

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE IVORIAN CONFLICT, 1993-2003: THREAT PERCEPTION  
AND UNDERLYING CAUSES**

**By**

**SAMUEL ADOTEY ANUM**

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**STUDY LEADER:**

**PROF M. HOUGH**

**PRETORIA**

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH THEME

West Africa has been marred by instability since the end of colonization and the advent of independence. Besides the liberation war of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, all the countries in the region became independent through peaceful transitions which established constitutional democracies. Yet the region is saddled with high levels of insecurity as manifested in *coups d'état*, secessionist movements and civil wars.

Souaré (2006:1) noted that since independence, the region has witnessed five civil wars, namely in Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire; thirty-nine military *coups d'état* (and several unsuccessful ones); and three separatist movements namely in the Biafra region in Nigeria, the Casamance province of Senegal, and the Tuareg rebellion in the Sahel region.

That the region became volatile after independence cannot be denied. The effects of insecurity on the political and economic development of the region have been disastrous.

Numerous arguments have been advanced by scholars highlighting the insecurity problem as well as the underlying threats that engender conflict situations in the region. As with other African states, West Africa reflects the threats and vulnerabilities linked to the national security of Third World countries. These among others, include weak governance institutions, corruption, undemarcated borders and contested natural resources, and ethnic and religious cleavages (Hough, 2003:13). Souaré (2006:42)

similarly identified greed and pursuit of personal ambitions, economic underdevelopment, poverty and illiteracy as threats to security and causes of conflict. Recent conflicts in Africa tend to reflect the ethnic and religious dimensions of the insecurity debate. This follows the emerging trend of ethnic conflicts as one of the important security issues following the end of the Cold War (Kirwin, 2006:42). The conflicts in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya seem to reinforce this point.

In the case of West Africa, it is important to highlight that ethnicity and religion, to a large extent, divide West African states into north, dominated by Muslims and south, dominated by Christians. This was reinforced by colonialism and migration, creating, in Huntington's terminology, a fault line in West Africa (Huntington, 1996:256).

While not discounting the potential force of ethnicity and religion as causes of conflict, it can be argued that both factors as threats to national security in West Africa have been over-emphasized. The main religions in West Africa, be they Christianity, Islam or Traditionalism, have co-existed prior to the advent of colonialism and also in the immediate post-colonial period. The mere existence of these tensions does not in itself pose threats to national security. The sudden explosion of ethnic and religious dimensions as causes of conflicts therefore needs to be examined, and the Ivorian conflict presents an opportunity for such a study.

Until the eruption of the conflict in 2002, Côte d'Ivoire bore the hallmarks of economic prosperity and was a bastion of stability in West Africa, where the various ethnic groups and cleavages were managed. The main religious groups – Christians, Muslims and Animists - co-existed in peaceful harmony. What then disturbed the balance? But more importantly, there is a need to examine if the ethno-religious threats are manifestations of the failure of the state to build national cohesion and legitimacy; consequences of manipulation of the ethno-religious differences by the ruling élite; or objectively assessed existential threats.



It is anticipated that such a clarification will contribute to the existing knowledge on the problem of insecurity in West Africa and encourage further debate on the fundamental threats facing the region.

## **2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this research is to analyze the nature of the official security threat perception and causes of instability in Côte d'Ivoire between 1993 and 2003; and the evolution of the conflict which erupted in 2002 as an internal grievance by military officers, into a regional and international crisis that has left the country divided along religious lines.

In analyzing these factors, the study highlighted the underlying conditions in Côte d'Ivoire and the inherent structural imbalances; and how these factors were aggravated by the policies pursued after independence, to the detriment of building a stable, cohesive and a resilient society. In this regard the study also examined the various arguments put forward to explain the conflict and confirmed that manipulation by the élite to secure the various regimes was more of a threat than the ethno-religious and economic inequalities.

Thus the study postulated that contrary to conventional arguments, economic prosperity has the inherent propensity to create structural problems that threaten the state and state structures unless the development dividend is translated into a platform for national cohesion.

The linkage between national, regional and international dimensions of the conflict is also highlighted. It assesses the fact that economic considerations along with ethnicity and migration, were the main factors that led to the escalation of the conflict beyond

national boundaries, drawing other states in the region and actors beyond the continent, into the conflict.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

A large body of literature exists on the concept of security and national security. Traditional definitions equated security to military force and tended to focus on external military threats. However the post-Cold War era witnessed alternative approaches to the subject that widened the application of the term. Buzan (1991:116) broadened the concept to include five sources of threats namely political, military, economic, societal and environmental. His identification of the individual as well as the state as referent objects of analysis and delineation of weak and strong states, form the basis for the analysis of the security of states at various levels of statehood and development.

Subsequently, national security in the Third World was analytically separated from that in the First World. Job (1992), Ayoob (1995) and Mathur (1996) highlighted the security concerns and threats to the national security of Third World states as distinct from those of the First World. Jackson (1992) and Hough (2003) similarly outlined the national security situation and threats to national security of African states in particular.

Buzan (1991) and Hough (2003) also covered the operation of threats, setting out the parameters for an issue to be considered as a threat to national security.

The existing literature offers various explanations of the underlying causes of conflicts in Africa. Irrespective of the diversity, the causes tend to reflect some commonalities as encapsulated in the United Nations (UN) Secretary General's Report on *The Causes of Conflict and The Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa* (1998). The report identified historical legacies, internal and external factors such as the absence of political pluralism, corruption, nepotism and abuse of power, lack of

transparency and accountability, lack of human rights, and regionally or ethnically based politics as internally induced factors that make conflicts inevitable. The report also mentions the control of natural resources, availability of arms, and marginalisation of certain groups over distribution of resources, as external and particular situations that lead to conflict in Africa.

Studies by Collier and Hoeffler (2000), Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom (2001) confirmed aspects of the findings of the United Nations Secretary General.

Regarding Côte d'Ivoire, although scholars have covered various aspects of the causes of the conflict, the concept of national security has not been applied comprehensively enough in the analysis of the security of Côte d'Ivoire in the period prior to the outbreak of the conflict.

Some observers (Chirot, 2006; Kirwin, 2006; Langer, 2005(a)) emphasised the ethnic causes of the conflict. Kirwin, (2006) however argued that although composed of different ethnic groups, the security dilemma of Côte d'Ivoire was based on shared north/south identity as the *Nordiste* have a common identity. Banégas and Marshall-Fratani (2007) similarly identified identity politics as the basis of the spillover of the war into a regional and international security issue.

Daddieh (2001:19) highlighted the "influence of political culture" as basis of the conflict, while Akindés (2003) linked the conflict to politics of patronage strategies employed in the immediate post-independence period until 1993.

In linking political and economic inequalities with ethnicity, Langer (2005(a)) identified horizontal socio-economic inequalities between the north and south divide coupled with political horizontal inequalities among the élite as the root cause of the conflict. He

noted that inequalities created opportunities for regimes to mobilize and garner support along ethnic lines.

Almås (2007) similarly emphasized the economic crisis in the eighties as the cause of the conflict. This explanation drew a linkage between externally imposed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS) and subsequent deterioration of socio-economic conditions as the cause of the conflict. Thus, economic concerns and the politics of exclusion created a polarization of the north/south or Muslim/Christian division (Collet, 2006).

The operation of the threats to national security in Côte d'Ivoire divided the country into two distinct parts namely, the Muslim north and the Christian/Animist south submerging the conflict into a semblance of a fault line conflict (Huntington 1996). Nordås (2007) however contested the characterisation of the conflict as a religious war. He delineated exclusionary identity politics as the underlying cause of the Ivorian crisis.

What is lacking in the above explanations is an adequate discussion on well-defined threats to national security and the failure of the ruling élite or governments in Côte d'Ivoire to convert economic prosperity and periods of relative stability into the building of national cohesion. In the end, the threats were manipulated at various times to perpetuate the regimes. The role of the ruling élite, reflected in the attitudes of the various regimes, has been largely overlooked as the main threat to security in Côte d'Ivoire. The study will attempt to address these shortcomings.

#### **4. FORMULATION AND DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The main focus of the study is to confirm that irrespective of the diverse explanations offered for the security/insecurity problem of West African states, an important aspect

has been largely overlooked, namely the role of the governing élites. The fundamental questions the study seeks to address are: What were the main threats faced by Côte d'Ivoire and what were the causes underlying these? Why did the ethno-religious factor become a threat only under successive leaders after 1993? Were the presumed threats a manipulation? And if so, by whom and for what purpose?

The research problem, therefore, is to examine the various explanations of the causes of the Ivorian war in 2002 and establish to what extent the various regimes and political leaderships manipulated the same factors to secure their regimes at the expense of building a cohesive society with resilient institutions.

The research is based on the following assumptions:

- Threats faced by Côte d'Ivoire and the causes of the armed conflict were of domestic origin, but were manipulated by the élite and tended to be a function of a lack of social cohesion and government legitimacy.
- In the case of West Africa, the introduction of ethnicity and religion into conflict situations broadens the base of a conflict into a north/south divide, creating the semblance of a fault line conflict, with regional and international dimensions.

The study focuses on threats to Ivorian national security from 1993 to 2002, the period that revealed the underlying antagonisms leading to political instability and open conflict until the peace agreement in 2003. It also provides an overview of the political, social and economic developments in Côte d'Ivoire from 1960 to 1993 to establish the foundations of the threats.

## 5. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The study uses description as well as analysis. In this context, the historical-analytical approach is used in examining the evolution of the threats to the national security of Côte d'Ivoire.

