

**FROM MIRACULOUS TO DISASTROUS:
THE CRISIS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

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Programme on Governance (Conflict Management, Negotiation and Diplomacy)

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Abstract

The 1999 coup d'état in Côte d'Ivoire shocked Ivorians and members of the international community alike. Yet the political instability and subsequent violence in this country is not wholly unexpected.

From independence until the early 1990s, Côte d'Ivoire was lauded as a miraculous anomaly in a continent plagued by divisive, violent conflicts and tyrannical dictators. Under the dictatorial leadership of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, president for more than 30 years, the country achieved and maintained economic prosperity and political stability. Houphouët-Boigny embodied Côte d'Ivoire's promise; under his rule, the country became known as "*le miracle ivoirien*."

Côte d'Ivoire's record of success cracked in the late 1980s because of declining coca and coffee prices, a serious drought, and international pressure for multi-party democracy. These factors, compounded by the death of Houphouët-Boigny in 1993, thrust the country onto an entirely different course.

Houphouët-Boigny's successor, Henri Konan Bédié, could not confront the underlying reasons for the nation's increasing instability. Rather than steering the country back on track, he labeled "foreigners"—West Africans who had been legally living and working in Côte d'Ivoire—as the scapegoats for the country's economic malaise. Bédié's actions began the political manipulation of nationality, or *l'ivoirité*.

Tensions escalated dramatically. Unrest because of the declining economic situation provoked the 1999 coup d'état. Presidential elections in 2000 sparked more violence when one of the main contenders was excluded on the basis of his nationality. In September 2002, a northern rebel group emerged to violently protest the government's xenophobic policies. The rebels quickly succeeded in occupying the north of the country. The surrounding chaos made Côte d'Ivoire prey to the wider, largely Liberian-led, regional conflict. This regional aspect of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire became a major impediment to achieving a peaceful resolution.

Côte d'Ivoire sits on the brink of a more secure peace and a descent into further violence. Peace accords were drawn up in Linas-Marcoussis, France in January 2003 and resulted in the formation of the Government of National Reconciliation, led by President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Deydou Diarra. But in spite of the accords and efforts of French peacekeeping forces, peace, as yet, remains elusive in Côte d'Ivoire.

This report, which is based on reliable secondary sources, is intended both as a background document and as a basis for further research on the Ivorian conflict.



from <http://ortcoop.free.fr/coteivoire/cote2.html>

Actors in the Ivorian Crisis

ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States

ECOWAS sent troops to Côte d'Ivoire to help monitor the ceasefire.

FANCI *Forces armées nationales de Côte d'Ivoire* (National Armed Forces of Ivory Coast)

These are Gbagbo's troops. Nearly 14,000 strong, FANCI forces have worked with the French to contain the rebels' movements in the North and the South. Gbagbo has been accused of recruiting (sometimes forcibly) Liberians to strengthen his forces against the pro-Taylor movement in the West. FANCI forces are predominantly Krahn, from both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as Bété and Guéré (both sub-groups of the Krahn ethnicity). These two groups that form the basis of Gbagbo's support.

FPI *Front populaire Ivoirien* (Ivorian National Front)

FPI is the political party of Gbagbo. Supporters are, for the most part, Christians from the South. FPI is also affiliated with the Socialist party in France. Members and supporters of FPI are also predominantly Bété and Guéré.

LURD Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy

A sizeable anti-Taylor movement based out of Guinea. LURD fighters are predominantly Krahn.

MFA *Mouvement des forces d'avenir* (Movement of Forces for the Future)

A small political party, led by M. Innocent Kobena Anakry, that took part in the peace process.

MJP *Mouvement pour la justice et pour la paix* (Movement for Justice and Peace)

This is one of the rebel groups that emerged from the West in November 2002 (MPIGO is the other). It is supported by Taylor and, possibly, by the Northern rebel movement MPC. Its goal is, vaguely, to avenge the death of General Robert Guei and remove Gbagbo. Both Western rebel movements are closely linked to the Liberian Gios and their Ivorian ethnic counterparts, the Yacouba.

**LURD-
MODEL** **Movement for Democracy in Liberia**

This group emerged only in March 2003, after breaking away from LURD forces based in Guinea because of disagreements over leadership. According to the International Crisis Group, this anti-Taylor movement is comprised mostly of anti-Taylor fighters, refugees, and political asylum seekers and is based in Côte d'Ivoire. It is supported by the Krahn and President Gbagbo.

MPCI ***Mouvement patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (Patriotic Movement of the Ivory Coast)**

Northern-based MPCI was the first rebel group to emerge after the failed coup in September 2002. They quickly gained control of the Northern part of the country. Their aim was to remove Gbagbo from power. They held his position was illegitimate because he had excluded Ouattara, a Northern candidate, from participating in the 2000 elections. This rebel movement is well-organized compared to those in the West, and led by Guillaume Soro. Members and supporters of MPCI are predominantly Dioula, a generic name for the ethnic groups living in the North of Côte d'Ivoire.

MPIGO ***Mouvement patriotique du Grand Ouest* (Patriotic Movement of the Great West)**

Like MJP, the MPIGO also lacks clear aims. Its leader was Félix Doh, who was executed by his own forces on 24 April 2003 upon asking them to respect the peace accords. Together, MJP and MPIGO have taken over large areas of the West and have created a humanitarian nightmare. As indicated above, the Liberian Gio ethnic group and the Ivorian Yacouba are supporters of the Western rebel groups. It is also the Gio and Yacouba that support Charles Taylor. General Guei belonged to the Yacouba ethnic group.

PDCI ***Parti démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (Democratic Party of the Ivory Coast)**

This party, sometimes referred to as PDCI-RDA (a remainder of the merging of PDCI and *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain*), is the party of former president Henri Bédié. PDCI, as the party of Houphouët-Boigny, was the ruling party in the country since its independence until the 1999 coup d'état. After the coup, Bédié took refuge in France. This group is allied with the Akan ethnicity, that of both Houphouët-Boigny and Bédié.

PIT ***Parti ivoiriens des travailleurs* (Party of Ivorian Workers)**

Another small political party that took part in the peace process.

RDR *Rassemblement des républicains (Rally of Republicans)*

This is Alassane Ouattara's party, with a strong Muslim, Northern backing. As a former IMF official and the prime minister under Houphouët-Boigny, Ouattara has considerable external support--including from France, even though France has actively supported Gbagbo's FANCI troops during the crisis. RDR supporters mostly belong to the Dioula ethnicity.

UDCY *Union démocratique et citoyenne (Democratic Union of Citizens)*

A small Ivorian political party that took part in the peace process.

UDPCI *Union pour la démocratie et pour la paix en Côte d'Ivoire
(Union for Democracy and Peace in Ivory Coast)*

Officially a political party, this movement essentially aims to promote Houphouët-Boigny's philosophy of peace and conviviality.

Timeline of Events in Côte d'Ivoire¹

- 1960-1993** From independence until the death of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the country remained stable. This was the time of the “*miracle Ivoirien*”.
- 1993** Henri Bédié succeeded Houphouët-Boigny.
- 1995** Bédié was elected president. He developed a form of nationalism founded on *ivoirité*, a xenophobic concept highlighting religious and ethnic differences between Ivoirians in the North and those in the South. Mistrust between the North and South grew. Bédié’s regime suffered from problems of poor governance and corruption.
- 1998** The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Union suspended economic aid. Bédié became very unpopular.
- 24 December 1999** A mutiny of soldiers launched a successful coup d’état. General Robert Guei announced Bédié’s dismissal.
- 4 January 2000** The military junta formed a transitional government. General Guei became president. He promoted a rhetoric based on the concept of *ivoirité* by legally defining an Ivoirian as someone who is born to parents who are themselves Ivoirian by birth. This concept was used to stir up hatred between Ivoirians.
- 4-5 July 2000** Guei changed the constitution to disallow his rival Alassane Ouattara, leader of the *Rassemblement des Républicains* to participate in the October elections. Ouattara has one parent of Burkinabé origin.
- 22-26 October 2000** Presidential elections resulted in Guei fleeing the country and Laurent Gbagbo, of *Parti démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire*, declaring himself president on the grounds that Ouattara was not a candidate.
- 27 October 2000** Discovery of a mass grave at Yopougon: 57 young men had been shot and killed. It later came to light that they had been supporters of Ouattara and had been killed by the gendarmerie.
- November 2000** Tentative legislative elections, resulting in the exclusion of Ouattara on the basis of his citizenship.

¹ Information is based on a document from the Belgian Red Cross:
http://www.croix-rouge.be/img/db/fiche_ivoire.pdf

- 9 October –
18 December 2001** Forum for National Reconciliation.
- 22-23 January 2002** Summit between Gbagbo, Guei, Bédié and Ouattara.
- 29 June 2002** The courts delivered a certificate guaranteeing Ivorian citizenship to Ouattara.
- 19 September 2002** A mutiny shook Abidjan. Rebels took control of Bouaké (a city in the center) and Korhogo (in the North). General Guei was killed in the violence.
- 22 September 2002** Arrival of the first French military reinforcements.
- 18 October 2002** The rebels signed a ceasefire agreement. President Gbagbo requested that France help monitor the ceasefire line.
- 28 October 2002** Two rebel groups emerged in the West, the *Mouvement populaire ivoirien du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO) and the *Mouvement pour la justice et la paix* (MJP). They quickly took control of the Western cities of Man and Danané.
- November -
December 2002** New battles broke out between rebel and government forces. French forces were repeatedly confronted by rebels.
- 15 January 2003** Opening of the peace negotiations in Linas-Marcoussis, France. The discussions involved all protagonists in the crisis.
- 24 January 2003** Marcoussis Accords were approved. Gbagbo would remain president but would work with a powerful prime minister and a government of national reconciliation. The rebels were given key ministerial positions in the new government.
- 26 January 2003** Gbagbo's supporters protested the accords. They pillaged the French cultural center, burned the Burkina Faso embassy, and attacked the French embassy.
- 4 February 2003** The UN approved the use of its peacekeeping force to support the French and ECOWAS troops in Côte d'Ivoire. The resolution 1464 condemned the serious violations of human rights committed by both rebel and government fighters.
- 6 February 2003** The UN evacuated all non-essential personnel.
- 8 February 2003** Gbagbo gave a televised address urging Ivorians to join him in supporting the "spirit" of the Marcoussis Accords.

- 14 February 2003** Rebels threatened renewed violence if they were not installed in the new government.
- 13 March 2003** Meeting of Council of Ministers of the Government of National Reconciliation. Only 23 out of 39 ministers attended. None of the rebels were in attendance.
- 17 April 2003** The new rebel ministers arrived in Abidjan for the first time despite periodic violence between rebels and government forces.
- 25 April 2003** Rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in West because of ongoing violence. The rebel leader of MPIGO was executed by his own troops when he asked them to respect the peace accords.
- 3 May 2003** A new ceasefire agreement was signed by national military and by rebels.
- 6 May 2003** Sierra Leone mercenary Sam “Mosquito” Bockarie was killed. He had served as an advisor for all of the Ivorian rebel groups. His death boosted chances for peace.
- 10 May 2003** Gbagbo ended nation-wide curfew. Steps to re-establish trade routes with Burkina Faso.
- 15 May 2003** Young Patriots, supporters of Gbagbo, demonstrated in Abidjan to disarm rebels.
- 15-18 May 2003** Meeting of the Security Council in Abidjan.
- 22 May 2003** First meeting of Government of National Reconciliation. Held in Bouaké, former MPCCI territory. Everyone was in attendance. The posts of Minister of Defense and Minister of the Interior that had been promised to the rebels remained empty.
- June 2003** Rebels increasingly impatient to be installed in the promised ministries.
- 27 June 2003** The leader of Northern rebel group MPCCI was physically attacked by Gbagbo supporters, motivating rebel groups to threaten to pull out of the ceasefire agreement.

Introduction

For decades, Côte d'Ivoire has been a peaceful, stable and successful West African nation. In contrast to its neighbors, this cocoa-rich country boasted one of the continent's strongest economies, a calm post-colonial history and solid external relations. But instability has been building over the last several years and since autumn 2003, violence has plagued Côte d'Ivoire. The peace agreement reached in France in February 2003 is tenuous at best. Côte d'Ivoire, with its 16 million inhabitants, is a pivotal state in the region and the crisis will undoubtedly have meaningful regional consequences—politically, economically and socially. It is a critical time for West Africa.

Two important reports have come out recently that address Côte d'Ivoire's crisis in a regional context: "The Usual Suspects: Liberia's Weapons and Mercenaries in Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone" by Global Witness and "Tackling Liberia: The Eye of the Regional Storm" by the International Crisis Group. Both deal particularly with Charles Taylor's Liberia and how Taylor exacerbated the conflict in the Côte d'Ivoire. As important as it is to thoroughly understand the regional situation, however, it is also vital to promote a better understanding of the Côte d'Ivoire and the domestic factors that made the country susceptible to violence.

No conflict can be resolved without understanding its roots. Conflicts can be frozen (by UN peacekeepers, for instance), but a true resolution necessitates a thorough understanding of how the conflict emerged and how it was perpetrated. Accordingly, this report is an attempt to clearly explain the situation in Côte d'Ivoire by exploring different aspects of the crisis. The first chapter seeks to establish the reasons why Côte d'Ivoire was vulnerable to instability. This entails a discussion of the colonial history, ethnicity and *ivoirité*, and the long presidency of Félix Houphouët-Boigny and the shorter mandate of Henri Bédié. The second chapter explains the 1999 coup d'état, the conflict itself and the involvement of France and Liberia. The third chapter examines what impact the Linas-Marcoussis Peace Accords, drawn up in January 2003, have had on the conflict, and then traces events

up to June 2003. Annex A provides a detailed account of the peace process and should be read in conjunction with the body of this report. The conclusion reflects upon the conflict and discusses prospects for the future.

