyn and Morrison, 6.

³⁶ Barnet.

³⁷ Ibid, 211.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ In East and Southern Africa signs of stone buildings in big agglomerations, iron mines and stove were discovered. They were made by African besides those of the Portuguese that still exist. Reference found in http://www.ankholine.com/population_Afrique.htm, page 8of 23.