The theoretical approach is based on the framework of national security and threats to national security of states in the context of the Cold War and post-Cold War. The approach also takes cognisance of national security concerns of states at different levels of development. In order to achieve this, the study employs the theoretical framework of national security proposed by Buzan (1991) and Ayoob (1995).

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include official Ivorian documents, notably the *Ivorian Constitution*, Legislative Acts, such as *Law No. 90-437* of 29 May 1990 on *Entry and Stay of Foreigners*; *Law No. 98-750* of 23 December 1998 on *Rural Land Ownership*, *Decree No. 2001-103* of 15 February 2001 on *National Identification*, and documents released by the UN, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its successor the African Union (AU).

Secondary sources included books on national security and journal articles to construct the conceptual framework for this study. In this regard, the study specifically focused on the works of Buzan (1991), Job (1992), Ayoob (1995), Mathur (1996), and Hough (2003) which were used to establish a conceptual framework of national security; the national security concerns of the Third World and Africa; and when an issue is deemed as a threat to national security. The link between internal and external aspects of the Ivorian conflict was based particularly on the national security frameworks provided by Buzan (1991) and Ayoob (1995).

Other secondary sources on the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire include books, yearbooks and journal articles notably *Governance as Conflict Management: Politics and Violence in West Africa*, (Zartman, 1997); *The Roots of the Military-Political Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire*, (Akindès, 2004); *The Political Economy of Ivory Coast* (Zartman and Delgado, 1984); *The Europa World Year Book* (2008); and *Africa South of the Sahara*, (2009). Journal articles include publications in the *Journal of the International African Institute*, *Social Compass*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, *West Africa Review* and *African Affairs*.

## **6. CHAPTER STRUCTURE**

The research is presented in six chapters outlined as follows:

### **Chapter One - Introduction**

Chapter One forms the introductory chapter. It outlines the context and objectives of the study, the research problem, a review of existing literature, the methodology of the study as well as the structure of the study.

### **Chapter Two – The concept of national security threats and causes of conflict in developing countries**

Chapter Two sets out the conceptual framework of national security and threats to national security. It assesses both the traditional and contemporary views of the concept and a discussion of the criteria offered to ascertain national security threats. The chapter will also examine the causes of armed conflicts in Africa with particular emphasis on ethnicity, religion, migration, socio-economic inequality and legitimacy of the governing regimes.

### **Chapter Three – Historical overview of Ivorian politics up to 2003**

Chapter Three provides an historical overview of Ivorian politics from the immediate post-independence period until the death of the first President, Houphouët- Boigny, and the subsequent political instability in the post-Boigny era, including the eruption of a full scale conflict in 2002, leading to the peace agreement of 2003.

### **Chapter Four – The Ivorian conflict of 2002: Causes and threat perception**

Chapter four focuses on the causes of the conflict and perceived threats to Côte d'Ivoire in the pre-2002 period. The chapter examines how the operation of the threats, reinforced by religion and ethnicity, created the semblance of a fault line conflict between north and south.

### **Chapter Five – Regional and international dimensions of the Ivorian conflict**

The fifth chapter will address the regional and international dimensions of the conflict. It will establish a link between domestic threats and vulnerabilities and regional security and international insecurity. The chapter will also highlight the various internal threats that accounted for the regionalization of the Ivorian conflict.

### **Chapter Six – Evaluation**

This chapter evaluates the assumptions outlined in the Introduction. It also contains a summary of the research and a conclusion.



## CHAPTER 2

# THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS AND CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of security has been one of the most complex subjects in the post-Cold War period. Buzan (1991:7) stated that security is an essentially contested concept. Thus, available literature lacks an agreed definition and presents numerous theoretical approaches to the concept. In its generic sense, security is defined as the feeling of being safe from harm or danger (Terriff *et al*, 1999:1) and therefore implies survival. As threats to nations, states and individuals become more complex, so scholars have advanced and broadened the definition of the concept to provide a contemporary definition. For a focal approach to the subject, Buzan (1991:26) argued that security must be defined in relation to a "referent object" or that which is to be secured. Wolfers (1962:149 in Terriff *et al*, 1999:2) similarly noted in this regard that a closer analysis of the concept of national security shows that if used without specifications, it leaves room for confusion. Thus, the concept of security becomes focused when defined in terms of a referent object. The referent object could be a nation, state, regime or the individual, depending on the approach to security as reflected in the views on security discussed in the following sections.

To enhance clarity of the subject and its application in this study, this chapter provides a conceptual framework of security and a distinction is also made between the various levels of security and new approaches to the subject. The chapter also discusses threats to national security, and what constitutes a threat to national security as well as the applicability of the concept in developing or Third World countries. The concluding

sections discuss the operation of the threats to national security and attempt to link the operation of the threats to causes of armed conflict in developing countries, with a particular focus on Africa.

## **2. THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND THREATS TO SECURITY**

The concepts of security and national security have been variously defined to reflect a specific approach in a specific time period. For the purposes of this study, the definitions are subsumed under two broad views reflecting before and during the Cold War and post-Cold War approaches.

### **2.1 TRADITIONAL VIEWS ON NATIONAL SECURITY**

Traditional definitions of security reflect the theoretical positions of the realist school of thought (both classical and neo-realists) espoused by Thucydides over 2,500 years ago and include the works of Machiavelli, and Hobbes among others (Snyder, 1999:57). The realist assumptions equated security to the defence of the state as it was threatened by the military power of other states and defended by the military power of the state itself (Snyder, 1999:77). It assumes anarchy in the international system and the military means employed by states to gain their political objectives (Snyder, 1999:2).

Security in the traditional sense is therefore “sought through the ability to deter and defend or through the ability to ignore or overcome other’s ability to deter and defend” (Terriff *et al*, 1999:59). Walt (1991:212) similarly defined security as “the study of the threat, use and control of military force”. These views are summed up by Lippman that a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core

values, if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a way" (Lippman, 1943:51 cited in Ayoob, 1995:5).

Security in this sense tends to focus on external military threats and equates security with the territorial integrity of the state and its institutions, and protection from external threats. The state is then the referent object of security in the traditional view. Realist traditions are therefore founded on the desire of sovereign states to survive and maximize power, the expectation of interstate struggle, crises and war and the sanction of military force as an instrument of policy (Booth, 2005:5). It means that the state alone has the right to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity by the use of force. This view implies that military threats emanate from external sources rather than domestic sources of insecurity.

## 2.2 POST-COLD WAR VIEWS

The end of the Cold War saw the emergence of new sources of threats, mainly internal in nature and trans-boundary in scope. Consequently, the scope and definition of security were widened from "a narrow perspective of securitisation of the state" (Bhonsle, 2004:81). The object of security therefore shifted from the state to the individual and how the individual can threaten the state and *vice versa*. This marked a shift from the realist view of a state-centric and military focus on security to a more interdependent and wider view of the concept reflected by non-military issues (Snyder, 1999:2).

The Widening School also propounded alternative approaches that expanded the subject from the use of force as expressed by traditionalists to include new and emerging threats.

A watershed in the new thinking of security in the post-Cold War era was the work of Buzan. In his book "Peoples, States and Fear" (Buzan, 1991) he argued that security threats emanates from different sectors using different referent objects as to what should be secured. This broadened the concept of security to include five sectors namely, political, military, environmental, economic and societal making military threats just one of the threats that a state could face.

The political sector refers to the stability of the state, government or ideological contestations. The economic sector refers to the management of the economy, markets and resources, while environmental threats are natural disasters attributable to man-made causes such as greenhouse gases, with the military sector including the offensive and defensive capabilities of the state. Societal security includes traditional patterns of life including cultural identity. The unit of analysis includes the politically significant ethno-national and religious identities. It also encompasses state security, sovereignty and individual security (Buzan, 1991:118-134).

With Buzan's sectoral approach, security can be analyzed at the level of the nation, state, regime, individual, communal, among others, depending on the referent object as discussed below.

#### **a) National Security**

Within the context of this study, a "nation" is defined as a "large group of people sharing the same cultural and possibly the same ethnic or racial heritage" (Buzan, 1991:70). To Mathur, (1996:304) "the term nation etymologically means a group of people from a common stock". A nation is therefore a larger society made up of people and resources with acquired values and common interests, located in a given geographical area. The definition implies that there could be different nations within a state or nations could cut across states. However, within the context of a nation-state,

national security encapsulates the totality of threats to a nation-state, including state institutions, individuals and other referent objects within a state (Hough, 2003:8).

### **b) State Security**

State security and regime security are quite restrictive. State security has been equated with “sovereignty, a distinct territorial base and a set of institutions that organizes, regulates and enforces interactions of groups within its territorial confines” (Hough, 2003:8). This refers to the capacity of the state to protect its territorial boundaries and sovereignty. State security then deals with threats to the institutional structure of the state and its territory.

### **c) Regime Security**

Regime has been defined as “the élite that effectively command the machinery, especially the coercive forces, of the state”. Regime security involves the protection of the governing élite or the government in power. In this regard, regime security is coterminous with state security. For instance, subversion which is the illegal overthrow of a regime is deemed as a crime against the state (Job, 1992:15).

In the negative sense, regime security refers to the protection of the ruling élite or government to the detriment of the state or individual security (Hough, 2003:9). In circumstances where regimes fail to engender political legitimacy, they tend to be extremely repressive, relying on the coercive apparatus of the state. Regime security in this case becomes a tool for oppression (Ayoob, 1995:41,190).