A note must also be included about the report's limitations. In an effort to provide readers with a solid understanding of Côte d'Ivoire and the conflict, sections necessarily alternate between explaining rather basic facts (such as a general overview of the country's colonial history) and outlining more complex theories (such as how and why the Ivorian crisis is linked to that in Liberia). While this paper is based on reputable secondary sources, gaps in information and conflicting reports have presented an obstacle. A thorough understanding of alliances between individuals and ethnicities, for example, is absolutely essential to understanding how and why the conflict was perpetrated—and also one of the most difficult things to ascertain. In this sense, this study serves as a starting point for more detailed research. However, this report also stands on its own as a background document for the situation in Côte d'Ivoire by providing an introduction to the different aspects of the crisis. The goal is to encourage a deeper understanding of the situation with the hope that this will in turn facilitate the development of positive future scenarios for the country and the region.

CHAPTER I: The Roots of Vulnerability

Contemporary politics and the current conflict in Côte d'Ivoire are intrinsically tied to its colonial history. French interest in West Africa intensified more than a century ago. France, seeking to secure its hold in the region, adopted Côte d'Ivoire as a colony in 1893. Two years later, the French administration began grouping their West African colonies together, and by 1904, Côte d'Ivoire and seven other West African countries constituted *l'Afrique occidentale française*. Despite such grand plans for administering the colonies, however, the first couple decades of colonial rule in Côte d'Ivoire were not peaceful. Several groups of Ivorians rebelled and the French reacted violently in turn, utilizing brutal methods to conquer all the territories of the country. Violent resistance turned passive in 1915, when Ivorians employed other methods of dissent, such as refusing to pay taxes and migrating outside the colonial borders.

In the 1920s, the colonial administration focused on the economic development of Côte d'Ivoire by nurturing the country's agricultural promise (with a focus on exports) and constructed wharfs, medical services, and basic infrastructure, such as roads. The majority of this construction benefited the South—at the expense of the North and West, which remained somewhat neglected by the French because they lacked the same agricultural potential. Agriculturally, the French first focused their attention on the production of palm oil and rubber. The production of cocoa, however, which also began in this decade, quickly proved to be far more lucrative, and by the 1930s, Côte d'Ivoire had been transformed into a “plantation economy” and a major producer of cocoa and coffee. Further improvements to the infrastructure system continued to benefit the South, since the colonial administrators were intent on transporting the valuable crops to the coast.

Africans in Côte d'Ivoire were considered subjects of France until after World War II. In 1946, Ivorians were granted French citizenship, the right to organize politically was recognized, and forced labor was abolished. Having been involved in farmers' rights since 1932, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who would become the first president of Côte d'Ivoire, made his debut into politics by founding the *Syndicat*

agricole africain (SAA) in 1944. By this time, nationalist sentiment was stirring—economic pressure and the growing severity of colonial policy caused a growing discontent with French rule. In 1945, an Ivorian political party formed from the *Rassemblement démocratique africain* (RDA): the *Parti démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (PCDI), which was closely tied to the SAA. Led by Houphouët-Boigny, the PDCI quickly moved to prominence in the country. Houphouët-Boigny became the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire when it achieved independence in 1959, and was elected as its first president in 1960.

The Colonial Origins of Ivoirité

The concept of *ivoirité*, though it has only been used as a political instrument of manipulation after Houphouët-Boigny's death, has colonial origins. *Ivoirité* is intrinsically linked to the North-South division (and indeed, the Muslim-Christian distinction) that is subject of so much debate today. This distinction emerged at the end of the 19th century, in large part because the southern part of the country had the most favorable agricultural conditions and became the focus of the colonial administration.

To help build up the colony's economy, the French colonial administration encouraged the people living in the North to move to the sparsely-populated South by offering various incentives, including an exemption from forced labor. In 1932, the colony expanded as a result of the partition of the territory of Upper Volta (what is now Burkina Faso). Migrant laborers moved South, and the number of workers on the plantations soon doubled.² In contrast to many other African states, this migration led to the establishment of heterogeneous villages in the southern part of the Côte d'Ivoire. However, such heterogeneity did not translate into happy coexistence. On the contrary, as scholar Catherine Boone points out,

Indigènes often found themselves in the minority, especially in the southwest where land-pioneering immigrants spearheaded export crop production. This

² Boone, Catherine. "The Social Origins of Ivorian Exceptionalism: Rural Society and State Formation." *Comparative Politics*. Vol 72, Issue 4. July 1995. p. 450.

process resulted in the de facto alienation of land to strangers and the de facto dispossession of indigenous communities. To make matters worse, the indigène-stranger cleavage sometimes ran along class-like divisions, as in much of the southwest where the largest farmers tended to be strangers.³

Who were these “strangers”? Many people from the North called themselves Dioula, but this name translated into a generic regional identity rather than a national or ethnic identity.⁴ When the Dioula moved South, they were perceived as being West African rather than Ivorian—they were perceived as being “other.” Jean-Pierre Dozon writes,

Une représentation d'autant plus marquée que s'y est greffée celle d'un monde dioula dominé par l'islam...comme si, là encore, du point de vue du Sud, les gens du Nord témoignaient d'allégeances les inscrivant dans un univers quelque peu extérieur à la réalité plus profondément forestière de la Côte d'Ivoire.⁵

Indeed, it was not ethnicity that set many migrants apart from the indigenous southern population, but the more tangible division of the North and the South. Religion served to accentuate this division further, as among non-Ivorians—who mostly lived in the North—only 18% were Christian while 73.3% were Muslim.⁶

The Stabilizing Reign of Houphouët-Boigny

“Houphouët not only runs the country, he also symbolizes it.”⁷

These North-South divisions were not a feature of Félix Houphouët-Boigny's policies—he had other priorities. Houphouët-Boigny was involved in politics in Côte d'Ivoire for nearly fifty years, including the 30 years he held the presidency. During

³ Ibid. p. 457.

⁴ Dozon, Jean-Pierre. « La Côte d'Ivoire entre Démocratie, Nationalisme et Ethnonationalisme. » *Politique Africaine*. No. 78. June 2000. p. 56.

⁵ Ibid. p. 58.

⁶ Touré, Moriba. « Immigration en Côte d'Ivoire : La Notion de ‘Seuil Tolérable’ Relève de la Xénophobie. » *Politique Africaine*. No. 78. June 2000. p. 75.

⁷ Vogel, Jerome. “Culture, Politics, and National Identity in Côte d'Ivoire.” *Social Research*. Summer 1991. Vol 58, issue 2. pp 439-757.

this time, and particularly in the two decades after the country's independence from France in 1960, the cocoa-driven economy climbed, transforming this West African nation into an exemplary African state—*le miracle ivoirien*. Côte d'Ivoire was lauded as having Africa's most developed economy: Abidjan, the economic capital, developed a Manhattan-like skyline; President Houphouët-Boigny was a friend to France; the country was peaceful—an accomplishment, considering the percentage of the population who had immigrated to Côte d'Ivoire from surrounding states; there was an impressive infrastructure and solid industrial base.

In the early 1980s, however, environmental and economic forces interrupted Côte d'Ivoire's record of positive trends. In response to macroeconomic instability and a decline in growth, the government undertook an adjustment program in 1981 with support from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. However, this measure did not avert the country's first significant economic crisis that sharpened between 1982 and 1984 as the result of a drought and a fall in coffee and cocoa prices. The gross national product per capita dropped from US \$840 in 1980 to US \$710 in 1985.⁸ The economy began to stagnate. By July 1987, the president halted cocoa exports altogether in an effort to arrest the falling prices, but his actions did not have the hoped-for effect.

As the decade progressed, the country's economy continued to decline. Critics of Houphouët-Boigny—students, members of the opposition, the international community—became more vocal, denouncing him as corrupt and pressuring him to institute a multi-party system. Yet throughout the relatively turbulent 1980s, Houphouët-Boigny maintained his grip on power and peace in the nation. Though there was increasing discontent and anger about the decline in living standards, Houphouët-Boigny was able to prevent these sentiments from rising to the surface. His ability to maintain peace was due in large part to the fact that he understood potential tensions and acted accordingly. For instance, he made it a priority to keep

⁸ “The New Racism: The Political Manipulation of Ethnicity in Côte d'Ivoire.” Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/ivorycoast/cotdiv0801.htm>

the military satisfied. He gave them practical roles within the state and compensated them well.⁹

In the latter part of the decade, demands for democracy grew. Student protests increased and the political opposition grew in strength and numbers. In 1990, Houphouët-Boigny was forced to relent and Côte d'Ivoire became a multi-party democracy. The October elections resulted in Houphouët-Boigny's re-election (his closest rival was Laurent Gbagbo from the *Front populaire ivoirien*, FPI). But his re-election did not restore Côte d'Ivoire to its shining image of the 1960s and 70s, and the president quickly began to lose respect and support. His declining health served to make him look weak and vulnerable, though he refused to yield power. Meanwhile, the economic situation had intensified the rural-urban migration pattern, which contributed to a 61% increase in informal sector employment. Between 1988 and 1993, poverty in the country as a whole doubled—and poverty in Abidjan increased tenfold.¹⁰

In 1993, even when it was clear he was dying from prostate cancer, Houphouët-Boigny did not name a successor. His death, on 7 December 1993, was widely mourned by Ivoirians and the international community alike. Despite economic problems, Côte d'Ivoire was one of the few African countries to make a peaceful transition from a colonial to an independent state. In retrospect, the death of Houphouët-Boigny represented a definitive shift in the country's course. Côte d'Ivoire lost its spiritual father. This man had come to symbolize Côte d'Ivoire; his death meant that the state was suddenly vulnerable to re-definition.

Bédié's Presidency: What Changed?

According to a 1990 amendment to the constitution, the speaker of the assembly would succeed the president. Thus, within hours, Henri Konan Bédié, the

⁹ Kieffer, Guy-André. « Armée Ivoirienne : Le Refus du Déclassement. » *Politique Africaine*. No. 78. June 2000 : 26-44.

¹⁰ "Issues in Comparing Poverty Trends Over Time in Côte d'Ivoire." The World Bank. January 1997. pgs. 3, 10.
http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1997/01/01/000009265_3970625093939/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf

Speaker, declared himself President. Bédié, who is Catholic and an Akan as was Houphouët-Boigny, quickly sought ways to foment and legitimize his ascension to power during this politically and economically uncertain period.

The devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994 gave a boost to the economy, but this boost proved to be only temporary. As world market prices for cocoa and coffee continued their downward trend, Bédié scrambled to find a scapegoat for the country's economic woes. He found one: foreigners. By virtue of Houphouët-Boigny's liberal open-door policy, by the early 1990s the Côte d'Ivoire was home to over two million non-Ivorians (most of whom were West African) who lived and worked—legally—in the country.¹¹ Yet Bédié blamed foreigners for taking jobs that should have gone to those Ivorians *de souche*, those whose parents were also born in Côte d'Ivoire.¹² He boldly reversed Houphouët-Boigny's policy and stopped foreigners from working in the country. These xenophobic measures were then articulated in constitutional amendments.

The elections slated for 1995 were a cause of worry to Bédié and his desperation to eliminate political rivals increased. In response, Bédié began promoting the importance of *ivoirité* in order to prevent his closest competitor, Alassane Ouattara, from participating. Ouattara, the former Prime Minister under Houphouët-Boigny and a former IMF official, has one parent of Burkinabé origin. According to the new constitutional amendments, a “double nationality” was rendered illegal. This meant that Ouattara was not a national of Côte d'Ivoire, and therefore could not participate in the elections.

Bédié won the elections, but his victory did not quell his pursuit of xenophobic policies. In addition to effectively alienating the large “foreign” population in the Côte d'Ivoire—most of whom lived in the Muslim North—Bédié also marginalized Ivorians who were not members of his Akan ethnic group. These measures did not increase Bédié's popularity with the majority of people living in Côte d'Ivoire. Opposition members were jailed. There was even some wariness within the PDCI that

¹¹ “Tackling Liberia: The Eye of the Regional Storm.” International Crisis Group. 30 April 2003. p. 27.

¹² Under Houphouët-Boigny, these “foreigners” often found work in the agricultural sector, jobs that many Ivorians viewed as too menial. There is no indication that foreigners took jobs at the expense of Ivorians. (see Country Report February 2003: Côte d'Ivoire. Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd.)

Bédié was not well-suited to the presidency. Economically, the benefits from the devaluation of the CFA had worn off, revealing profound problems with the fiscal administration of the country. Domestically and internationally, Bédié's government had the reputation of being corrupt. In 1998, reports of corruption and bad governance prompted the International Monetary Fund to freeze its program with Côte d'Ivoire. In December of that year, the European Union suspended economic aid following a scandal involving the misappropriation of €27.5 million by several government ministers.¹³

Bédié's presidency, which ended abruptly with the country's first coup d'état in December 1999, has been described as an "historical parenthesis."¹⁴ Rather than steering the course of the country in one definitive direction or another, Bédié's five-year mandate was more of an unsuccessful attempt to follow in Houphouët-Boigny's footsteps. Bédié lacked the insight and the ability to command the same amount of respect as his predecessor. The government's mismanagement of the country's fiscal health combined with external factors, such as the drought and the falling prices for cocoa and coffee, triggered increased inequality, poverty, and, needless to say, considerable social unrest.