#### **d) Human Security**

The concept of human security was developed by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994 (Bajpai, 2000:6-7 cited in Nyström, 2006:12). It is differentiated from the traditional and the widening schools since the individual is the referent object and at the same time offers a multi-dimensional approach that combines elements of national security, economic development and human rights to the study of security (Ball and Fayemi, 2004). The proponents argue that traditional national security concerns became less important with the end of the Cold War, while the security of the individual became paramount. The approach has seven categories namely economic security, food security, environmental security, health security, community security, political security and personal security (Smith, 2005:52 cited in Nyström, 2006:12). At the core of this school are the physical safety, well-being and freedom of the individual. These ideals are achievable through economic development and good governance, hence the linkage of the latter to human security.

In an attempt to find a universal basis for determination of national security, Mathur (1996:307) suggests that national security in any given country should include the following;

- i) geographical and geo-strategic conditions including location, extent, physical confirmations, climate, weather of the nation territories and their vulnerability in terms of security and defence;
- ii) human and material resources available and their extent of optimum utilization;
- iii) industrial, material and economic development in relation to other countries of the world;
- iv) political conditions including national policies, political structure, level of national cohesion and level of national consciousness;

- v) socio-cultural conditions including level of social cohesion and solidarity;
- vi) national power in terms of air power, naval power and military power and their effectiveness and level of national preparedness;
- vii) security from all internal and external threats to the vital national values and legitimate national interests; and
- viii) maintenance and preservation of political, economic and social structure that the nation has given to its citizens.

These also include domestic factors such as legitimacy, integration, ideology and policy capacity.

Although Mathur's contribution highlights both domestic and external variables, the factors outlined are too broad, over-extending the concept to include virtually all societal ills (Hough, 2003:3) including ordinary law and order issues.

The concepts are however interrelated. Security of the state could be coterminous to that of the regime or individual. For instance, subversion against a legitimately elected government could be deemed as a national, state, or regime security issue. Conversely, some actions by a regime can undermine the national security interests of the state. Threats to a regime and state can therefore be similar but not necessarily the same.

Within the context of this study, and in a broader sense, Handrieder and Buel (in Mathur, 1996:310) state that "the term National Security can be defined as immunity of a state or nation to all internal and external threats emanating from its own people or from outside boundaries". Not all threats to the nation, the state, the regime or the individual are however national security threats, hence the need to identify criteria for establishing threats to national security. Prior to that, it is however necessary to establish the national security concerns of developing or Third World countries.

## 2.3 NATIONAL SECURITY IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

Third World states share similar historical circumstances, levels of economic development, structural weaknesses and difficulties in building nation states arising out of artificial boundaries by colonial powers as well as the following characteristics (Ayoob, 1995: 15);

- i) lack of internal cohesion, in terms of economic and social disparities and major ethnic and regional fissures;
- ii) lack of unconditional legitimacy of state boundaries, state institutions and governing elites;
- iii) easy susceptibility to internal and interstate conflicts;
- iv) distorted and dependent development;
- v) marginalisation in relation to dominant international security and economic concerns;
- vi) easy permeability by external actors, other states, international institutions or trans-national corporations.

These factors make Third World states highly vulnerable but most importantly threatened by domestic rather than external factors. Consequently, national security concerns outlined by traditional and even contemporary views were inadequate in establishing the determinants of national security in Third World states.

If the argument is held that the foremost preoccupation of Third World states is the protection and preservation of the state and its institutions, then other levels of security such as environmental degradation, economic deprivation and even individual security will depend on the intervention of the state and become security problems only when they threaten the survival of states or regimes (Ayoob, 1995:190). Security in the Third



World becomes state centred in character with emphasis on the primacy of the political realm (Ayoob, 1995:8).

Ayoob thus defines security-insecurity in the Third World as “in relation to vulnerabilities – both internal and external – that threaten or have the potential to bring down or weaken state structures, both territorial and institutional and governing regimes” (Ayoob, 1995:9). Other levels of security receive attention only when they threaten state boundaries, institutions or the regime. The security of the state and that of the regime becomes similar.

In addition to these characteristics, Third World states are challenged by questions of legitimacy, integration and policy capacity, the absence of which leads to low levels of social cohesion. In view of underdeveloped or weak institutions, security capabilities are virtually non-existent. The lack of both the “software” (security environment) and “hardware” (security capabilities) components of security management (Azar and Moon 1988, 77-101 cited in Ayoob, 1995:11) reflects the failure of Third World states to achieve a degree of stateness. This argument tends to confirm the inability of Third World states to maintain legitimacy, internal order and social cohesion.

Furthermore, although some conflicts relate to autonomous regional power dynamics and irredentism, domestic factors play a key role in regional conflicts. Interstate conflict and insecurity in the Third World owe their sources to the intermeshing of domestic insecurities with interstate antagonisms (Ayoob, 1995: 49).

Ayoob’s assertion that security in Third World states are domestic in nature, reinforced the view expressed by Job (1992) that there is no single nation in the Third World and regimes tend to lack legitimacy while the state lacks the institutional capacity to

maintain order, and threats are perceived to be from and to the regime in power (Job, 1992:17-18).

From the concept of national security already discussed, two paradigms of national security emerge based on the orientation of the state. Buzan (1991:39-40) referred to these as the minimal and the maximal states. The minimal state is derived from the Lockean tradition that the state should be equal to the sum of its parts. National security in such a state is derived directly from the interests of the citizens as there is low disharmony between individual and state interests. Security interests of the state become externally directed. Conversely, the maximal state views the state as primordial, more than the sum of its parts, and has an interest of its own. Individuals, groups and the state therefore have competing interests making internal concerns the focus of security. These two views of the state result in different conceptions of national security.

The distinction between weak and strong states as well as weak and strong powers enabled a broad categorization of national security concerns between states (Buzan, 1991:97-100). The former is defined in relation to the degree of socio-political cohesion while the latter refers to military and economic capability of states in relation to each other. Weak states are in the early stages of consolidating nation-states, under-developed and politically penetrated. They lack a clear and observed hierarchy of political authority and a coherent national identity. This creates conflict over organising ideology and high levels of political violence, among others. National security in weak states is defined by the level of contention among groups, organisations and individuals making the concept ambiguous with a focus on domestic threats.

In strong states, national security is viewed in terms of protecting national interests and the components of the state from external threats and interference. Since the state and

its institutions are clearly defined in such states, security becomes restricted to military means and the defence of the state (Buzan, 1991:100). These generalizations indicate that weak states are found mostly in the Third World.

## **2.4 THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY**

The concept of security is devoid of operational meaning in the absence of some identification of a threat either implicitly or explicitly (Mathur, 1996:304) as national security is invoked on the basis of the level of threat. To the extent that security implies protection against a menace or danger, insecurity reflects a combination of threats and vulnerabilities (Hough, 2003:5). The two concepts are therefore mutually reinforcing and cannot be discussed in isolation. Consequently, this section discusses the concept of threat, a categorization of vulnerabilities and how threats may constitute a threat to national security.

In its generic sense, threat means danger. However, a distinction is made between security threats and potential security threats. Security threats reflect adversarial relationships between two entities (Cohen, 1989:76 cited in Bernhardt, 2004:4). Ullman (1983:123) defines a security threat as an “action or sequence of events that (i) threatens drastically and over a relatively brief span of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state, or (ii) threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to the government of a state or to private, non-governmental entities (persons, groups, corporations) within a state”. This definition broadens the scope of security threats to include threats posed by and to the state; individuals and groups and organisations within a state. Threats thus emanate from sources such as the political, military, economic, environment and society.

Bernhardt (2004:4) similarly defines a security threat as the “presence or the perceived presence of a menacing intention and capacity on the part of one entity to cause harm,

injury or damage to another entity". Such threats are deemed imminent and certain with a level of urgency requiring immediate attention.

This is distinguished from potential security threats or security risks which are referred to as not an immediate danger, but serious. Thus, more immediate threats are security threats whereas less immediate ones are deemed security risks. Security risks are viewed as more strategic in nature and security threats at the tactical level (Hough, 2008:3).

Another distinction is made between threats and vulnerabilities. Vulnerabilities are identifiable and concrete. These include size, indefensible borders, political instability, economic under-development and powerful neighbours (Buzan, 1991:112-114). Some of these are endowed by nature and cannot be changed. In contrast, threat assessment is a combination of subjective and objective elements (Hough, 2003:5).

Given the definition of threats, a threat to national security is any activity, phenomenon, or course of events that poses a danger to either the survival or the existence of the nation or the welfare of the people of a sovereign nation-state (Mathur, 1996:305). National security threats therefore require immediate attention even if it demands the mobilization of the total resources of the state to confront the threat.

Buzan (1991:134) specifically attempts to establish criteria for national security threats. For an issue to qualify as a national security threat depends on the type of threat, the perception by the state, and the intensity of the operation of the threat. Intensity is determined by proximity, probability of occurrence, specificity, consequences and historical setting. The perception of the state introduces an element of subjectivity to threat analysis. Consequently, threat assessment is not always an objective process as actual threats may not necessarily be perceived, and perceived threats may not have real substance.

From this follows a distinction between normal competition, lesser threats, and threats to national security. "The difference between normal challenges and threats to national security necessarily occurs on a spectrum of threat that ranges from trivial and routine, through serious but routine, to drastic and unprecedented. Quite where on this spectrum issues begin to get legitimately classified as national security problems is a matter of political choice rather than objective fact" (Buzan, 1991:134).

In most cases, it is only if a certain condition or situation leads to violence, unacceptable conflict, or state instability or has the potential to do so, that it could possibly be viewed as a national security threat (Hough, 2003:10).

The assumption is that in view of competing threats to national security, an issue can be a national security issue but the priority it occupies on the threat spectrum will determine the attention and resources allocated to contain it. This determination is a matter of political choice and ultimately rests with the ruling élite.

An issue that could be classified by one regime as a threat may therefore not be deemed so by another regime in the same country. This consideration makes threat assessment subjective and ambiguous in many respects. This is particularly evident in weak states where threat perception tends to become a prerogative of the governing regimes and is often linked to regime security. In this regard the distinction between national security threats and regime security becomes blurred.

### **3. NATIONAL SECURITY IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

If security is viewed as externally oriented, then African states are fairly secure from external actors arising out of international conventions on sovereignty, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of states and inviolability of borders as

espoused by the UN, the OAU and the AU (Jackson, 1992:87). This is reinforced by international public opinion that condemns large scale invasions. Interstate violent conflict and military interventions do of course occur but are often also linked to domestic conflict.

Since most African states remain typical Third World states, the national security of African states tend to be internally oriented and a competing interest between the state, groups and individuals. In this sense the state as a guarantor of security is an interested party; an interest that is reflected by the ruling regimes. In these instances, the benefits of national security tend to be restricted to segments of the population, usually the ruling regime (Jackson, 1992:90).

However, as with other regions, African countries began addressing the broader notions of security at the end of the Cold War. An important definition of security for Africa which has also gained increasing acceptance is human security. The concept is gaining wide consensus and reflects in the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDA). Article 6 of the *Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy* affirms that “the causes of [the high incidence] intrastate conflict necessitate a new emphasis on human security, based not only on political values, but on social and economic imperatives as well. This newer, multi-dimensional notion of security thus embraces such issues as human rights; the right to participate fully in the process of governance...” (CSSDA, 2000).

It is noted, however, that although human security contests the core values and assumptions of the traditional “national security” concept (military in nature and exclusive delivery of security by the state), it presumes the state as an essential component and a precondition of a wider security.

In a broader sense, however, threats to Africa national security or African insecurity include the following among others (AllAfrica, 2002 cited in Hough, 2003:13):

- i. actual and potential external threats of force projection (invasion);
- ii. external threats of destabilization and terrorism;
- iii. potential sources of conflict with neighbours such as undemarcated borders, contested natural resource control;
- iv. violent crime and banditry associated with proliferation of light weapons;
- v. potential social unrest associated with economic recession;
- vi. ethnic, religious and regional cleavages and the incapacity of governance structures to manage disputes peacefully;
- vii. insufficiently institutionalized constitutional order;
- viii. weak governance institutions and corruption;
- ix. mass distress migration due to natural and man-made calamities; and
- x. HIV/AIDS and its impact on institutions and capacities including security services.

The operation and intensity of threats have often led to violent internal armed conflicts which in some cases decimated African states with the propensity to create regional conflict, as discussed in the following section.

#### **4. CAUSES OF ARMED CONFLICTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND IN AFRICA**

Scholars have attempted to categorize the numerous explanations for and causes of armed conflicts. These notwithstanding, in view of its historic circumstances, armed conflicts in Africa tend to reflect some commonalities as discussed in this section.

## 4.1 SOURCES OF CONFLICT

The causes of armed conflict or war have been analyzed at the individual, national and systemic levels (Waltz, 1979 cited in Tshitereke, 2003:2). Causal factors at the individual level relate to man's innate ability to cause violence. This is reflected in human nature and predispositions towards aggression as well as personality and psychological dispositions. The structure of the political system, nature of the policy making process, ethnicity, nationalism and ideological conflicts, are some of the causes at the national level while systemic level causes include the structure of the international system and patterns of military alliances, among others (Waltz, 1979 cited in Tshitereke, 2003:2). Whatever their merits, the explanations shifted from the systemic level to that of the individual after the end of the Cold War.

These general causes are subsumed under a number of theories including Huntington's clash of civilizations, Kaplan's Anarchy theory, the Greed and Grievance theory of Collier and Toffler's Wave theory (Bhonsle, 2004:38). A disaggregation of the causes is discussed below.

Bhonsle (2004:35) classified the causes of conflicts in developing states under political, economic, social and ecological categories. Political threats arise from problems of governance, and flawed processes of nation building. These manifest in secessionist movements, conflicts related to ethnicity and social and sectarian conflicts. Economic causes relate to social pressures as a result of mismanagement of the economy and unequal distribution of wealth which generate tensions leading to conflicts. The social causes include social and cultural coercion arising from religious fundamentalism; class based tensions; and majority-minority political divisions. Ecological threats relate to resource depletion, over-exploitation and extremist ecological activism. Allied to this are demographic pressures caused by overpopulation and contestations over resources.



Although there are similarities between armed conflicts in developing countries, armed conflicts in Africa are unique in view of the particular historical circumstances. Available literature presents extensive explanations of the causes of conflicts in Africa. The explanations revealed that conflicts in Africa are rooted in one or a combination of root and secondary causes such as historical, internal, external and particular situations (United Kingdom, 2001; Souaré, 2006; United Nations, 1998). However, recent studies suggest that conflicts in Africa conform to a global pattern that is explained by political and economic factors as well as by the extent of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in society (Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000:246). To a large extent, the sources of conflicts are internal with some conflicts reflecting the dynamics of a particular sub-region while others have international dimensions (United Nations, 1998:2). These sometimes degenerate into violent armed conflicts in Africa.

#### **4.2 CAUSES OF ARMED CONFLICTS IN AFRICA**

The political causes of armed conflicts in Africa are partially rooted in the historical legacy bequeathed by colonialism. The Berlin conference of 1885 arbitrarily divided kingdoms and nations (United Nations, 1998:2) and imposed new borders which divided nations into different states. This was reinforced by the decision of the OAU/AU on non-violability of territorial boundaries (Jackson, 1992:87) on attainment of independence by African states resulting in the creation of states with different national or ethnic identities. Thus, the task of nation building and national unity was pursued through centralization of political and economic power, which led to abuse of power and deepening distortions in the political and economic system, resulting in conflicts among the various groups (United Nations, 1998:2). Political violence and suppression then became entrenched as a means for resolution of problems with the tacit support of the coercive apparatus of the state.

This was exacerbated during the Cold War, when African states became a platform or proxies for the protagonist leading to proxy wars and internecine strife (Tshitereke, 2003:1). However, to a large extent, the Cold War period was a period of relative stability as internal agitations were suppressed at the behest of superpower rivalries. The end of the Cold War gave renewed impetus to quests for internal reforms as foreign powers could no longer protect, bolster or readily undermine governments. (United Nations, 1998:3). The post-Cold War era thus unleashed agitation for political reforms which resulted in conflict.

Although most African states adopted political pluralism after the Cold War, the nature of capturing and maintaining political power became largely exclusionist epitomized by 'winner-takes-all' systems or through ethnic alliances and patronage. This created a sense of advantages and disadvantages heightened by an over reliance on centralized and personalized forms of governance, lack of transparency, accountability, inadequate checks and balances, lack of respect for human rights and corruption among others (United Nations, 1998:3). These polarized ethnic groups, created an unequal access to power and resources and formed a basis for armed conflicts in multi-ethnic societies in Africa.

In view of the competing interests within the state, and the inability of governments to ensure national cohesion, legitimacy was conferred on ethnic leaders to the detriment of the ruling élite. Authority over the population became diffused in these instances.

In consequence, identity determined by religious divergence and ethnic affinity became the basis of access to political and economic mobility and a rallying point for political action. This is often abused by both the ruling élite and their opponents. As noted by Tshitereke (2003:4), ethnicity becomes complicated in Africa due to the arbitrarily drawn borders, hence a missing correlation between ethnicity and geography. A corrosion of state capacity and power through external influences and a fusion of state and society create a civic identity, guaranteed by the state, and an ethnic identity. The

contradictions between these two and intensification of the struggle for dominance among the ethnic groups for resource control and political authority, resulted in secessionist movements and agitation for self-determination and also facilitated the spread of conflict into neighbouring states.

Allied to the ethnic factor is the issue of religion as a cause of war. As Huntington (1996) explained in his clash of civilization thesis, “across the bulge of Africa, a variety of conflicts have gone on between the Arab and Muslim peoples of the north and animist-Christian black people of the south” (Huntington, 1996:256). Although this assertion is debatable, the religious fault line thesis has largely explained some of the bloody wars in Africa notably in Southern Sudan and Darfur, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, the clash of communities in Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire and struggles in Chad, Kenya and Tanzania (Nordås, 2007:1). Given that religious affiliation is sometimes linked with ethnicity, and the fact that most rebel movements are dominated by a specific ethnic group, the religious connotations of some armed conflicts are not difficult to identify.

Another cause of conflict is the incidence of mass migration. Migration, whether voluntary or forced, tends to have both short and long term security consequences for receiving states. Adamson (2006:167) notes in this regard that migration flows affect three dimensions of national security namely state capacity and autonomy, the balance of power and the nature of violent conflict.

In Africa, migration is occasioned by political conditions and economic circumstance usually concerned with the search for security, better life or arable land for grazing (Adepoju, 2005). The phenomenon does not only increase demographic pressure on limited arable lands but also forms the basis of an identity crisis as children of migrants assume the nationality of the receiving state with a consequential effect on demographic patterns. These result in contestations with *indigènes* over natural resources and sometimes political office, leading to xenophobia and armed conflicts.