¹³ "The New Racism: the Political Manipulation of Ethnicity in Côte d'Ivoire." Human Rights Watch. August 2001. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/ivorycoast/cotdiv0801-08.htm>

¹⁴ Dozon, Jean-Pierre. « La Côte d'Ivoire entre démocratie, nationalisme et ethnonationalisme. » *Politique Africaine*. No. 78. June 2000. p.46.

CHAPTER II: The Breaking Point

1999 Coup d'Etat and Resulting Instability

Given the economic and social frustrations that had been brewing, the December 1999 coup d'état is not altogether surprising. And the fact that General Robert Guei led the coup is even less surprising. Guei received his military training in France at St. Cyr Academy, and was a strong supporter of Houphouët-Boigny. In 1990 he became Côte d'Ivoire's military chief. However, relations with the government became strained when Bédié took power. During the 1995 elections, Guei refused to support Bédié's designs to exclude Ouattara. This took on a tangible form when Guei declined to deploy his troops in order to silence the protests of Bédié's opposition. This refusal resulted in Guei being fired as head of the military. In 1997, Bédié further humiliated Guei by dismissing him from the army altogether on the grounds that Guei had been plotting a coup two years earlier, though this accusation remains unproven.¹⁵

Guei was apparently asked to lead the coup by young soldiers who were frustrated by the decrease in their wages. There is no indication that Guei had initiated the coup himself; on the contrary, he has been described as a "reluctant" head of state. On 24 December 1999, the military overthrew the government in a nearly bloodless coup. The public reaction to the coup was, at first, amazement. As BBC journalist Mark Doyle writes, "the people of this city had never experienced a coup d'état before, and at first...hundreds of local people were standing frozen on the pavements, staring at the soldiers in complete disbelief."¹⁶

Bédié quickly left the country and took refuge in France. Guei's first public announcements brought relief to many Ivoirians. Guei promised to "sweep the house clean"—in other words, clean up corruption—and assured the public he would withdraw after holding transparent, democratic elections. Observers and academics alike thought that perhaps this coup had saved the country from a civil war. But, in fact, it soon became clear that the coup did nothing to dispel tensions. Within months,

¹⁵ Obituary: General Robert Guei. *The Guardian*. 21 September 2002.

¹⁶ "A Coup Out of the Blue." BBC news. 8 January 2001.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/595591.stm

the hope that Guei's original statement inspired evaporated. As one journalist describes it, "within 10 months, Guei had fallen into the mould of many another military leader, and transformed himself into a power-hungry civilian."¹⁷

Guei took swift and decisive—if unpopular—actions during his 10-month stint as head of state. Rather than eliminating Bédié's xenophobic policies as promised, he promoted them. Guei actually endorsed stricter constitutional amendments that set new, narrower, eligibility requirements for those seeking political office. One of the other major changes Guei undertook was to push Akan officials (the ethnicity of Houphouët-Boigny and Bédié¹⁸) out of important posts in all sectors, and this included a "purification" of the military. In short, despite his initial popularity, only months after seizing power, Guei became just as unpopular as his predecessor.

The one promise Guei did keep was to hold elections in October 2000. The elections were held, but Guei, upon hearing that his rival Laurent Gbagbo was in the lead, dissolved the National Electoral Commission and declared himself president. Thousands of Ivoirians from different political parties protested this outcome, demanding a new election. The protests took a violent turn when Guei's army fired on demonstrators, killing hundreds. But after only a few days, the military and police abandoned Guei and he fled to Benin.¹⁹

Laurent Gbagbo from the *Front populaire ivoirien* (FPI) declared himself president on 25 October 2000, though if he did in fact win the necessary votes, it is in large part because, once again, Alassane Ouattara was disqualified from running because he lacked true Ivorian status. (Bédié himself was also disqualified from participating because of his failure to submit a proper medical certificate.²⁰) Ouattara called for new elections and his supporters—primarily Muslims from the North, like Ouattara himself—began protesting Gbagbo's legitimacy. Ouattara's case was supported by the United States, South Africa, the United Nations, and the

¹⁷ Obituary: General Robert Guei. Ibid.

¹⁸ Bédié and Houphouët-Boigny were actually members of the Baoulé ethnicity, which is a sub-group of the Akan.

¹⁹ "The New Racism: the Political Manipulation of Ethnicity in Côte d'Ivoire." Human Rights Watch. August 2001. It is also worth pointing out that Guei returned to the country in November 2000, amid much government speculation that he was planning to take revenge.

²⁰ Ibid.

Organization of African Unity. Yet Gbagbo did not agree to new presidential elections. The parliamentary elections held in December again excluded Ouattara from participating.

Ouattara's supporters continued their protests. Clashes with the police became more frequent as demonstrations and mistrust grew, deepening the ethnic and regional divisions within the country. Serious unrest manifested itself in a failed coup in January 2001, led by unidentified rebels rumored to be loyal to Guei. President Gbagbo vehemently reaffirmed his claim that he had been elected fairly.

Throughout 2001 and up until the autumn of 2002, the situation in Côte d'Ivoire teetered on the verge of peace. Condemnations about human rights abuses by Western countries and NGOs such as Amnesty International increased. Opposition politicians were often the victims of abuse or murders. Economically, after world cocoa prices hit an all-time low in 2000, the GDP struggled to regain its 1999 level of US \$11.4 billion. In 2000, the GDP was approximately \$9.4 billion, and this dropped to \$9.2 billion in 2001. Though the GDP rose to \$10 billion in 2002, its real growth hovered at -1.7%.

Politically, Gbagbo maintained his position as head of state and officially took steps to re-establish peace in the country. In March 2001, he and Ouattara met and agreed to work towards reconciliation (Ouattara's RDR party had boycotted the parliamentary elections held in January). In October, Gbagbo set up a National Reconciliation Forum (though Guei refused to attend). By August 2002, Ouattara's party, the RDR, was given four ministerial posts in the new government.

But on 19 September 2002, the scale tipped. In an apparent attempted coup, a group of soldiers mutinied in coordination at three different sites: Abidjan, Bouaké (the country's second largest city in the center of the country), and Korhogo in the North. Though the assailants were defeated in Abidjan, the cities of Bouaké and Korhogo were occupied. Approximately 300 people died as a result of this violence, including former head of state General Guei.

At first, the mutinous soldiers were reported to be deserters of the national armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) as well as some 270 soldiers who had served

under Guei and had recently been demobilized. Within weeks, however, a rebel group called the *Mouvement patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI) emerged in the North, claiming responsibility for the attacks. They demanded Gbagbo's resignation, a six-month transitional government, and new elections. The turn of events in September launched the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

Escalation of Violence: October 2002-January 2003

The complexity and danger of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire grew tremendously between October 2002 and January 2003. Following the northern occupation by MPCI, two other rebel groups: the *Mouvement patriotique du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO) and the *Mouvement pour la justice et pour la paix* (MJP).

The primary rebel group is MPCI, which, under the leadership of young Guillaume Soro, made itself known in early September. MPCI's unofficial objective, as a northern-based group, was to unseat Gbagbo in protest of his election in 2000 and his xenophobic policies. This group is significantly better organized than the other groups, as evidenced by their website.²¹ MPCI lists their official objectives of fostering universal humanist and political values by ensuring: long-term economic stability; better living standards for all the populations regardless of religion; ethnic origin and political conviction; equal access to the country's political decision-making process; etc. Gbagbo's supporters have accused Ouattara of creating/supporting MPCI, and while this is not confirmed, it is probable that MPCI grew from Ouattara's support base.

MPIGO and MJP both emerged at the end of October, just after MPCI had agreed to a French-monitored ceasefire. While French troops patrolled and monitored fighting in the North and along an East-West ceasefire line, the two rebel movements emerged from the unwatched southwest part of the country. Despite their lack of organization and weapons, MPIGO and MJP quickly captured several towns. It is not clear if the two groups were in communication with each other. MPIGO, led by Félix

²¹ www.supportmpei.org/TheIvoryCoast.htm

Doh, had a clear goal of avenging the death of General Guei (it has been reported that one of Guei's sons is a supporter). Though MJP has not publicly expressed a mission, it, too, is reportedly aiming to avenge Guei's death. It is more probable, however, that this group has emerged expressly to enter the scramble for power of Côte d'Ivoire.

The emergence of these two groups has significantly complicated the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire for two main reasons. First, the addition of MPIGO and MJP to the scene meant that there were at least six groups vying for power in Côte d'Ivoire.²² Second, these two newer rebel groups indicated a strong possibility of the involvement of Liberia. There are several indications of Liberia's involvement, an obvious one being reports that many rebels speak in English or with English-accented French.²³ Additionally, the ferocity of fighting in the west belies the fact that some of the rebel fighters are trained; as several reports have indicated, both Liberian and Sierra Leone mercenaries have been hard-pressed to find a paycheck. A recent report by Global Witness claims that about 90% of MPIGO and MJP forces are paid mercenaries from Liberia and Sierra Leone.²⁴

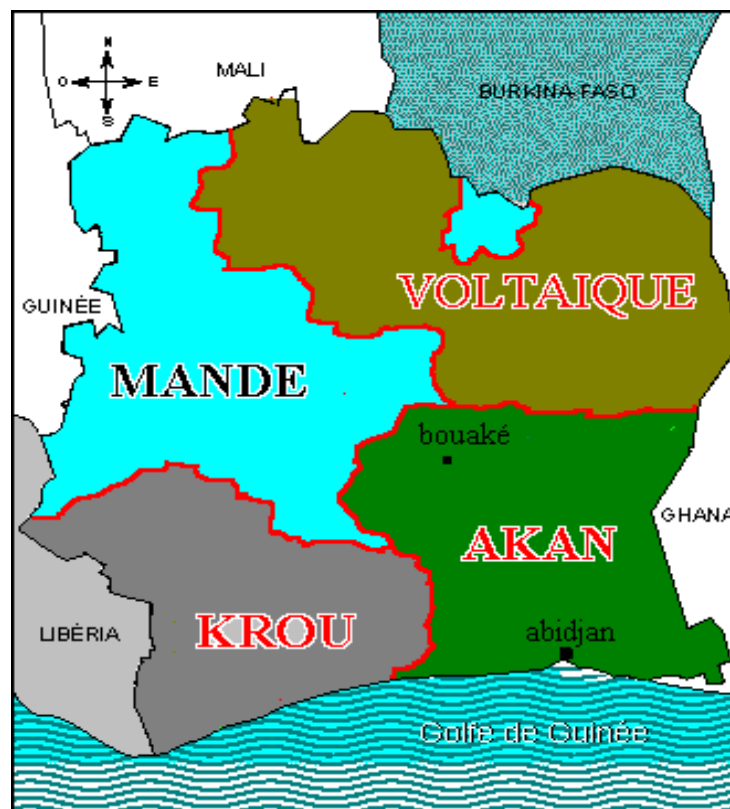
Ethnicity in Côte d'Ivoire

Ethnicities in West Africa are fluid and amorphous, and political events fall straight along ethnic lines—not necessarily along state borders. As suggested above, regional and ethnic alliances play a major role in the current crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. However, in order to demonstrate the intricate links between West African states and how and why the Ivorian crisis took on a regional dimension, it is also necessary to examine the ethnic constitution of the country. Côte d'Ivoire, which is home to five major ethnic groups, though there are as many as 60 ethnicities in the country. The major groups, the Northern Mande, Southern Mande, Voltaique, Krahn, and Akan, are not confined within the borders of Côte d'Ivoire.

²² FPI, RDR, PDCI, MPCI, MPIGO, and MJP.

²³ According to the Côte d'Ivoire Country Report February 2003, The Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd.

²⁴ "The Usual Suspects." March 2003. p. 6.



The **Northern Mande** live in the Northwest of Côte d'Ivoire, and also in parts of Guinea and Mali. They make up about 17% of the population. Another 17% of the population is **Voltaïque** and live in the Northeast—as well as parts of Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana—and this group includes the smaller groups of Sénoufo, Lobi, and Koulango. The diversity of ethnicities in the North are often grouped together under the generic term “Dioula,” meaning trader. The **Southern Mande**, who constitute about one-tenth of the population, live in the West. This group includes the Yacouba (or Dan) tribe. The **Krahn** (or Krou—a name that is tied Liberia’s American heritage, indicating African “crewmen”), including the Bété and Guéré, make up about 11% of the Ivorian population and live predominantly in the Southwest of the country, as well as in Liberia. The largest ethnic group, the **Akan**, constitute just over 42% of the population. Both Houphouët-Boigny and Bédié belonged to this group. They are also a significant population in Ghana. In addition to these five main groups, there are numerous smaller ethnicities and approximately 60 different languages in Côte d'Ivoire.

Ethnic alliances indicate the complex, cross-border nature of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. For instance, Gbagbo's small ethnic group, the Bété, is closely linked to the Liberian Krahn, who form the base of the anti-Charles Taylor rebel groups. Former Liberian President Samuel Doe, who was overthrown by Charles Taylor in 1989, was also Krahn—a fact that automatically indicates antagonism between Gbagbo and Taylor. General Guei and Charles Taylor are ethnically linked by virtue of their Yacouba and Gio, heritage, respectively (these two groups are closely tied). Additionally, the tension between Gbagbo's Bété and Guéré supporters and the Dioula in the North has translated into a political FPI-RDR division.²⁵

Regional Aspects of the Ivorian Crisis

Regional events, particularly in Liberia, have played a large role in the escalation of the crisis. In fact, a recent report by the International Crisis Group²⁶ points to the crisis in Liberia as being one of the main causes of instability in Côte d'Ivoire. However, Burkina Faso and Guinea also have played a role in fomenting instability in Côte d'Ivoire.