The political causes are reinforced by the socio-economic circumstances. Inequitable distribution of resources, either real or imagined, has created conflicts over resource control. The new wars that emerged in Africa after the Cold War tended to revolve around the control of resources as the control of strategic resources invariably confers power on their custodians (Tshitereke, 2003:1-4). While there could be genuine grievances against systematic discrimination by marginalised communities, the existence of war became a way of life and profitable business for some actors, notably the warlords. The profit motive and personal ambitions became a basis of conflict.

The possession of natural resources attracted external assistance, including the intervention of both state and non-state actors in facilitating the illicit trade and transfer of small arms directly or indirectly to rebel groups or conflict zones, and financial, diplomatic or political backing of rebel movements (Souaré, 2006:42).

The role of small arms and arms merchants in the outbreak, sustenance and escalation of civil wars cannot be ignored (Souaré, 2006:73). Although this role is debated, the UN (1991) acknowledged the “destabilizing and destructive effects of the illicit arms trade, particularly for the internal situation of affected states and violation of human rights”. These sentiments were echoed by the assertions of the former UN Secretary General that small arms exacerbate conflict, spark refugee flows, undermine the rule of law, spawn a culture of violence and impunity and form a threat to peace and development to democracy and human rights (Annan, 2001).

Other causes of armed conflict in Africa include contested boundaries, and the existence of regional conflicts.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The concept of security and national security is relatively broad, and risks the inclusion of lesser problems in the absence of clear parameters to establish criteria for threats to

national security.

In view of the political connotations associated with the identification of threats to national security in the Third World and in Africa in particular, threat perception tends to have a positive correlation with regime insecurity. As such, definitions of national security are often highly subjective and determined by the ruling regime. The political definition is even more pronounced in Africa as states lack both the hardware and software components of security. In this regard, identification of threats engenders patronage, ethnicity and identity politics, deepens inequality and alienates segments of society especially as it often focuses on regime security. It then becomes a basis for grievances and conflict as evidenced in the subsequent analysis of the Ivorian conflict.

The next chapter outlines the post-independence political and economic history of Côte d'Ivoire and developments leading to the violent armed conflict in 2002. This will be preceded by an overview of the pre-colonial history until independence in 1960, as this period laid the foundations for the subsequent socio-political and economic developments in the country.

## CHAPTER 3

# HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF IVORIAN POLITICS UP TO 2003

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The present security predicament of Côte d'Ivoire lies deep in the past. Indeed the threats to the security of the country are reflective of the country's history as well as the political and other economic policies pursued by the French colonialists and successive governments after independence. A meaningful analysis of the security threats and consequences for the state therefore requires an overview of the political and economic history of the country. Prior to this, a brief background on the climate, ethnic and religious composition of the country is required.

### 2. BACKGROUND

Côte d'Ivoire (or the Ivory Coast) is located in West Africa between latitude 4° and 10° north and longitude 8° and 9° west. It is bordered in the north by Mali and Burkina Faso; in the east by Ghana, west by Liberia and Guinea, and the Gulf of Guinea constitutes the southern border stretching over five hundred (500 kilometres) from east to west. The total surface area of the country is 322,462 square kilometres (124,503 square miles) (Ivorian Government, 2007(b)).

The capital city is Yamoussoukro. Abidjan, the former capital, however, remains the largest city. Other principal cities include Bouaké, Daloa, Gagnoa and Korhogo (United States of America: Department of State, 2009:1). Map 1 depicts the political map of the country.

**MAP 1. POLITICAL MAP OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE**



Source: Maps of the world. Available online at [www.mapsofworld.com/ivory-coast/ivory-coast-political-map.html](http://www.mapsofworld.com/ivory-coast/ivory-coast-political-map.html)

Most parts of the country have an equatorial climate with the south receiving double maxima rainfall of 1,250mm to 2,400mm annually, a high humidity and a dense tropical forest. The north has tropical climatic conditions with a single rainy season with an average of 1,250mm to 1,500mm of rain annually, with Guinea Savannah vegetation (Africa

South of the Sahara, 2009:354). The climatic conditions have also influenced the political economy, and form an integral part of any security analysis of the country.

The country is ethnically and religiously diverse. The population of the country, estimated at 20,227,876 in 2007 (Africa South of the Sahara, 2009:354) is composed of over 60 ethnic groups classified under five principal language groups namely the Akan (this group occupies the east, centre and south-east), Kru (mainly in the southwest), Southern Mandé (west), Northern Mandé (northwest), Sénoufo/Lobi (north centre and northeast). The Baoulés, a sub-group of the Akan division, comprise the single largest subgroup with 15 to 20 percent of the population. They are based in the central region around Bouaké and Yamoussoukro. The Bétés in the Kru division, the Sénoufo in the north, and the Malinkés in the northwest are the next largest groups with 10 to 15 percent each of the national population (United States of America: Department of State, 2009:2).

Other ethnologists regroup the people into four different groups using a different classification. These are East Atlantic (or Akan people), the West Atlantic (Kru), The Voltaic and the Mandé. The groups are also differentiated in terms of environment, economic activity, language and general cultural characteristics. A significant number of the principal ethnic groups are found in the neighbouring states particularly the Akan in Ghana; Kru in Liberia; Sénoufo in Burkina Faso; and the Mandé and Malinké in Guinea and Mali (Ivorian Government, 2007(c); Konaté, 2004:2; Kohler, 2003:24-25). Map 2 illustrates the ethnic distribution in the country.

The country also hosts a large number of migrants. It is estimated that the population includes more than five million African migrants living in the country with citizens of Burkina Faso accounting for one-third to half of the number. The rest of the migrants are from Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Benin, Senegal, Liberia and Mauritania. The non-African migrant community includes French and Lebanese nationals (United States of America: Department of State, 2009:2).



MAP 2. MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE.



Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps\\_Af\\_nsf/luFullMap/1BCF60F3CDC1F504852572A4004F8CC6/\\$File/ocha\\_POP\\_civ030704.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Af_nsf/luFullMap/1BCF60F3CDC1F504852572A4004F8CC6/$File/ocha_POP_civ030704.pdf?OpenElement)

Regarding religion, the 1998 census estimated that 38.6 percent of the population were Muslims; 19.4 percent Catholics; 6.6 percent Protestants; 11.9 percent animists while 16.7 percent practiced other religions (Ivorian Government, 2007(c)).

### 3. PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY

Among the first inhabitants of present-day Côte d'Ivoire were the pigmies until desertification in sub-Saharan Africa around 5<sup>th</sup> century AD which possibly forced their migration or extinction. Parts of the country at various times became part of the ancient 'Sudanic' empire of Mali, which extended to Odienné in the north west. After the fall of the Mali Empire, the northern part of the country was inhabited by the Muslim empire of Kong, established by the Juula in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century in the north-central region inhabited by the Sénoufo (Ivorian Government, 2007(a); United States of America: Congress, 1988).

The Empire of Kong was made up of the *Dyulas* or *Dioula* – people from different ethnic groups but mainly of Malinké and Voltaic origin stretching to part of modern day Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea. The term *Dyula* refers to Mandingo-speaking Muslim traders. In the east it became synonymous with a closely-knit ethnic minority group often playing a leading role in society on account of the socio-professional nature of its talents (Ajayi and Crowder, 1974: 262,277). The *Dioula* became an important politico-economic group whose wealth and participation in politics were a source of threat to the regimes.

At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Agnis from the Akan group in Ghana migrated to Côte d'Ivoire fleeing from the slave trade and in search of gold, and established the Indénié and Sanwi Kingdoms. They were followed by the Assinie and later by the Baoulés, who settled in the central part. The latter were the last of the Akans to migrate to Côte d'Ivoire (Ivorian Government, 2007(a)).

First contact with Europeans was made between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the Portuguese explored Côte d'Ivoire mainly for the slave trade. France made initial contact with Côte d'Ivoire in 1688 when French missionaries and traders landed at Assinie near the Gold Coast (Ghana) border in search of slaves and trade opportunities (Hargreaves, 1969:54, Ivorian Government, 2007(a)).

The King of the Sanwi, the most powerful Agni kingdom, later signed a protectorate treaty with France in 1843. The country however became an official French territory in 1893 with the appointment of Louis Gustave Binger as the first Governor. (Ivorian Government, 2007(a)). The country became part of the Federation of *Afrique Occidentale Française*, AOF, (Federation of French West Africa) in 1895. By 1920 the Federation comprised Mauritania, Senegal, French Soudan (Mali), French Guinea, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Ivory Coast, Dahomey (Benin) and Niger under a Governor-General based in Senegal (Ajayi and Crowder, 1974:519).

The introduction of Islam and Christianity added another dimension to the security situation of the country. Prior to the arrival of the Christian missionaries in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Islam had been practiced in the far north of Côte d'Ivoire for roughly seven centuries (Winslow, n.d:4, 5) as witnessed in the Kong, the activities of the *Dioula* and indeed the exploits of Samory Touré, who defeated the Kong and established an empire that included large parts of Côte d'Ivoire which aided the spread of Islam until he (Touré) was defeated by the French in 1898 (Hargreaves, 1969:54; Ivorian Government, 2007(a))

A significant development is that while Islam advanced from the north, Christianity penetrated the interior from the south (Ajayi and Crowder, 1974:538-541). Thus the nature of proselytizing by both religions influenced the character of their followers along ethnic lines. The north tended to be Muslim while Christians generally inhabited the south. This also created a religious fault line in the Ivory Coast (Huntington, 1996) and a basis of threats in times of socio-economic or political insecurity.

#### 4. FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Côte d'Ivoire was administered based on the applicable French policy in the AOF. Initially the administrative policy of French West Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire, was modelled on the metropolitan system based on the concept of *assimilation*. The country was therefore perceived as part of France and Ivorians as French subjects. This concept was replaced in the 1920s with the policy of *association* under which the African territories were reorganised or reoriented for the mutual benefit of both the French and the Africans. This was never put into systematic practice. However, the main characteristic of French administration was its heavy centralisation, a hierarchical structure with the district as the lowest administrative unit, and a lack of scope for local initiative. Although there was a Governor-General of French West Africa, the principal source of legislation was the French Chamber of Deputies (Ajayi and Crowder, 1974: 516, 518).

Like other French colonies, Ivorians were French citizens without political rights and therefore drafted for work on plantations and on public property, among others, through a system of force labour. They were also subjected to the *indigénat*, a code of law that allowed the French administrators to deal with subversive acts and discipline criminals without necessarily holding a trial. Punishments were also not subject to appeal (Ajayi and Crowder, 1974: 449).

Plantation farming was introduced to West Africa around the 19<sup>th</sup> century to produce cash crops to meet the growing demand in industrializing Europe. The plantations were concentrated along the coast where conditions were favourable, specializing in palm oil, cocoa, coffee and timber (Ajayi and Crowder, 1974:46,529). In Côte d'Ivoire, cocoa and coffee production became dominant having been made the main principal commodities of the country around 1870 by Arthur Verdier (Ivorian Government, 2007(a)). By the 1930's, Côte d'Ivoire had been transformed into a "plantation economy" and a major producer of cocoa and coffee (Kohler, 2003:13). The introduction of plantation farming

marked a watershed for ethnic and political cleavages and nationalism as it shaped different ethnic roles, created different class interest and uneven regional development (Institute for Security Studies, 2007:1). The interplay of the above impacted on the long term security situation of the country. For example, being the economic hub, infrastructural development was concentrated in the south to the exclusion of the north. This disparity was capitalized on later by the northern élite to mobilize northerners against southerners. Similarly, the wealth acquired by the plantation owners, mostly Baoulé, became a source of resentment to other ethnic groups that deepened ethnic cleavages.

To meet the increasing demand for labour on the plantations, the French recruited large numbers of workers from Upper Volta to work in the Ivory Coast. The demand for labour was exacerbated by the production quotas imposed by the French government for its war efforts during the Second World War (Lawler, 1990:88-90). This source of labour became so important to the economic activity of Côte d'Ivoire that in 1932, Upper Volta was made an integral part of the Ivory Coast (United States of America: Congress, 1988). The role of Upper Volta as a labour bank continued after independence but this time based on migration which was tacitly encouraged by the post-independent government leaders in the Ivory Coast, who were planters and benefited immensely from the cheap labour.

The imposition of a head tax in 1900 aimed at financing a public works programme, also had an unintended consequence on migration from the less endowed areas in the AOF to the cocoa and coffee growing areas. Younger members of the family migrated voluntarily or through contract labour organisations to earn cash to pay taxes. Large scale migration for this purpose subsequently took place from Niger and Upper Volta to the Ivory Coast and Ghana (Ajayi and Crowder, 1974:531). The French administration also encouraged people living in the north to move to the sparsely-populated south by offering incentives such as exemption from forced labour (Kohler, 2003:14).

With a sizeable number of “settlers”, a third of the plantations were in the hands of French citizens based on a forced-labour system (Wikipedia, 2009:6). In addition, French policies also favoured European planters by offering higher prices for their produce, leading to resentment against the French administration. Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a Baoulé chief and wealthy cocoa planter, seized on this to form the *Syndicat Agricole Africain*, (SAA) in September 1944. The SAA was a platform for an alliance between peasants, labourers and chiefs from the northern labour reserves on the one hand, and the rising *bourgeois* class of the southern planters on the other, to fight discriminatory measures and forced labour. Houphouët-Boigny emerged as the champion of Africa rights. In 1946 Houphouët-Boigny founded the *Parti Démocratique la Côte d’Ivoire* (PDCI) out of the SAA and later became an ally to the Ivorian section of the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA), an inter-territorial party in the AOF created in 1947 (Lawler, 1990:88, 91; Ajayi and Crowder, 1974:672).

Prior to the formation of the PDCI, the agitations in the immediate post-war years led to the passage of laws in 1946 which abolished the *indigénat*, and forced labour was formally abolished on 11 April 1946 by the *Loi Houphouët-Boigny*, which secured Houphouët-Boigny’s political hegemony over the Ivory Coast (including Upper Volta).

Moreover, the Brazzaville conference in 1944 on the future of the French territories, and the enactment of the *Overseas Reform Act* or the *Loi Cadre* in 1956 by the French Government, outlined reforms in the AOF and gave a measure of autonomy to the constituent territories (Ajayi and Crowder, 1974: 668, 685-688).

These developments culminated in the appointment of Houphouët-Boigny as Prime Minister of the Ivory Coast in 1959. He became the President in November 1960 having led the country to independence on 1 August 1960 (Ivorian Government, 2007(a)).

## 5. THE PERIOD OF HOUPHOUËT-BOIGNY: 1960-1993

Houphouët-Boigny made economic development rather than political reform his priority. (Meredith, 2005:63). The immediate post-independence period was therefore characterized by economic growth and development, making the country the most prosperous in West Africa. At the same time Houphouët-Boigny consolidated his power by managing the numerous threats that confronted the country and his regime.

### 5.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

At the time of independence in 1960, Côte d'Ivoire was the most prosperous of the French West African territories contributing over 45 percent of the total exports of the AOF (Meredith, 2005:64). This was accompanied by ambitious projects in infrastructural development and diversification from cash crop production to an industrialized economy (Ivorian Government, 2007(a)).

Due to good incentives, Côte d'Ivoire became the third largest coffee producer in the world after Brazil and Colombia, and the leading producer of cocoa, pineapples and palm oil (Wikipedia, 2009). During the 1960s and the 1970s, average annual gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 11 percent and by 7 percent between 1970 and 1980 as the main exports, cocoa and coffee enjoyed high prices on the world market (Toungara, 1990:40).

To boost cocoa and coffee production, Houphouët-Boigny adopted a liberal attitude towards migrants who provided cheap labour. He granted access to land to anybody utilizing it, arguing that "the land belongs to those who put it to use" (Institute for Security Studies, 2007:3). Migrants therefore gained land rights in return for their labour, enjoyed similar rights as citizens and were allowed to vote and participate in government (Woods, 2003:646-648).

These policies yielded dividends. In the first two decades after independence, Côte d'Ivoire's annual growth in real terms was more than 7 percent a year, placing it among the top 15 countries in the world in terms of economic growth (Meredith, 2005: 285).

The cocoa driven economy transformed Ivory Coast into a model African state with impressive infrastructure and an enviable industrial base. The country was subsequently dubbed *le miracle ivoirien* or "the Ivorian Miracle" (Kohler, 2003:16).

## 5.2 POLITICAL SYSTEM

Although the Constitution guaranteed a multiparty political system, by late 1960s power was concentrated in the hands of Houphouët-Boigny and Côte d'Ivoire was a *de facto* one-party state. In addition to his position as president, he was also the titular president of the PDCI (United States of America: Congress, 1988).

Appointments to positions of authority were based on loyalty to Houphouët-Boigny. He appointed administrative heads from the national to the local level. He also selected the 35 members of the Economic and Social Council (a consultative organ of the state) which, with the Political Bureau, chose the members of the National Assembly (United States of America: Congress, 1988).

Thus, this period was characterized by a system of patronage supported by a one party system and political appointments calculated to quieten dissent (Kirwin, 2006:46). The tactics included constitutional and electoral manipulation; monopoly control over access to political and bureaucratic sinecures; co-optation of political dissidents; coupled with harassment, forced exile, and imprisonment of political adversaries; followed at times by rapprochement and political rehabilitation (Daddieh, 2001:14). As noted by Bakary (1997; cited in Institute for Security Studies, 2007:2), in the absence of democratic



institutions in negotiating the distribution of resources, Boigny became the mediator on who gets what, when and how.

The high level of economic growth was therefore at the expense of political development and the building of strong national cohesion. Stability of the regime was the preoccupation of the government and the French, regardless of the future consequences for the state.

### 5.3 SECURITY CONCERNS

According to Daddieh (2001:14) the domination of Ivorian politics for nearly half a century by Félix Houphouët-Boigny, and a single political party, the PDCI, and the same cohort of politico bureaucratic élites, engendered élite cohesion and cooperation which heralded stability. Security arrangements and sources of threats during the period were therefore influenced by the personalized rule and the one-party system.

Among the measures taken to ensure the security of the regime was the creation of the armed forces or the *Forces Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire* (FANCI) in 1961. Other security agencies included the para-military *gendarmerie*, militias made up of PDCI members and Baoulé Kinsmen and the intelligence services attached to the Presidency (United States of America: Congress, 1988; N'Diaye, 2005:93; Winslow, n.d:6).

To curb its powers, the function of the army was restricted to development and administrative activities including administration of the cities, serving in Ministerial capacities, diplomatic appointments, directorships of hospitals, road construction and running of the national airline. Thus the capacity of FANCI as a fighting force was severely limited (Gberie and Addo, 2004:1).