Liberia

Côte d'Ivoire has been peripherally involved in the Liberian conflict since 1980, when Liberian President William Tolbert, a close friend of Houphouët-Boigny, was murdered during a coup led by Samuel Doe. In revenge, Houphouët-Boigny supported designs by Charles Taylor to overthrow Doe, and in fact allowed Taylor to launch his rebellion from Côte d'Ivoire in 1989 with support of Ivorian troops.²⁷ The Ivorian Military Chief of Staff at the time, General Robert Guei, was brought into close contact with Taylor as a result of this cooperation. This alliance between Guei and Taylor was perhaps part of the reason for Guei's success in staging the 24

²⁵ For more information about this aspect of the crisis, please refer to the report by Human Rights Watch, "The New Racism: The Political Manipulation of Ethnicity in Côte d'Ivoire." The report is available on their website: <http://www.hrw.org>

²⁶ Tackling Liberia: The Eye of the Regional Storm." International Crisis Group. 30 April 2003.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 15.

December 1999 coup, during which he took power from Bédié. The Ivorian coup took place exactly 10 years to the day after Taylor's coup in Liberia.

The two Ivorian rebel groups, both of whom publicly vowed to avenge Guei's death, could have grown from an Ivorian base. But it is likely that both MPIGO and MJP recruited Liberians to help them fight. Indeed, this recruitment may have even had the blessing of Charles Taylor himself; Taylor, as a friend of Guei's, undoubtedly would have supported movements that aimed to avenge Guei's death. And if such a group should manage to attain leadership, it would be a tremendous boon to Taylor's pan-Africanist plans for West Africa. The International Crisis Group states that "based on the location of the rebels and their initial success, none could have launched their attacks without the financial or military support of Taylor or Compaoré."²⁸

Significant Liberian support for these two rebel groups also fits into the pattern of conflict that has developed in West Africa. With the end of the conflict in Sierra Leone and only sporadic fighting in an already devastated Liberia, many West African mercenaries were without work.²⁹ It is, as noted earlier, very probable that the Ivorian conflict drew in many of these fighters: evidence for this also lies in the escalation of the Liberian conflict following the increasing peace in Côte d'Ivoire in late spring 2003.

Up until the recent American intervention and Taylor's resignation, the Liberian conflict had largely disintegrated into an unorganized fight for power with relatively little intervention—or attention—from the international community.³⁰ Taylor held the presidency since the 1997 elections (though he began his uprising against Doe's government in 1989), which were declared "free and fair" by international observers. Since then, however, it has become clear that Taylor has flagrantly violated international law and human rights standards. It is widely held that Taylor is responsible for instigating the horrific and tragic conflict in Sierra Leone in

²⁸ "Tackling Liberia: The Eye of the Regional Storm." ICG. p. 18.

²⁹ There is also evidence of South African mercenaries involved in the fighting in Côte d'Ivoire. "I'm Just a Hunter, Not a Fighter." 3 August 2003. *Sunday Times (Johannesburg)*.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200308030229.html>

³⁰ Though as of 4 July 2003, there is a greater possibility of international (US) intervention in Liberia.

the late 1990s for his own benefit. Global Witness reports that Liberian investments in Switzerland are higher than both those of South Africa and Nigeria, and Liberian funds constitute about 25% of all African funds in Swiss accounts.³¹ In June 2003, Swiss banks announced their decision to freeze Liberian assets.

Burkina Faso

The President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, has two notable allies: Charles Taylor and Alassane Ouattara. Compaoré and Taylor likely met in Libya in the early 1980s while training under Gadhaffi. As indicated in the report by International Crisis Group, there has officially been a decline in the relations between the two leaders. The report continues,

A number of sources paint a picture of involvement by Taylor from the beginning in the attempt to remove Gbagbo. However, the level of coordination between Taylor and Compaoré is not known.... It is possible to imagine a tacit arrangement between the two presidents pursuant to which each dealt directly with the Ivorian movement to which he was closest. There are many indications of a degree of coordination before the coup but it appears that the initial military action came from the North, with the support of Burkina Faso.³²

Whether or not Taylor and Compaoré were plotting together, it is true that Compaoré did have an investment in Côte d'Ivoire: over two million Burkinabés. The Burkinabés living in the North are predominantly Muslim, and one of the most discriminated against. This population also forms a significant part of Ouattara's support base, as Ouattara had faced accusations that his mother was a Burkinabé citizen. Gbagbo has accused Compaoré and Taylor of conspiring and initiating the conflict from its start.

Ouattara and Compaoré met in the 1980s as well, when Ouattara served as Director of the Africa Department of the IMF. When Ouattara was asked in an

³¹ Abbas Fawaz letter to the UN Secretary General, December 2001. Cited in "The Usual Suspects." Global Witness. March 2003. p. 18.

³² "Tackling Liberia...." P. 18.

interview to respond to the allegation that he and Compaoré had planned or encouraged the Northern rebellion, Ouattara spoke of Compaoré as a close friend and left it at that.³³ However, it does not appear that Compaoré would have any strong reason to initiate a destabilization of Côte d'Ivoire. Burkina, as one of the poorest countries in West Africa, depends heavily on its neighbor for trade and for the transportation of goods. Additionally, though Compaoré showed little concern or compassion for the increasing violence against the two million or more Burkinabés living in Côte d'Ivoire (there are reports of up to as many as four million), he must be aware that Burkina Faso would face a humanitarian disaster if all these people returned.³⁴

Guinea

In 2000, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) emerged to challenge Taylor's legitimacy. The LURD is currently based in Guinea, in Macenta (a town near the Liberian border) and also in the capital city of Conakry. While Taylor continues to find arms support from Eastern European countries and finance through the illegal trade of diamonds, the LURD is allegedly supported by the Guinean government, both monetarily and—rumor has it—militarily. The International Crisis Group addresses this issue, stating,

Allowing the LURD to operate along the Guinean border provides President Conté with a cheap alternative to securing the border with his own army. However, this has given renewed life to Liberia's war. Conté has also found the LURD useful to protect him from armed dissidents, especially those based in Liberia.³⁵

As the Guinean military receives substantial support from the United States, the US is also an indirect supporter of the LURD. The military cooperation between

³³ "Ouattara Tells of Escape from Death Squads, Says Gbagbo Not Committed to Peace." Interview. www.allafrica.com. 9 May 2003. Ouattara also stated in this interview that, "I don't believe in military coups and military regimes. They don't work.... Even if some people were to make a coup and ask me to be president, I would refuse."

³⁴ See "Synthese de l'Actualité Politique au Burkina Faso Durant le Mois d'Octobre 2002." http://www.int-idea.se/burkina/docs/cdg_update_oct.pdf

³⁵ Ibid. p.11.

the United States and Guinea is due in part to their shared dislike and distrust of Charles Taylor. Officially, neither the US or Guinea support the LURD. The unofficial version undoubtedly tells another story. Guinea possesses an inordinate amount of mineral wealth, including vast reserves of gold, diamonds, and bauxite. There are substantial amounts of oil just off the West African coast, an extremely valuable commodity, particularly given the conflict in the Middle East. After Taylor's involvement in Sierra Leone, which was partially motivated by the quest for Sierra Leone's diamond wealth, Guinea has reason to suspect that they might be on Taylor's list as well. Taylor has accused Guinea numerous times of sheltering Liberian rebel forces, an accusation which led to a brief conflict when Liberians invaded Guinea in October 2000.

Similarly, US relations with Liberia have been strained for nearly two decades. Taylor has flouted international standards of human rights and his administration is plagued with problems of serious corruption, mismanagement, and poor governance. In 2001, the US imposed a travel ban on Liberian government officials when it was proven that the Liberian government was supporting the Sierra Leone rebel group Revolutionary United Front.³⁶ Clearly, the US has an interest in protecting Guinea from a Liberian invasion, both to protect Guinea's wealth and to prevent Taylor from increasing his power and subsequently destabilizing the entire region.

In spite of these significant supporters, the LURD are rumored to be struggling with internal conflicts for power. The group lacks a strong leader; there is no one who is obviously equipped to assume the role of head of state should the LURD succeed in overthrowing Taylor. These internal struggles are evidenced by the recent emergence of a LURD subgroup emerged, LURD-MODEL (Movement for Democracy in Liberia) in March 2003, from Côte d'Ivoire. This movement is possibly allied with Gbagbo, and is a LURD competitor rather than co-conspirator.

³⁶ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm>

The Involvement of France

West African neighbors are not the only external actors in Côte d'Ivoire. Since Chirac's re-election (and with the departure of Lionel Jospin), France has demonstrated a renewal of interest in African affairs. As a former colony, Côte d'Ivoire is home to over 16,000 French citizens. It is also a region of significant French financial investment: one report estimates that 80% of the country's economy is in the hands of French conglomerates.³⁷ France is, unquestionably, Côte d'Ivoire's biggest trading partner.³⁸ Approximately 13.3% of Côte d'Ivoire's exports go to France, and France provides 22.6% of the country's imports. In 2001, there were close to 210 subsidiaries of French companies, primarily in the strategic sectors of telecommunications, energy, water, transport, public works, and agriculture. Collectively, these businesses brought to France more than 2.2 billion euros in 1999.³⁹

Approximately 700 French troops were first sent to Côte d'Ivoire on 22 September 2002, immediately following the attempted coup and rebel activity in the North. On 18 October, the rebels agreed to a ceasefire, and President Gbagbo called on the French to monitor it. Because of its colonial ties to Côte d'Ivoire, France, under a 1961 pact, is obligated to militarily defend its former colony from any external invasion. The French government hesitated to commit to an explicit agreement to protect Côte d'Ivoire from an *external* invasion, as the conflict almost certainly came from within the country. Gbagbo's government called it a question of semantics. At any rate, France did, in practice, monitor the ceasefire, though they cited the reason for this as being the protection of French nationals and, one might divine, the protection of French investments.

But while the French patrolled the east-west ceasefire line, which effectively stopped MPCCI from moving south of Bouaké—thereby preventing them from

³⁷ Pascal D. Kokora quoted in "This is an Economic War." *New African*. Issue 416. March 2003

³⁸ Main destinations of exports 2001 (in %):

France	13.3
Netherlands	9.4
US	8.3
Mali	5.8
Germany	5.4

(According to The Economist Intelligence Unit in February 2003)

³⁹ "L'économie contrôlée par la France." *Courrier International*. No. 637. 16 January 2003.

attempting an attack on Yamoussoukro and Abidjan—the two western rebel groups emerged. Throughout the rest of the year, the ceasefire was broken repeatedly and the number of French troops rose exponentially. By January 2003, there were more than 3,000 troops in Operation Licorne, as this intervention was called, and it became the most significant French military intervention since Operation Turquoise in Rwanda.⁴⁰

As the different actors in the conflict emerged, France took an increasingly aggressive stance in effort to prevent any of the rebel groups from reaching the capital city of Yamoussoukro and Abidjan. Guillaume Soro, the leader of MPCI, admitted that it was true that the “only thing separating us from taking power in Abidjan was the French.”⁴¹ France also gave military supplies and arms to the poorly-equipped FANCI, the Ivorian government forces.

The French intervention was praised and criticized on many levels, by many sides. As the commencement of the peace talks in France, on 15 January 2003, drew closer, opinions about French involvement raged. The United States Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Walter Kansteiner, reported to Congress on 12 February that “widespread bloodshed was averted in the recent rebellion in Côte d’Ivoire thanks to French intervention.”⁴² But not all opinions have been so favorable. One author on France-Africa relations accuses France of “keeping up its old policy of only exploiting the natural and geopolitical resources of the continent...in Paris, many continue to believe that Africa is their private garden, where they can do whatever they want, where all crimes are possible and where impunity reigns.”⁴³ France was in the unusual position of militarily supporting Gbagbo and suppressing the rebel groups while at the same time protecting Ouattara and promoting a power-sharing agreement at the Marcoussis peace negotiations. Walter Kansteiner was quoted as saying that the French have been “truly driving” the peace process since the fighting began.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ “France Got Them There.” *Economist*. 18 January 2003. p. 50.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² “France Key to Peace in Côte d’Ivoire, US official says.” 14 February 2003. US Dept of State. www.reliefweb.int

⁴³ François Xavier Verschave quoted in Godoy, Julio. “Africa Policy Loses its Way.” 6 November 2002. http://www.ipsnews.net/africa/Focus/conflict_prevention/note_6.shtml

⁴⁴ “France Key to Peace in Côte d’Ivoire...” *ibid.*

Exacerbating Factors

In retrospect, it is clear that the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire took a different turn when the rebel groups emerged in the West. While MPCCI did not fully comply with the ceasefire, its leader, Guillaume Soro, did endorse the January Marcoussis accords, thereby demonstrating his willingness to work in cooperation with other parties to resolve the conflict. The leadership of MPCCI also to some extent maintained control over their troops—the incidences of theft and rape have been far fewer in the North than the West—and there was every indication that the majority of the troops agreed to the accords.