The government also signed a Defence Pact with France in 1961 which enjoined the latter to assist in the preservation of the territorial integrity of the Ivory Coast against foreign aggression (Defence Accord, 1961). This guaranteed external security to a large extent. It has, however, been argued that some of the defence agreements signed between France and its former territories contained secret clauses to guarantee the personal safety of heads of state and their families (Domergue-Cloarec, 1994:72). N'Diaye (2005:94) opined that it is reasonable to assume that such a clause existed with the Ivory Coast given Houphouët-Boigny's role in the post-independence political and security arrangements in French West Africa.

Despite these efforts, the new regime was confronted with a number of security challenges which signalled the sources and nature of threats to the country and to the regime. There were attempts by Ivorian Army officers, left-wing youth, politicians and northerners in 1962, 1963, 1973 and 1980 to overthrow the government while in 1970, attempts by Kragbe Gnagbe to form a Bété based political party were violently crushed by the government (Institute for Security Studies, 2007:3; N'Diaye, 2005:99; United States of America: Congress, 1988). Resentment against the participation of foreigners in the Ivorian economy led to violence prior to and after independence. In 1954 Ivorians protested against foreign Africans mainly Senegalese, Dahomeyans and Togolese who dominated lower grades of white collar positions. Similar violence occurred in 1980 and 1985, directed against Mauritians and Burkinabés respectively (Winslow, n.d:8; Crook, 1990(a):26). While these were met with heavy-handedness, it nevertheless signalled the potential impact of xenophobia on the security of the country.

The country was also faced with the threat of secession when in 1969, the Sanwi of Krinjabo attempted to break away from Côte d'Ivoire to form an independent Kingdom (United States of America: Congress, 1988). These developments added another dimension to the nature of threats faced by the regime.

## 5.4 ECONOMIC DECLINE

In the early 1980s, however, environmental and economic forces notably drought and a fall in commodity prices, interrupted the positive trends. Crook (1990:649(b)) noted that in a country that was dependent on cocoa and coffee for the majority of its foreign exchange earnings and for the livelihood of the majority of its working population, the consequences were dire. Between 1981 and 1984 contribution from industry to the gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 33 percent, services dropped by 9 percent, and agriculture by 12.2 percent. In 1987 coffee and cocoa exports declined by 62 percent. The GDP declined by 5.8 percent in real terms, and the trade surplus declined by 49 percent. In the first half of 1987 there was a 35 percent drop in the value of exports compared with the same period in 1986 (Daddieh, 2001:15). Between 1980 and 1983 state revenues dropped by 65 percent and the debt service ratio grew from US\$38.5 million in 1970 to US\$737 million in 1979 to US\$996 million in 1982. The gross national product *per capita* dropped from US\$840 in 1980 to US\$710 in 1985 (Meredith, 2005:289).

To reverse the declining growth, the government with the support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, embarked on a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1981 (Almås, 2007:12). Among other measures, it reduced the producer prices for cocoa and coffee; slashed the salaries of all state employees, some by as much as 40 percent; and tightened controls over the use of government vehicles. The measures also led to increased corruption in the government (Daddieh, 2001:16).

The SAP rolled back subsidies which affected social programmes. Extreme poverty nearly doubled, rising to 11 percent between 1981 and 1990 and to 20 percent in 1999. This was particularly severe in Abidjan rising from 0.7 percent in 1985 to 5.1 percent in 1993 and to 20.2 percent in 1995 (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2005). The hardship provoked widespread popular resentment, especially among the urban unemployed.

The populace reacted to the measures with mass protests and strikes by soldiers, police, customs officials and trades unions among others, in 1990 and 1991. Coupled with the wave of democracy across Africa, Houphouët-Boigny succumbed to multiparty democracy (Kirwin, 2006:46).

After the 1990 elections, Houphouët-Boigny reinstated Article II of the Constitution which confers power to the president of the National Assembly to continue with the term of the presidency in the event of the inability of the president to complete his term. He also established the position of a prime minister and appointed Alassane Dramane Ouattara, a technocrat, then serving as governor of the West African Central Bank (BCEAO) to the position, ostensibly to implement the SAP and salvage the economy (Daddieh, 2001:16). His reform programme brought him into confrontation with established interests linked to both the ruling party and the opposition (Crook, 1997:220, 223).

Houphouët-Boigny died on 7 December 1993 and was succeeded by Henri Konan Bédié, president of the National Assembly. As noted by Kirwin, (2006:47), at the time of Houphouët-Boigny's death, there were no measures in place to ensure a lasting union. His tenure was underpinned by an obsession to secure his regime, made up of wealthy planters. The politics of patronage and liberal immigration policies were designed to shore up the regime to the detriment of creating a foundation for national security and cohesion. His death therefore marked a paradigm shift regarding security and stability in Côte d'Ivoire.

## **6. THE BÉDIÉ PRESIDENCY: 1993-1999**

Houphouët-Boigny's death in 1993 marked the beginning of overt political tension and the end of the fragile ethnic balance that he maintained between the Ivorian ethnic groups and immigrants from West Africa (Human Rights Watch, 2005:1).

In accordance with the Constitution, Henri Konan Bédié, the President of the National Assembly, another Akan from the Baoulé group and a Catholic, was named the successor following a tense standoff with then Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara, who subsequently resigned from his position. Bédié was re-elected in 1995 in an election boycotted by the opposition (International Crisis Group, 2007).

The subsequent divisions within the PDCI led to formation of the *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR), a pro-Ouattara reformist party. The character and identity of the party resembled a northern regionalist Muslim agenda (Crook, 1997:225).

Bédié's tenure witnessed the economic problems of his predecessor including worsening unemployment, inequality, poverty and an increase in corruption and in the number of sinecures (Sindzingre, 2000; Chaléard, 2000 in Dozon, 2001:378). It was also characterized by bad governance, corruption and mismanagement of the economy. In addition, low commodity prices on the international market and drought created high levels of poverty that resulted in social unrest (Kohler, 2003:19; Human Rights Watch, 2001).

In the face of the fragile political situation and economic meltdown, Bédié attempted to garner political support and legitimize himself through the exploitation of ethnicity and migration. He invented the concept of *Ivoirité* or *Ivorianess* which sought to distinguish real Ivorians from "foreigners". This was implemented through constitutional amendments approved by the National Assembly. Two main Acts were significant. In 1994, the National Assembly passed a new *Electoral Code* which among other things stipulated that candidates for the Presidency and for Deputy in the National Assembly should be Ivorian by birth, with both parents also known by birth; should have resided continuously in the country for five years prior to elections; and should neither have renounced their Ivorian citizenship nor taken nationality of another state (Crook, 1997:228). The law was deemed as preventing Ouattara from contesting the 1995 elections (Daddieh, 2001:17). In 1998, a new *Rural Land Law* made citizenship a

condition of owning land, and for many Ivorians of northern extraction, establishing citizenship was problematic in view of the ethnic affinities with Sahelian groups, particularly Mali and Burkina Faso (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):7).

In addition, in 1997, Bédié established a new National Security Council responsible to the President and assigned additional responsibilities in areas such as countering illegal immigration, smuggling and organised crime (Africa South of the Sahara, 2009:356). The types of threats perceived by the regime were obvious.

The policies on land and the electoral code as well as the concept of *Ivoirité* alienated a large “foreign” population, most of whom lived in the Muslim north, and the non-members of the Akan ethnic group (Kohler, 2003:17-79). The period thus marked the beginning of politics of exclusion underpinned by identity designed to secure the ruling élite.

## **7. GENERAL GUEI’S INTERREGNUM 1999-2000**

Côte d’Ivoire experienced its first *coup d’état* on 24 December 1999 when young soldiers seeking better working conditions and payment of salary arrears turned their employment grievances into political claims (Konaté, 2004:3).

The young officers later invited General Robert Guei, a Yacouba from the west, to head the junta named *Comité National de Salut Public* (CNSP) or National Committee of Public Salvation. Guei pledged to eliminate corruption and introduce an inclusive Ivorian government. Initially, his government elicited support by forming a coalition government including members of the RDR and the *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI), or Ivorian Popular Front, led by Laurent Gbagbo, a vocal opposition politician and a Bété from the west (The Europa World Yearbook, 2008:1408). To legitimize itself, the CNSP attempted to mobilise collective memory around the work of Houphouët-Boigny,

declaring *Ivoirité* a threat to national unity and assuring foreigners and nationals of their respective places in the Ivorian nation (Akindès, 2004:21).

Following his decision to contest the October 2000 presidential elections, Guei reverted to the divisive policies pursued by Bédié, by endorsing constitutional amendments that narrowed the existing eligibility requirements for those seeking political office. The new Constitution drafted and ratified under him proposed that both parents of a candidate must be Ivorian (Daddieh, 2001:18) thus reinventing *Ivoirité* with stringent restrictions.

Under the new legislation and amendments, fourteen of the nineteen presidential candidates including Alassane Ouattara and former President Bédié, were barred from contesting the 2000 elections (Human Rights Watch, 2005:2).

Besides *Ivoirité*, Guei embarked on a process to eliminate Akan (the ethnicity of Houphouët-Boigny and Bédié) officials from important posts in all sectors including the military making him as unpopular as his predecessor (Kohler, 2003:21). Guei thus appeared to embark on a systematic exclusion of ethnic groups from the north and the south-east, creating conditions for ethnic groups from the west, and most importantly a Yacouba (Guei), to assume political control of the country.

During the October 2000 elections, Guei dissolved the National Electoral Commission following reports that Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the FPI, was leading. The action sparked massive popular protests and Guei subsequently fled the country to Benin. Gbagbo was declared president and was sworn into office on 25 October, 2000 (Human Rights Watch, 2005:2).