In contrast, the troops of MPIGO and MJP were thoroughly undisciplined. Though their leaders did participate in the peace negotiations, the willingness of the troops to respect the accords was questionable at best. This was pointedly clear when MPIGO leader Sergeant Félix Doh was captured and executed on 25 April 2003 by his own forces after asking them to lay down their arms and respect the peace accords. According to MPCCI's leader Soro, Doh had requested reinforcement from MPCCI, to help with the momentous task of disarming the Sierra Leone and Liberian mercenaries he had hired.⁴⁵ The International Crisis Group reports,

French soldiers and humanitarian workers note a marked difference in the behaviors of rebel fighters from the North and West. The former were paid from the beginning, and their money lasted until December 2002. Until January 2003, discipline was relatively well maintained, and, in general, civilian populations have been well protected. The situation is very different in the West where the fighters have looted, raped, killed and forced villagers to pay to gain access to roads or other villages.⁴⁶

But the rebel groups were not the only ones who recruited Liberian troops: it was also suspected that Gbagbo's forces (FANCI) were comprised partly of Liberians. Some of these Liberians had ties to the anti-Taylor rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD).⁴⁷ Others volunteered or were forcibly

⁴⁵ "Le chef d'un groupe rebelle ivoirien a été tué." *Le Monde*. 28 April 2003.

⁴⁶ "Tackling Liberia..." p. 25

⁴⁷ This group has reportedly created its own faction, LURD-MODEL, separate from the LURD group that is controlled of Conakry, Guinea.

recruited. In total, there were between 1,000 and 2,500 Liberians in FANCI, 95% of whom are Krahn. The Krahn are traditional rivals with the Gio and Mano tribes that form the basis of Taylor's support. Both sides of the Ivorian conflict though—from Gbagbo's troops to the rebels groups—admitted early in 2003 that they had lost control of the Liberians they recruited. The International Crisis Group states that the Liberians were being blamed for the continued violence and instability in the West: "Suddenly neither side in Côte d'Ivoire find the Liberians useful. All claim that at one stage they needed them 'but today they have realized that they came, looted, raped and caused mayhem.'"⁴⁸ Both sides sought to disarm the Liberian fighters and send them home, but this became an insurmountable task. Most Liberian mercenaries lacked incentive to put down their weapons and go home. After all, many of them have spent more than a decade fighting in Liberia and Sierra Leone: what is there for them to go home to? As the report by the International Crisis Group points out, "the Ivorian crisis is an economic opportunity for soldiers who are not paid in Liberia where there is little left to loot."⁴⁹

Because of the significant presence of Liberians, there have been hypotheses that the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire metamorphosed into a struggle between Liberians. Gbagbo, as Guei's unwanted successor, was no friend of Taylor's. Considering that there has been speculation that Taylor has plans to destabilize several West African nations for his own economic benefit (a speculation to take seriously, given the atrocious war in Sierra Leone), it is not outside the realm of possibility that Taylor took advantage of the vulnerable situation in Côte d'Ivoire.⁵⁰ In October, while both government and French forces were focused on containing MPCJ rebels in the North, MPIGO and MJP emerged from the West, very close to the Liberian border. And it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the coup in Côte d'Ivoire was carried out exactly 10 years after Taylor's coup.⁵¹

⁴⁸ "Tackling Liberia..." p. 25

⁴⁹ *ibid.* p. 24

⁵⁰ The report from the International Crisis Group references a "pan-African revolutionary plan" developed in Libya in the 1980s by dissidents from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, and Ghana. Côte d'Ivoire was not included in the plan because Houphouët-Boigny was seen as "the godfather" of many dissident fighters. *From "Tackling Liberia..."* p. 26.

⁵¹ Kourouma, Ahmadou. *Allah n'est pas obligé*. Editions du Seuil : Paris. 2000.

These exacerbating factors, hypotheses or fact, must be taken into account when analyzing the peace negotiations in France. Though there were particular internal factors that made Côte d'Ivoire vulnerable to conflict, there was also a very serious external element to the conflict. The peace negotiations at Marcoussis failed to take these regional factors into account. There has been no indication that discussion about alliances with Taylor, LURD, LURD-MODEL, or Compaoré took place at the round table. This could be a major weakness of the accords.

CHAPTER III: After Marcoussis

Problems with the Peace Process

The Marcoussis Accords, described in detail in the annex of this report, resulted in a power-sharing agreement reached on 24 January 2003. The agreement gave MPCCI key positions in the Ministries of the Interior and the Defense. It also created a Government of National Reconciliation with a relatively neutral figure, Seydou Diarra, to serve as Prime Minister until elections in 2005.

As mentioned earlier, France has faced intense criticism for its role in brokering the peace accords. There is much speculation that the peace agreement was forced upon Gbagbo and the FPI, especially since under the new governmental regulations, France will be able to maintain the status quo and continue to benefit from its investments and companies in Côte d'Ivoire. The Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, actively advocated the peace negotiations. Though mediators in peace negotiations do not always have to be neutral figures, in this instance a more neutral figure may have been valuable. For instance, consider how the Oslo peace accords were reached via the "back channel" in Norway as opposed to by virtue of the aid of the United States, a party that was very publicly involved in affairs in the Middle East. During peace talks on Côte d'Ivoire, accusations of French bias were quick to emerge. In fact, on 20 January 2003, one member of the round table left the negotiations, accusing France of trying to conduct a "constitutional coup d'état." If the French have been described as "driving" the peace process, it is very likely that they had the end destination clearly in mind.

The weeks following the signing of the peace accords demonstrate that while the main players did sign the document, not all of them signed it in good faith. After signing the accords in Paris at a Special Heads of State Summit following the negotiation process, Gbagbo returned to Côte d'Ivoire and stated publicly that the accords are merely "proposals," in spite of his professed support for the agreement. Gbagbo's army refused to accept the accords because of the rebels' new role in the government, and called the agreement a "national humiliation."

Many of Gbagbo's supporters began an intense anti-France campaign, denouncing France's role in the peace agreements as merely a way to promote neo-colonialist objectives. This anti-France sentiment translated into a very vocal pro-United States cry. Gbagbo's supporters called on the US to protect Côte d'Ivoire from "French terrorism" and the potential destruction from the right wing of the French government.⁵²

There were two aspects of the Marcoussis Accords that sparked protest and rebellion in Côte d'Ivoire: the composition of the Government of National Reconciliation and the choice of prime minister. In both instances, Gbagbo's supporters were the primary dissenters. They —particularly the armed forces— assert that too many concessions were made to the rebels and that they hold too much power in the new government, notably positions in the defense and interior ministries.

The accords state that the prime minister will be chosen by consensus of the round table. However, there are many conflicting reports and rumors as to how Diarra was appointed. Though considered a neutral figure, Diarra is from the North. In practice, this means that while Gbagbo is, as president, reduced to figure-head status (though his party retains some official positions), Ouattara's party, from the North, holds important posts, as does the rebel group MPCJ (also from the North) and, of course, Diarra. There are rumors about how "democratic" the appointment of Diarra really was, since the Government of National reconciliation appears to be slanted in favour of the North. There are reports that the French forced Gbagbo to approve Diarra's nomination.

Another problematic aspect of the peace accords is their reliance on power sharing, a concept that is both applauded and criticized by professionals in the field of conflict resolution. In theory, power sharing is an appealing and logical solution to end a conflict in which several parties are vying for power. Yet, as one scholar writes, "power sharing has obvious problems: power-sharing agreements are difficult to arrive at, even more difficult to implement, and even when implemented, such

⁵² Sengupta, Somini. "Thousands Rally in Ivory Coast to Protest Peace Plan." *The New York Times*. 2 February 2003.

agreements rarely stand the test of time.”⁵³ Unfortunately, though not insurmountable, these problems appear to be manifest in the case of Côte d’Ivoire. With the abrupt departure of one of the participants in the peace negotiations and the allegations that Gbagbo’s signature to the accords came only after some arm-twisting, it is evident that it was not an easy process to reach an agreement. Additionally, the fact that the power-sharing agreement included rebel leaders sharing government responsibilities has led to much criticism. Several individuals, from an anonymous Western diplomat to Charles Ble Goude, a vocal youth leader and supporter of Gbagbo, warned that the peace accords set a dangerous precedent. As Goude said, “From now on, to enter into a government you just need to base yourself in one region and take up arms.”⁵⁴

The path to implementation was also laden with obstacles. In early February 2003, Gbagbo’s supporters blocked the airport runway in protest of the new Prime Minister’s arrival, making it impossible for his aircraft to land. As mentioned earlier, one of the members of the round table, Félix Doe, was shot and killed by his own troops upon asking them to put down their weapons and respect the accords. But, as months passed, there remained hope that the Marcoussis Accords would help resolve the conflict.

January-March 2003: Tenuous at Best

After the peace accords were signed, Gbagbo returned to Côte d’Ivoire amidst protest. His supporters were shocked that he would “give away” power to the rebels. On 5 February 2003, Simone Gbagbo, the president’s wife, told the press that the Marcoussis Accords posed a problem and that the French would be better off leaving Ivorians to their own devices.⁵⁵ It was true that rather than the accords having inspired hope and relief, they resulted in even more passionate and violent demonstrations and

⁵³ Spears, Ian. “Understanding Inclusive Peace Agreements in Africa: The Problems of Sharing Power.” *Third World Quarterly*. Vol 21, issue 1. February 2000. p. 105.

⁵⁴ Harman, Danna. “Ivorian Protests Cool, but Damage Takes Toll.” 10 February 2003. <http://www.reliefweb.int>

⁵⁵ “Simone Gbagbo rejette les accords de Marcoussis.” *Le Figaro*. 5 February 2003. <http://lefigaro.figaro.net/cgi/edition/genimprime?cle=20030205.FIG0117>

the subsequent mass exodus of thousands of French nationals who feared for their safety.

In response to the continuous deterioration of the situation and rebel violations of the ceasefire, on 4 February French and West African troops (there were 200 ECOWAS troops working with the French) were granted permission by the United Nations to use force in their peacekeeping operation. Foreign companies and businesses began pulling their employees out of the country, including Abidjan's biggest employer, the African Development Bank.

Finally, on the evening of 8 February, Gbagbo broke his silence and addressed Ivorians in a televised speech. Contrary to his wife's comments, Gbagbo announced that he would "try this medicine" and expressed his commitment to the "spirit" of the accords. However, he contradicted some specifics of the accords and the agreed implementation. For instance, he denied that rebels had been given control of the defense and interior ministries (saying that he had not yet chosen the government); he stated that the defense and security forces would not be disarmed; and he asserted that where there are discrepancies between the accords and the constitution, he would defer to the constitution. His contentions were particularly difficult to reconcile with the "spirit of the accords," seeing as one of the central issues at the negotiations was nationality, or *ivoirité*. And finally, he took issue with the stipulation that the prime minister could not be dismissed prior to the elections in 2005, citing that this point is "incompatible with the constitution, which states that the President of the Republic shall appoint the prime minister and terminate his functions."⁵⁶

On 10 February, West African leaders held a summit to discuss the implementation of the peace accords. Though the Ivorian rebel groups had chosen not to participate, the summit did reinforce the international interest in resolving the conflict. In attendance were President Gbagbo and the newly-installed Prime Minister Diarra, presidents John Kufour of Ghana, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, and Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, South African Vice President Jacob Zuma, the interim

⁵⁶ "West African Leaders Discuss Post-Marcoussis Peace Process." UN Integrated Regional Information Networks. 10 February 2003.
<http://www.allafrica.com/stories/printable/2003021100671.html>

executive secretary of the African Union Amara Essy (who is himself Ivorian), and the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General to ECOWAS Ahmedou Ould Abdallah.⁵⁷ The rebels, in absentia, added pressure to the summit by declaring that they were giving Gbagbo until midnight on 14 February to implement the Marcoussis Accords. Guillaume Soro of MPCCI asserted that the accords were non-negotiable.

Meanwhile, from the 9th through the 11th of February there were also reports of new fighting—rebels in the West claimed to have been attacked by government troops near the Liberian border. Yet on the 14th, representatives from the MPCCI rebel group traveled to Ghana to meet with President Kufuor in attempt to rescue the peace accords. The absence of MPIGO and MJP, however, indicated that some of the actors lacked commitment to the accords. The rebel-imposed deadline for implementing the accords was pushed to midnight on the 16th. An MPCCI spokesperson reported that, “nothing came of the meeting in Accra except the fact that Diarra made clear that Gbagbo continued to refuse the ministerial posts [promised to the rebels].”⁵⁸ The following day, the rebels flew to Nigeria to meet with President Obasanjo who reinforced the regional commitment to peace in Côte d’Ivoire.

The threat of continued rebel action by MPCCI was suspended, but nothing of substance emerged from any of these February talks. Western rebel groups continued to fight amongst themselves and also with government troops. This halting, dangerous situation continued throughout the month.

Events in March did not serve to brighten prospects for the Marcoussis Accords. None of the three rebel groups attended the first three meetings (held weekly beginning 13 March) of the National Government of Reconciliation. Twenty-three out of 39 ministers attended the first meeting. Rebel groups chalked their absence up to logistical problems, though it was widely held that they did not attend out of fear for their safety. At the end of the month, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that,

The humanitarian situation on the ground continues to worsen as conditions for populations in rebel-controlled

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ “Rebels Threaten to Renew Ivory Coast Civil War.” *The New York Times*. 17 February 2003.

areas suffer for lack of public services and a strangled economy, and IDPs, host families and communities in the government-controlled south face deepening economic, health, and social pressures. Intensifying violence and instability in the west are causing grave problems of access to populations desperately in need of humanitarian assistance.⁵⁹

At the end of the month, reports that Gbagbo had named interim defense and interior ministers—not from the rebel groups—led to renewed protest. There were also rumors that thousands of youth were receiving government-sponsored military training in Abidjan to defend President Gbagbo. Nothing indicated that the peace accords were going to hold together. The peace process, inorganic from the start, seemed to have very little impact on the people on the ground.

April-June 2003: Possibility for Peace?

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan released a report in the first week of April about the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, which proposed to establish a UN mission in the country, called MINUCI (*Mission des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire*). The objective of MINUCI is to, “facilitate the implementation by the Ivorian parties of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, and including a military component complementing the operations of the French and ECOWAS forces.”⁶⁰

MPCI rebels released a statement saying that they were not opposed to the peace process so long as it followed the document agreed upon in Marcoussis. Amidst ongoing violence in the West, including a plethora of media reports on violence against civilians, the rebels agreed to attend a meeting to discuss the implementation of the Government for National Reconciliation on 3 April, even though they expressed concern over their continued exclusion from the promised ministries. A week later, the meeting was postponed and on tenterhooks when rebels alleged that government forces had attacked their positions in the West.

⁵⁹ “Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire Situation Report No. 07.” 13-28 March 2003. <http://www.reliefweb.int>

⁶⁰ <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minuci/mandate.html>

Nevertheless, the factions appeared to be linked by a thread of optimism. On 17 April, the Government for National Reconciliation held its first official meeting in Abidjan behind closed doors. With all nine rebel ministers in attendance, this meeting seemed to bode well for the resolution of the conflict. But, again, there was a divide between speech and action: the same week, a rebel spokesman accused the government of sponsoring more attacks, resulting in the death of 28 people and the injury of nearly 100 others.⁶¹ The government then accused the rebels of launching violent attacks, and it was reported that rebel group MPIGO killed 300 people in the town of Toulepleu (very close to the Liberian border). There are also unsubstantiated reports that this surge in fighting was the result of an attempt to disarm foreign—mostly Liberian—fighters. The day that MPIGO leader Félix Doh was killed, on 25 April, prospects for peace grew very dim.

But May brought new glimmers of hope; on the first of the month, all parties involved in the continued fighting resolved to adhere to a new ceasefire agreement. On the 3rd, a representative from the government forces, General Mathias Doué, and a representative from MPCI, Colonel Michel Gueu (on behalf of all the rebel forces—*les forces nouvelles*) signed the document. Unlike the other ceasefire agreements, this one had the official blessing of all parties (though this did not mean that every fighter was in accord) and covered the entire country with particular emphasis on the West. Gueu announced that even though there would be skirmishes here and there, “we can say that with today’s accord, we are approaching the end of the war.”⁶² The 18th of May was decided upon as the date for government and rebels forces to meet and discuss how to approach disarmament.

Another event that had a bearing on the situation was the murder of Sam “Mosquito” Bockarie, a very powerful and feared mercenary from Sierra Leone. Bockarie was rumored to be responsible for the death of Félix Doh in April, as well as countless other atrocities and murders in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d’Ivoire. He was allegedly killed by supporters of President Charles Taylor, who was under intense international pressure to pull Liberian forces out of Côte d’Ivoire. According to

⁶¹ “Ivory Coast Rebels Become Part of Cabinet.” *The Washington Post*. 18 April 2003.

⁶² “Côte d’Ivoire: forces gouvernementales et rebelles signent un cessez-feu total.” *Le Monde*. 3 May 2003.

International Crisis Group, there was a rumor that Bockarie was the military advisor to all three Ivorian rebel groups. Few people were sorry to hear of his death; the news was welcomed by rebels, and certainly by the Ivorian government. However, relief workers and regional analysts warned that if Bockarie was indeed killed by Taylor's forces, there could be serious retribution in Liberia by Bockarie's 5,000-strong mercenary force.⁶³

This start-and-stop momentum of the dubious peace process continued throughout the spring. Positive signs, such as the government's decision to abolish the nation-wide curfew on 12 May were often followed by negative signs—the curfew was quickly re-imposed in two western areas in response to the murder of 68 villagers. On the same day, another positive development was a successful test run on the railway line that runs from Abidjan to Burkina Faso that is normally used to transport goods. This successful run indicates that the transport of goods would soon resume, necessary for Côte d'Ivoire's economic recovery.

The following week, discussions began with Burkina Faso about re-establishing the trade routes and, despite further outbreaks of violence in the West (dubbed the "Wild West" by journalists), heads of state from Benin, Togo, Niger and Côte d'Ivoire met in Lome, Togo to discuss the Ivorian peace process. And on 22 May, journalists, for the first time in months, had good news to relay:

Côte d'Ivoire's government of national reconciliation held a ground-breaking cabinet meeting in the rebel-held city of Bouaké on Thursday as the first freight train for eight months left Abidjan carrying cement and fertilizer to the rebel-held north of the country.⁶⁴

Just over a week later, Prime Minister Seydou Diarra announced that the new government was working on a serious program to implement the peace accords. He mentioned some of the priorities as being the reworking of land laws and the status of

⁶³ OCHA Integrated Regional Information Network reports there was a possibility that the loyalty of Bockarie's forces might shift to another Sierra Leonean mercenary Johnny Paul Koroma who already had a force of 3,000. However, on 15 June, reports surfaced that Koroma had also been murdered, though this has yet to be substantiated. There are an equal number of reports stating that he is still alive and working in Liberia under Taylor. Additionally, the warnings of retribution were accurate, considering the timing of the resurgence of violence in Liberia in June.

⁶⁴ "Côte d'Ivoire: Cabinet meets in rebel city as train service resumes." UN OCHA Integrated Regional Information Network. 22 May 2003. <http://www.reliefweb.int>

foreigners. In response to accusations that he was biased toward the rebels, Diarra stated, "I am an Ivorian first, and a Muslim and a northerner later."⁶⁵ The possibility of peace opened in the west on 23 May when French and West African peacekeeping forces established a "zone of confidence" by sending in two large columns of armored vehicles.⁶⁶

It is true that spring brought significant political developments to Côte d'Ivoire. On paper, indeed, it appeared that the conflict was being resolved. On the ground, it was doubtful that most Ivorians shared this view. On 15 June, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs described a rather grim picture:

The conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has left hundreds of thousands of people in situations of physical and psychological insecurity. The reconciliation process is proving to be cumbersome and slow, and instead of improving, the humanitarian situation in the country is deteriorating. Humanitarian organizations are increasing their assistance week by week, and are still only able to provide emergency aid to the most vulnerable. The agricultural crisis that was predicted is coming to be, and cases of malnutrition, unheard of in this country of prosperity and bounty, continue to rise. Tens of thousands of children are missing out on their education, and women and children, as always, are bearing the brunt of the hardship.⁶⁷

Figures suggest that between 800,000-1,000,000 Ivorians were internally displaced during the conflict and another 500,000 took refuge in neighboring countries. A new militia group, the Young Patriots, has emerged from a suburb of Abidjan, urging people to take up arms against the Marcoussis Accords and conveying xenophobic messages. Health is a also huge concern, especially since sources of drinking water in the West have been contaminated by corpses and this is taking major toll on the health of people living in the region.

⁶⁵ "Ivory Coast unveils peace programme, denies pro-rebel bias." *Agence France-Presse*. 28 May 2003.

⁶⁶ "Corpses Contaminate Drinking Water in Troubled West." UN OCHA Integrated Regional Information Network. 23 June 2003. <http://www.reliefweb.int>

⁶⁷ "Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire Situation Report No. 12." UN OCHA Integrated Regional Information Network. 15 June 2003. <http://www.reliefweb.int>

Conclusion & Future Prospects

The conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has old and wide-reaching roots. Its colonial past provided a solid foundation for a sound, export-driven economy and a durable infrastructure—a legacy which Houphouët-Boigny used to his advantage. But beginning in the 1980s, the economy took a downward turn. Decreased salaries and standards of living triggered dissent and uneasiness. And in 1993, the death of Houphouët-Boigny shook the country to its foundations. Ivorian concern and grumbling evolved into protest. President Bédié began blaming non-Ivorian-born Africans who lived and worked in the country for the economic problems, accusing them of taking jobs from true Ivorians. These multiple tensions set the stage for Côte d'Ivoire's first coup d'état.

Continued xenophobic policies and increasing discontent throughout the 1990s created immense friction within the country. Given the policies of General Guei and then President Gbagbo, the outbreak of violence in October 2002 is hardly surprising. And, given the boiling tensions in Liberia and Guinea, neither is it surprising that regional tensions in other countries also spilled into Côte d'Ivoire. It was an opportune moment for such foreign influences: the French and Ivorian governmental forces had their attentions focused on the North of the country. Ivorian forces are not just innocent victims of an external attack, but neither are they solely responsible for the current crisis.

Since the signing of the Marcoussis peace agreement in January 2003, violence has diminished, but it has not disappeared altogether. Challenges remain. Even though both rebel and government forces have become weary of the conflict, and the presence of peacekeepers has made it difficult for rebel fighters to regroup, the possibility of an enduring peace still appears unlikely. No one has won this conflict. As a result of the war, hundreds of thousands of Ivorians now face deteriorating health conditions, psychological trauma, weak domestic security and problems of internal displacement. Daily life has never been so difficult for the inhabitants of what was once one of the continent's most prosperous countries.

Perhaps even more significantly, there remains great risk that violence will explode again. Resentment on the part of the rebels—who are still armed and, as yet, not part of the promised ministries—is growing. A newspaper article from the *Vanguard* on 1 July 2003 states,

Ivory Coast's rebel military chiefs declared a state of emergency on Monday, and blocked access to parts of the country they control, accusing the president of failing to fulfill promises meant to end civil war.... Impatience is growing among rebels at the delay in naming key defense and security ministers under the accord.⁶⁸

Additionally, members of the Young Patriots—a group composed of Gbagbo's supporters—physically attacked MPCCI leader Guillaume Soro in June 2003. The United Nations has taken note of these warning signs, in mid-August stating that despite the fact that security has somewhat improved, there are some “negative trends” which threaten to undermine the peace process. Kofi Annan also reported “disturbing signs that both sides in the now dormant conflict [are] rearming.”⁶⁹

It is unlikely that the violence will subside until the roots of the crisis have been addressed. The constitutional definition of *ivoirité* can be changed, but such a change on paper is meaningless without a broader acceptance of the changed definition by the people who live in Côte d'Ivoire. And other questions remain as well: How have the peace accords have altered the ingredients that set the country on the dangerous path toward conflict? Have the peace accords changed Gbagbo's desire to remain in power? Have they changed Ouattara's determination to run in the 2005 elections? Will Ivoirians, now struggling with an exceedingly difficult economy, put aside the question of nationality that emerged *because* of economic hardship? Will the blame that haunts different groups of Ivoirians suddenly be eradicated? Will regional mercenaries stay out of Côte d'Ivoire? These are the kinds of questions that must be tackled during the process of conflict resolution and rehabilitation if the peace is to last on the ground, for the process of ending the conflict must involve *all* of the actors in the crisis—not just those seated around a round table.

⁶⁸ “Rebels Declare State of Emergency.” 1 July 2003.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200307010247.html>

⁶⁹ “UN Says Security Improves, But Obstacles to Lasting Peace Remain.” 14 August 2003.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200308140912.html>

Working with West African states in isolation is no longer an effective strategy to prevent or resolve conflicts. This is evidenced by the situation in Liberia, where the conflict re-ignited just as violence in Côte d'Ivoire lessened. Considering the number of Liberians reportedly involved in the fighting in Côte d'Ivoire, these events must be linked. There is some hope that things in Liberia will improve with Taylor's resignation and the newly signed Liberian peace accords. But though the peace accords are not even 48 hours old at the time of writing, doubts are already surfacing. *The New York Times* reports,

Peace pacts have been patched together and fallen apart before during the 14 bitter years of civil war and conflict in Liberia; some Western diplomats here said today that this accord's wording is hardly different, and hardly better, than the ones that went before it.⁷⁰

Thousands of lives in West Africa hinge upon the success of the Liberian peace accords. Because of the political and ethnic links between the two countries, the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire will not be completely resolved until peace is achieved in Liberia. And, conversely, even though there are particular Ivorian elements to the Côte d'Ivoire conflict, an Ivorian solution alone is not sufficient.

Thus, the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire cannot be analyzed or resolved in linear isolation; the roots of the crisis are multi-layered in both time and geography. Efforts to thoroughly resolve the conflict must encompass many spheres, including internal, external, regional, economic, social, political, and historical. The peace process in Côte d'Ivoire necessitates realistically assessing the past, confronting the present, and creating a positive and hopeful future for both the country and the region.

⁷⁰ "In Ruined Capital, Liberian Fear for Shaky Peace." *The New York Times*. 20 August 2003.

Map of Rebel-Held Areas⁷¹



⁷¹<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/map.nsf/wByCLatest/4587C30A0D4F32FD85256CBB005D58BD?OpenDocument>

Map of October 2002 Ceasefire Line⁷²



⁷²<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/map.nsf/wByCLatest/3A77C030838F87FC85256CB0007B58A1?OpenDocument>

ANNEX A: Details of the Linas-Marcoussis Peace Negotiations

Main Participants

1. ***Ivorian Popular Front (FPI)***. FPI is the official ruling party of Côte d'Ivoire, led by Laurent Gbagbo, though Gbagbo himself was not a participant in the negotiations. FPI requested French support in the beginning phases of the conflict. The Defence Minister, Kadet Bertin, referenced a 1961 defense accord between France and Côte d'Ivoire that calls for French support in the event of “blatant external aggression.”⁷³ FPI supporters are predominantly Christians from the South. Though the FPI hoped the negotiations would restore peace, they also wanted to maintain their position of power.
2. ***Rally of Republicans (RDR)***. Alassane Ouattara, the former prime minister, heads this political party. His supporters, mostly Northern Muslims, demanded a new election on the basis that Ouattara was unfairly excluded from the election and asserted that the FPI has stirred up ethnic hatred and pursued xenophobic policies. In part because of his support of IMF programs, there are rumors that he has found a strong ally in France.
3. ***Democratic Party of Ivory Coast (PDCI) and RDA***. The party of former President Henri Bédié. Bédié has been in France since the coup in 1999. He maintains Gbagbo's power is illegitimate and demands that PDCI be restored to its position as the ruling party. RDA, or the African Democratic Rally, was a West African political group which merged with PDCI in the early 1950s. Officially, this party is referred to as PDCI-RDA.
4. ***Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast (MPCI)***. This is the main rebel group that has been involved in the conflict since a failed coup in September 2002 and quickly gained control of much of the northern part of the country. Though fairly well-organized (led by Guillaume Soro), their mission is somewhat unclear. They are also vying for leadership positions in the government.
5. ***Ivorian Patriotic Movement of the Far West (MPIGO)***; and
6. ***Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP)***. These two western rebel factions were also included in the peace negotiations. The MPIGO has recently taken over a portion of the southwest. Like MPCI, the objectives of both MPIGO and MJP are difficult to ascertain, leading some to suggest that the conflict could turn into a prolonged, violent struggle between rivals for power.⁷⁴
7. Other political parties involved in the peace negotiations were: **MFA** (*Mouvement des forces d'avenir*); **PIT** (*Parti ivoirien des travailleurs*);

⁷³ “Ivory Coast Factions Said to Reach Accord on New Government.” *The New York Times*. 24 January 2003.

⁷⁴ Carroll, Rory. “Conflict in Ivory Coast Widens.” *The Guardian*. 3 January 2003.

UDCY (*Union démocratique et citoyenne*); **UDPCI** (*Union pour la démocratie et pour la paix en Côte d'Ivoire*).

8. Also present were: M. Pierre Mazeaud, the moderator; M. Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary for ECOWAS, M. Ralph Uwechue, ECOWAS Special Envoy to Côte d'Ivoire; M. Cheick Tidiane Gadio, Minister of State and of Foreign Affairs for the African Union and Acting President of ECOWAS; M. Keba Mbaye, legal expert; M. Seydou Diarra, former president of the Forum for National Reconciliation; M. Miguel Trovoda, African Union Special Envoy for Côte d'Ivoire; and M. Ouid Abdallah, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire.

The Process

The negotiations were held on the grounds of France's national rugby training center in Linas-Marcoussis (35 kilometers south of Paris) from 15 – 23 January 2003. The meetings were held behind closed doors and presided over by Mr. Pierre Mazeaud, a former minister and member of the *Conseil constitutionnel*. He was assisted by representatives from ECOWAS, the African Union, and the UN. While participants were not forbidden to leave the grounds, they were urged to stay at the conference site. Lodging was provided on-site.

A spokesman from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave press briefings daily.⁷⁵ On the first day, three themes central to the negotiations were proposed: nationality (*l'ivoirité*), the status of foreigners in Côte d'Ivoire, and electoral questions. The delegates all expressed their commitment to a return to peace in Côte d'Ivoire and had a moment of silence in honor of the victims of the conflict. The delegates themselves decided upon the best way to structure the talks, though it was emphasized that the structure could be changed according to the needs of the groups.

The nine days of negotiations alternated between plenary sessions, informal meetings, and bilateral discussions. Though the talks officially continued to focus on the main three issues, the spokesman acknowledged that the uneasy ceasefire in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire was a preoccupation for many of the delegates. On the 20th, one of the delegates, M. Mamadou Coulibaly, the president of the National Assembly and member of the FPI party, abruptly left the talks. The reason for his departure was his disgust with how France was leading the negotiations, insisting that they were planning a constitutional coup d'état. The spokesman for the negotiations was unable to give any comment as to how the departure of M. Coulibaly affected the talks.

On the 23rd, the negotiations entered their final stage and the accords were reportedly starting to take shape. The following day, the spokesman announced that

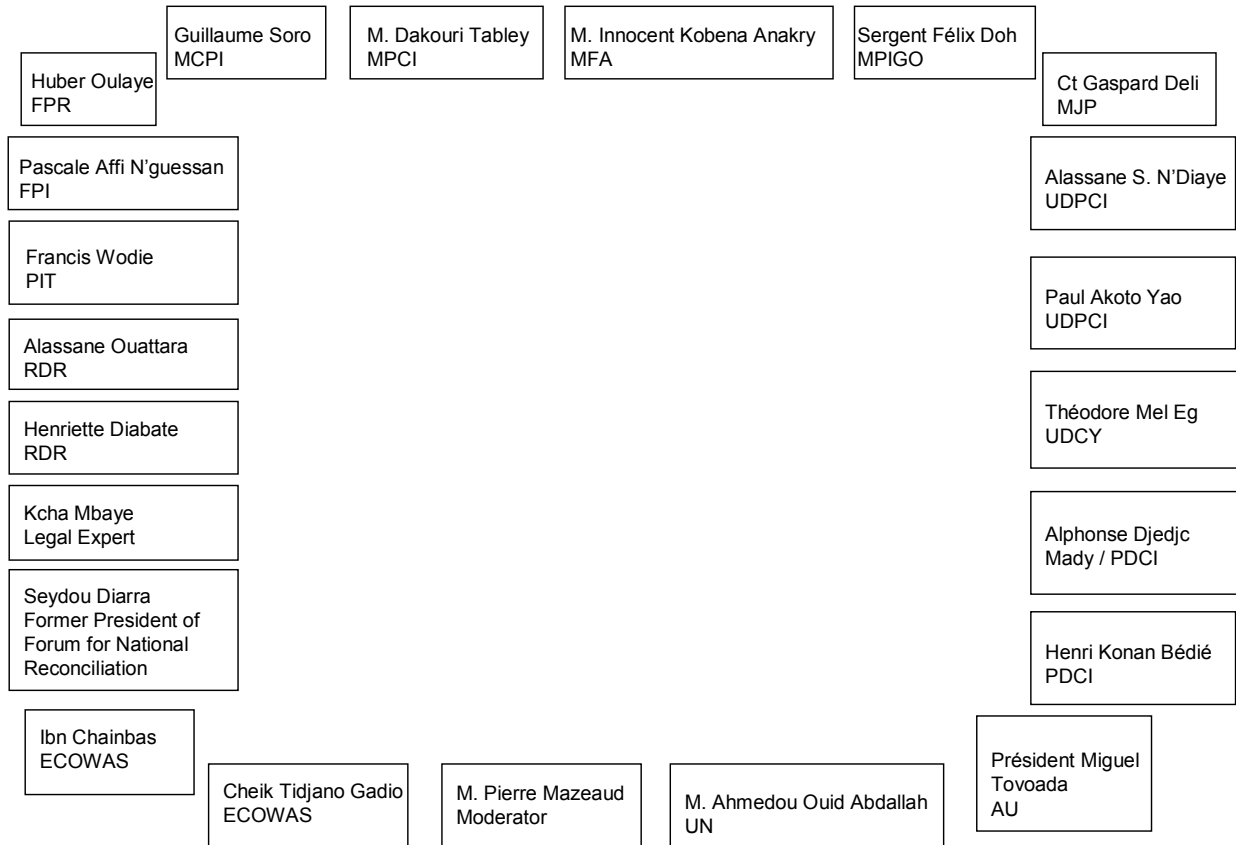
⁷⁵ French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr>

the accords had been signed the previous night by all members of the round table. He emphasized that the accords were created by all the political and rebel actors in Côte d'Ivoire and that all these factions had signed it. He described the atmosphere as powerful, and that there was a common feeling of being part of an historical and important moment. The delegates sang the national anthem hand in hand. However, the spokesman also made it clear that the agreement was just the first stage in a longer process to resolve the conflict.

The accords were examined that day by Presidents Gbagbo and Chirac. There were rumors that Gbagbo was at first unwilling to sign away part of his government to the rebel forces and also that he disputed the appointment of Diarra as Prime Minister. However, whether pressured or not, Gbagbo eventually agreed to the accords. A Special Heads of State Summit followed over the weekend, during which heads of state from several African countries, the Secretary-General of the UN, the president of the European Commission, a representative from the EU and other international organizations, and representatives from nations worldwide gave their approval to the Linas-Marcoussis Accords.

Schema of the Ivorian Round Table

Linass-Marcoussis, 15-24 January 2003



Outline of the Agreement

The accords make the following provisions:

- A. The immediate establishment of a “government of national reconciliation” comprised of members of all the parties participating in the negotiations. The major appointments are as follows:
 - Gbagbo’s party, FPI, to the finance and energy ministries;
 - Ouattara (RDR) to the justice ministry;
 - Bédié (PDCI) to foreign affairs; and
 - the main rebel group (MPCI) to key defense and interior ministries.
- B. Preparations will begin for fair and free elections to be held in 2005.
- C. A Prime Minister will be nominated by the Round Table who will serve until the elections, for which he will not be able to run (Seydou Diarra, a popular and neutral figure from the north, was chosen for this post).
- D. A call for immediate compliance with the cease-fire; plans to restructure the national army; the disarmament of the defense and security forces; the release of all political prisoners; and the liberation of detained military personnel. These and similar measures will be enforced by ECOWAS and the French.
- E. A diverse committee will be formed to ensure the respect of the peace accords. The committee will include representatives from the EU, AU, ECOWAS, UN, FMI and WB, G8, France, and the International Organisation of la Francophonie.

The Annex, detailing the responsibilities of the Government of National Reconciliation, includes other provisions, such as:

- the modification of the constitutional laws which condone xenophobic government policies;
- immediate changes to naturalization procedures and national(ity) identification processes;

- improvement of the status of non-nationals living in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Annex also includes clarifications and/or proposals for: presidential eligibility, border regimes, freedom of the media, fundamental human rights, disarmament and demobilization of armed forces, and economic and social stability.

Annex B: Official Text of Linas-Marcoussis Accords⁷⁶

From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France

Texte de l'Accord de Linas-Marcoussis

Accord de Linas-Marcoussis

1) A l'invitation du Président de la République française, une Table Ronde des forces politiques ivoiriennes s'est réunie à Linas-Marcoussis du 15 au 23 janvier 2003. Elle a rassemblé les parties suivantes **FPI, MFA, MJP, MPCJ, MPIGO, PDCI-RDA, PIT, RDR, UDCY, UDPCI**. Les travaux ont été présidés par M. Pierre MAZEAUD, assisté du juge Keba Mbaye et de l'ancien Premier ministre Seydou Diarra et de facilitateurs désignés par l'ONU, l'Union Africaine et la CEDEAO.

Chaque délégation a analysé la situation de la Côte d'Ivoire et fait des propositions de nature à rétablir la confiance et à sortir de la crise. Les délégations ont fait preuve de hauteur de vue pour permettre à la Table Ronde de rapprocher les positions et d'aboutir au consensus suivant dont tous les éléments - principes et annexes- ont valeur égale :

2) La Table Ronde se félicite de la cessation des hostilités rendue possible et garantie par le déploiement des forces de la CEDEAO, soutenu par les forces françaises et elle en exige le strict respect. Elle appelle toutes les parties à faire immédiatement cesser toute exaction et consacrer la paix. Elle demande la libération immédiate de tous les prisonniers politiques.

3) La Table Ronde réaffirme la nécessité de préserver l'intégrité territoriale de la Côte d'Ivoire, le respect de ses institutions et de restaurer l'autorité de l'Etat. Elle rappelle son attachement au principe de l'accession au pouvoir et de son exercice de façon démocratique. Elle convient à cet effet des dispositions suivantes :

a- Un gouvernement de réconciliation nationale sera mis en place dès après la clôture de la Conférence de Paris pour assurer le retour à la paix et à la stabilité. Il sera chargé du renforcement de l'indépendance de la justice, de la restauration de l'administration et des services publics, et du redressement du pays. Il appliquera le programme de la Table Ronde qui figure en annexe et qui comporte notamment des dispositions dans les domaines constitutionnel, législatif et réglementaire.

b- Il préparera les échéances électorales aux fins d'avoir des élections crédibles et transparentes et en fixera les dates.

c- Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale sera dirigé par un Premier ministre de consensus qui restera en place jusqu'à la prochaine élection présidentielle à laquelle il ne pourra se présenter.

d- Ce gouvernement sera composé de représentants désignés par chacune des délégations ivoiriennes ayant participé à la Table Ronde. L'attribution des ministères sera faite de manière équilibrée entre les parties pendant toute la durée du gouvernement.

e- Il disposera, pour l'accomplissement de sa mission, des prérogatives de l'exécutif en application des délégations prévues par la Constitution. Les partis politiques représentés à l'Assemblée Nationale et qui ont participé à la Table Ronde s'engagent à garantir le soutien de leurs députés à la mise en oeuvre du programme gouvernemental.

f- Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale s'attachera dès sa prise de fonctions à refonder une armée attachée aux valeurs d'intégrité et de moralité républicaine. Il procédera à la restructuration des forces de défense et de sécurité et pourra bénéficier, à cet effet, de l'avis de conseillers extérieurs et en particulier de l'assistance offerte par la France.

⁷⁶ An English-language version can be found on the internet at:

http://www.usip.org/library/pa/cote_divoire/cote_divoire_01242003en.html

g- Afin de contribuer à rétablir la sécurité des personnes et des biens sur l'ensemble du territoire national, le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale organisera le regroupement des forces en présence puis leur désarmement. Il s'assurera qu'aucun mercenaire ne séjourne plus sur le territoire national.

h- Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale recherchera le concours de la CEDEAO, de la France et des Nations unies pour convenir de la garantie de ces opérations par leurs propres forces.

i- Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale prendra les mesures nécessaires pour la libération et l'amnistie de tous les militaires détenus pour atteinte à la sûreté de l'Etat et fera bénéficier de la même mesure les soldats exilés.

4) La Table Ronde décide de la mise en place d'un comité de suivi de l'application des accords de Paris sur la Côte d'Ivoire chargé d'assurer le respect des engagements pris. Ce comité saisira les instances nationales, régionales et internationales de tous les cas d'obstruction ou de défaillance dans la mise en oeuvre des accords afin que les mesures de redressement appropriées soient prises.

La Table Ronde recommande à la Conférence de Chefs d'Etat que le comité de suivi soit établi à Abidjan et composé des représentants des pays et des organisations appelés à garantir l'exécution des accords de Paris, notamment

- le représentant de l'Union européenne,
- le représentant de la Commission de l'Union africaine
- le représentant du secrétariat exécutif de la CEDEAO,
- le représentant spécial du Secrétaire Général qui coordonnera les organes de la famille des Nations unies,
- le représentant de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie,
- les représentants du FMI et de la Banque mondiale
- un représentant des pays du G8
- le représentant de la France

5) La Table Ronde invite le gouvernement français, la CEDEAO et la communauté internationale à veiller à la sécurité des personnalités ayant participé à ses travaux et si nécessaire à celle des membres du gouvernement de réconciliation nationale tant que ce dernier ne sera pas à même d'assurer pleinement cette mission.

6) La Table Ronde rend hommage à la médiation exercée par la CEDEAO et aux efforts de l'Union Africaine et de l'ONU, et remercie la France pour son rôle dans l'organisation de cette réunion et l'aboutissement du présent consensus.

A Linas-Marcoussis, le 24 janvier 2003

POUR LE FPI : Pascal AFFI N'GUESSAN
POUR LE MFA : Innocent KOBENA ANAKY
POUR LE MJP : Gaspard DELI
POUR LE MPCI : Guillaume SORO
POUR LE MPIGO : Félix DOH
POUR LE PCI-RDA : Henri KONAN BEDIE
POUR LE PIT : Francis WODIE
POUR LE RDR : Alassane Dramane OUATTARA
POUR L'UDCY: Théodore MEL EG
POUR L'UDPCI: Paul AKO
LE PRESIDENT: Pierre MAZEAUD

ANNEXE PROGRAMME DU GOUVERNEMENT DE RECONCILIATION

I- Nationalité, identité, condition des étrangers

1) La Table Ronde estime que la loi 61-415 du 14 décembre 1961 portant code de la nationalité ivoirienne modifiée par la loi 72-852 du 21 décembre 1972, fondée sur une complémentarité entre le droit du sang et le droit du sol, et qui comporte des dispositions ouvertes en matière de naturalisation par un acte des pouvoirs publics, constitue un texte libéral et bien rédigé.

La Table Ronde considère en revanche que l'application de la loi soulève de nombreuses difficultés, soit du fait de l'ignorance des populations, soit du fait de pratiques administratives et des forces de l'ordre et de sécurité contraires au droit et au respect des personnes.

La Table Ronde a constaté une difficulté juridique certaine à appliquer les articles 6 et 7 du code de la nationalité. Cette difficulté est aggravée par le fait que, dans la pratique, le certificat de nationalité n'est valable que pendant 3 mois et que, l'impétrant doit chaque fois faire la preuve de sa nationalité en produisant certaines pièces. Toutefois, le code a été appliqué jusqu'à maintenant.

En conséquence, le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale :

- a. relancera immédiatement les procédures de naturalisation existantes en recourant à une meilleure information et le cas échéant à des projets de coopération mis en oeuvre avec le soutien des partenaires de développement internationaux;
- b. déposera, à titre exceptionnel, dans le délai de six mois un projet de loi de naturalisation visant à régler de façon simple et accessible des situations aujourd'hui bloquées et renvoyées au droit commun (notamment cas des anciens bénéficiaires des articles 17 à 23 de la loi 61-415 abrogés par la loi 72-852, et des personnes résidant en Côte d'Ivoire avant le 7 août 1960 et n'ayant pas exercé leur droit d'option dans les délais prescrits), et à compléter le texte existant par l'intégration à l'article 12 nouveau des hommes étrangers mariés à des Ivoiriennes.

2) Pour faire face à l'incertitude et à la lenteur des processus d'identification ainsi qu'aux dérives auxquelles les contrôles de sécurité peuvent donner lieu, le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale développera de nouvelles actions en matière d'état civil et d'identification, notamment:

- a. La suspension du processus d'identification en cours en attendant la prise des décrets d'application de la loi et la mise en place, dans les meilleurs délais, d'une commission nationale d'identification dirigée par un magistrat et composée des représentants des partis politiques chargés de superviser et de contrôler l'Office national d'identification.
- b. La stricte conformité de la loi sur l'identification au code de la nationalité en ce qui concerne la preuve de la nationalité.

3) La Table Ronde, en constatant que le grand nombre d'étrangers présents en Côte d'Ivoire a largement contribué à la richesse nationale et aidé à conférer à la Côte d'Ivoire une place et une responsabilité particulières dans la sous-région, ce qui a bénéficié également aux pays dont sont ces étrangers originaires, considère que les tracasseries administratives et des forces de l'ordre et de sécurité souvent contraires au droit et au respect des personnes dont les étrangers sont notamment victimes peuvent provenir du dévoiement des dispositions d'identification.

- a. Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale devra donc supprimer immédiatement les cartes de séjour prévues à l'article 8 alinéa 2 de la loi 2002-03 du 3 janvier 2002 pour les étrangers originaires de la CEDEAO et fondera le nécessaire contrôle de l'immigration sur des moyens d'identification non susceptibles de détournement.
- b. De plus, le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale étudiera toute disposition législative et réglementaire tendant à améliorer la condition des étrangers et la protection de leurs biens et de leurs personnes.
- c. La Table Ronde demande par ailleurs à tous les Etats membres de la CEDEAO de ratifier dans les meilleurs délais les protocoles existant relatifs à la libre circulation des personnes et des biens, de pratiquer une coopération renforcée dans la maîtrise des flux migratoires, de respecter les droits fondamentaux des immigrants et de diversifier les pôles de développement. Ces actions pourront être mises en oeuvre avec le soutien des partenaires de développement internationaux.

II- Régime électoral

1) La Table Ronde estime que la loi 2000-514 du 1er août 2000 portant Code électoral ne soulève pas de difficultés et s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un processus d'amélioration des textes et que la loi 2001-634 du 9 janvier 2001 portant création de la Commission Electorale Indépendante constitue un progrès significatif pour l'organisation d'élections transparentes.

2) Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale:

- a. assurera l'impartialité des mesures d'identification et d'établissement des fichiers électoraux;
- b. proposera plusieurs amendements à la loi 2001-634 dans le sens d'une meilleure représentation des parties prenantes à la Table Ronde au sein de la commission centrale de la Commission Electorale Indépendante, y compris au sein du bureau;
- c. déposera dans un délai de 6 mois un projet de loi relatif au statut de l'opposition et au financement public des partis politiques et des campagnes électorales
- d. déposera dans le délai d'un an un projet de loi en matière d'enrichissement illicite et organisera de manière effective le contrôle des déclarations de patrimoine des personnalités élues;
- e. prendra toute mesure permettant d'assurer l'indépendance de la justice et l'impartialité des médias, tant en matière de contentieux électoral que de propagande électorale.

III- Eligibilité à la Présidence de la République

1) La Table Ronde considère que l'article 35 de la Constitution relatif à l'élection du Président de la République doit éviter de se référer à des concepts dépourvus de valeur juridique ou relevant de textes législatifs. Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale proposera donc que les conditions d'éligibilité du Président de la République soient ainsi fixées

Le Président de la République est élu pour cinq ans au suffrage universel direct. Il n'est rééligible qu'une fois.

Le candidat doit jouir de ses droits civils et politiques et être âgé de trente-cinq ans au moins. Il doit être exclusivement de nationalité ivoirienne né de père ou de mère Ivoirien d'origine.

2) Le Code de la nationalité sera amendé par l'adjonction aux conditions de perte de la nationalité ivoirienne édictées par son article 53, des mots suivants : exerçant des fonctions électives ou gouvernementales dans un pays étranger.

3) Le Président de la République rendra public chaque année son bulletin de santé.

IV- Régime foncier

1) La Table Ronde estime que la loi 98-750 du 23 décembre 1998 relative au domaine foncier rural votée à l'unanimité par l'Assemblée nationale constitue un texte de référence dans un domaine juridiquement délicat et économiquement crucial.

2) Cependant, le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale:

- a. accompagnera la mise en oeuvre progressive de ce texte d'une campagne d'explication auprès des populations rurales de manière à aller effectivement dans le sens d'une véritable sécurisation foncière.

- b. proposera un amendement dans le sens d'une meilleure protection des droits acquis les dispositions de l'article 26 de la loi relative aux héritiers des propriétaires de terre détenteurs de droits antérieurs à la promulgation de la loi mais ne remplissant pas les conditions d'accès à la propriété fixées par son article 1.

V- Médias

1) La Table Ronde condamne les incitations à la haine et à la xénophobie qui ont été propagées par certains médias.

2) Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale reprendra dans le délai d'un an l'économie générale du régime de la presse de manière à renforcer le rôle des autorités de régulation, à garantir la neutralité et l'impartialité du service public et à favoriser l'indépendance financière des médias. Ces mesures pourront bénéficier du soutien des partenaires de développement internationaux.

3) Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale rétablira immédiatement la libre émission des médias radiophoniques et télévisés internationaux.

VI- Droits et libertés de la Personne humaine

1) Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale créera immédiatement une Commission nationale des droits de l'homme qui veillera à la protection des droits et libertés en Côte d'Ivoire. La Commission sera composée des délégués de toutes les parties et présidée par une personnalité acceptée par tous.

2) Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale demandera la création d'une commission internationale qui diligentera des enquêtes et établira les faits sur toute l'étendue du territoire national afin de recenser les cas de violation graves des droits de l'homme et du droit international humanitaire depuis le 19 septembre 2002.

3) Sur le rapport de la Commission internationale d'enquête, le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale déterminera ce qui doit être porté devant la justice pour faire cesser l'impunité. Condamnant particulièrement les actions des escadrons de la mort et de leurs commanditaires ainsi que les auteurs d'exécutions sommaires sur l'ensemble du territoire, la Table Ronde estime que les auteurs et complices de ces activités devront être traduits devant la justice pénale internationale.

4) Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale s'engagera à faciliter les opérations humanitaires en faveur des toutes les victimes du conflit sur l'ensemble du territoire national. Sur la base du rapport de la Commission nationale des droits de l'homme, il prendra des mesures d'indemnisation et de réhabilitation des victimes.

VII - Regroupement, Désarmement, Démobilisation

1) Dès sa prise de fonctions, le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale entreprendra le processus de regroupement concomitant des forces en présence sous le contrôle des forces de la CEDEAO et des forces françaises.

2) Dans une seconde phase il déterminera les mesures de désarmement et de démobilisation, qui seront également menées sous le contrôle des forces de la CEDEAO et des forces françaises.

3) L'ensemble des recrues enrôlées depuis le 19 septembre seront immédiatement démobilisées.

4) Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale assurera la réinsertion sociale des militaires de toutes origines avec l'appui de programmes de type Désarmement Démobilisation Rapatriement Réinstallation

Réinsertion (DDRRR) susceptibles d'être mis en oeuvre avec l'appui des partenaires de développement internationaux.

5) Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale prendra les mesures nécessaires pour la libération et l'amnistie de tous les militaires détenus pour atteinte à la sûreté de l'Etat et fera bénéficier de la même mesure les soldats exilés. La loi d'amnistie n'exonérera en aucun cas les auteurs d'infractions économiques graves et de violations graves des droits de l'homme et du droit international humanitaire.

6) Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale procédera à un audit de ses forces armées et devra déterminer dans un contexte économique difficile le niveau des sacrifices qu'il pourra consentir pour assurer ses obligations en matière de défense nationale. Il réalisera sur ces bases la restructuration des forces armées et demandera à cette fin des aides extérieures.

VIII- Redressement économique et nécessité de la cohésion sociale

1) Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale rétablira la libre circulation des personnes et des biens sur tout le territoire national et facilitera la reprise des activités scolaires, administratives, économiques et sociales.

2) Il préparera dans un bref délai un plan de reconstruction et de développement des infrastructures et de relance de l'économie nationale, et de renforcement de la cohésion sociale.

3) La Table Ronde recommande aux institutions internationales et aux partenaires de développement internationaux d'apporter leur concours au processus de redressement de la Côte d'Ivoire.

IX- Mise en oeuvre

Le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale veillera à ce que les réformes constitutionnelles, législatives et réglementaires que nécessitent les décisions qu'il sera appelé à prendre interviennent dans les meilleurs délais.

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