## 8. LAURENT GBAGBO: 2000

The legitimacy of the elections being questionable, the transition was marred by violence with RDR supporters calling for fresh elections. This position was endorsed by the international community including the AU. The continued protests and clashes with the police widened the mistrust and deepened the ethnic and regional divisions within the country, leading to another *coup* attempt in January 2001 (Kohler, 2003:22).

On 19 September 2002, a group of former junior army deserters mutinied, in coordination, at three different sites (Abidjan, Bouaké and Korhogo). The attack was repelled in Abidjan but the mutineers occupied Bouaké and Korhogo, two cities in the north. A rebel group that identified itself as the *Mouvement Patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI), (Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire), emerged from the north and later claimed responsibility for the attacks. The group, among other demands, called for Gbagbo's resignation, in protest against the xenophobic policies, and a transitional government leading to new elections within a month (Kohler, 2003:22). That the MPCI rebels were composed mainly of *Dioula* or northerners of Malinké origin, Senoufo, Burkinabé and Malian recruits (Human Rights Watch, 2005:2) gave some indication of an identity contestation.

To restore normalcy, Gbagbo took steps towards reconciliation by setting up a National Reconciliation Forum in October to discuss the future of the country. Gbagbo also expanded the new government to include members of the RDR (Kohler, 2003:22). This gesture was however short-lived with accusations of bad faith and mistrust on both sides.

Between October 2002 and January 2003, two other groups, the *Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO)-(the Popular Movement of the Great West), and the *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (MJP)-(Movement for Justice and Peace),



composed largely of Liberia and Sierra Leonean fighters, emerged from the southwest of the country. The primary aim of both groups was to avenge the death of Guei (Human Rights Watch, 2005:2). The emergence of these groups further complicated the crisis. As noted by Kohler (2003:22) the turn of events led to the beginning of the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002.

Within two months the MPCCI had almost taken the northern part representing about 50 percent of the country. The MJP and the MPIGO later united with the MPCCI to form a military-political alliance known as the *Forces Nouvelles (FN)*-New Forces (Human Rights Watch, 2005:2) led by Guillaume Soro, a former leader of the *Fédération Estudiantine et Scholaird de Côte d'Ivoire* (FESCI) or Ivorian Students Federation, to fight the Gbagbo government (Africa South of the Sahara, 2009:357) The country was effectively divided into two equal parts along the religious fault line with the rebels controlling the north and the government maintaining the south.

## 9. THE PEACE AGREEMENT

The armed conflict between the government and the FN officially ended in January 2003 with the signing of a peace accord known as *The Linas-Marcoussis Accord* (LMA) which called for the formation of a government of national reconciliation (GNR) composed of members from each of the armed factions and the opposition political parties. The parties also agreed to work together on modifying national identity, eligibility for citizenship and land tenure laws which were the root causes of the conflict. The LMA also called for an international monitoring committee including the UN, AU, and the Economic Community of West Africa States. (ECOWAS) (LMA, 2003).

In terms of the accord, Seydou Diarra was appointed Prime Minister in March 2003. The parties declared an "end of war" in July 2003, having agreed to a process and details of a disarmament and reintegration programme, power sharing government and

the creation of a *zone de confiance* between north and south (International Crisis Group, 2007:2).

Minimal progress was made as both sides traded accusations of bad faith. In an attempt to reinvigorate the agreement, the UN, the AU and ECOWAS organized a summit in Accra, Ghana in March and in July 2003. The meeting resulted in the *Accra III Agreement* which adopted legal reforms on citizenship for West African immigrants; eligibility to contest elections under Article 35 of the Ivorian Constitution; and legal rights (Africa South of the Sahara, 2009:358; Human Rights Watch, 2005:2, 3).

By the end of 2003 the country remained divided into two with the New Forces based in Bouaké controlling the landlocked north, and President Gbagbo holding the south. Map 3 illustrates the respective positions of the belligerents as of 2003.

## 10. CONCLUSION

That the death of Houphouët-Boigny marked a threshold in Ivorian politics was undeniable. What was evident was that both Houphouët-Boigny and successive regimes perceived a set of issues as threats that must be managed. These were migration, ethnicity, religion, natural resource contestation, property rights and external invasion. However, the approaches to the management of these threats were indicative of a narrow conception of security which tended to secure a group rather than the state and nation.

The political and economic history of Côte d'Ivoire reveals that the stability and security or insecurity of the post-independence regimes remained linked to the plantation economy. While this was rooted in the pre-independence political economy, it was evident that the determination of security by successive regimes in the

**MAP 3. POSITIONS ALONG THE CEASEFIRE LINE.**



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France. Available online at [www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps\\_Af.nsf/luFullMap/740F792929F669EE85256CB0007BB723/\\$File/govfr\\_civsit160103.jpg?OpenElement&cc=civ](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Af.nsf/luFullMap/740F792929F669EE85256CB0007BB723/$File/govfr_civsit160103.jpg?OpenElement&cc=civ)

post-independence period revolved around the plantations. Thus, security or insecurity of the ruling élite tended to be influenced by related factors such as the availability or otherwise of land, and the availability and appeasement or otherwise, of migrant labour to generate revenue to buy acquiescence. Conversely, in periods of socio-economic insecurity or adverse commodity prices, migrant labour and the associated changes in demographic patterns became threats to the regimes.

The independence movement emerged out of the grievances and interests of the rich African plantation owners led by Houphouët-Boigny. These grievances mainly revolved around the exploitation of migrant labour to the advantage of French planters. Consequent policies pursued by Houphouët-Boigny appeared to be geared towards bolstering the regime irrespective of the consequences for the security interests of the nation. Successive regimes, including that of Bédié who belonged to the Houphouëtist tradition, regarded the same policies as threats at a time of decreasing rents, to purchase patronage.

The next chapter discusses the origins and nature of the threats perceived by the regimes after independence and the objectivity or otherwise of the perception. The chapter will also highlight how the management of narrowly defined threats, aided by religion, formed the basis of the armed conflict in 2002.

## CHAPTER 4

# THE IVORIAN CONFLICT OF 2002: CAUSES AND THREAT PERCEPTION

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The risk of an armed conflict existed in Côte d'Ivoire long before the war erupted in 2002. This was partly due to the inability of the post-independence governments to address the structural challenges bequeathed by French rule as well as their preoccupation with the élite interest rather than forging a national consensus. Similarly, security was narrowly defined in terms of élite or regime security. This perception of security became the basis of the definition of threats. In consequence, an issue that was a focus of security by one regime was perceived as a threat by another. The definition and management of narrowly defined threats created wider implications for national security, leading to the armed conflict in 2002.

This chapter provides an analysis of the conceptualization of threats by the various regimes and how the attempts to address the threats resulted in the armed conflict. It also highlights the fact that in the Ivorian context, security was rather a narrow construct defined to preserve the interest, security and legitimacy of regimes at the expense of that of the nation; a definition of security that also threatened the existence of the state.

## 2. IDENTIFICATION AND SOURCES OF THREATS TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE

As with most African states, security issues are mystified, hence there is no comprehensive study on Ivorian national security and the underlying threats (United States of America: Congress, 1988). Perceptions of threats to security, either implicit or explicit, will be deduced from the following selected legislative acts, official documents, as well as the functional description of the various security and intelligence agencies. This will include the functions of the Ministry of Interior, (1961 and 1962); the functions of the Ministry of Internal Security (1976); the functions of the National Gendarmerie; the *Defence Accord* with France (1961); the *Report of the Economic and Social Council*, of October, 1998; and the deliberations at the National Reconciliation Forum (2001).

The functions of the Ministry of Interior as outlined by two decrees issued in January 1961 and May 1962, identified immigration as a security related function of the Ministry. The Ministry of Internal Security which was established in 1976 in replacement of the Ministry of Interior, listed counter-espionage, narcotics and drug control, anti-government demonstrations and protection of the state against treason and espionage, among others as functions of the Ministry (Winslow, n.d.:10, 11). These are deemed as national security threats since functions of security agencies are directed at perceived or actual threats to national security.

The National Gendarmerie, a branch of FANCI was assigned internal security functions which included the suppression of violent crime, maintenance of domestic order and territorial security (United States of America: Department of State, 2009).

Foreign invasion was considered an external threat as indicated in the *Defence Accord* with France, signed on 24 April 1961, which ceded the responsibility of the protection of Côte d'Ivoire from external sources to France (Collett, 2005:5). Under the Accord, the

Ivorian government could also request French assistance for internal security, including the prevention of *coups d'état* and management of internal dissent (N'Diaye, 2005:94).

The *Report of the Economic and Social Council* identified immigration and Islam as the two main threats that faced the country. While immigration impacts negatively on social cohesion the “inflow of Muslim immigrants” constitutes a threat to the social peace as the influx could be exploited for political ends. The Report thus established the potential of migration and religion, notably Islam, as threats to the security of Côte d'Ivoire (Côte d'Ivoire, 1998 (b)).

Lastly, the National Reconciliation Forum organized by President Gbagbo from October to December 2001, identified ethnicity, regionalism and land tenure as issues affecting national unity (N'Diaye, 2005:110). Considering that these issues were the sources of tension in the country at various times, it appears there was unanimity that they constituted threats to national security.

In addition to the challenges to both national and regime security (including secession, external invasion, *coup* attempts and xenophobia) identified in the previous chapter, the following could therefore be classified as the threats perceived by the various regimes in the post-independence era:

- Migration and consequences for the demographic structure.
- Treason.
- Espionage.
- Ethnicity and Regionalism.
- Religious cleavages and expansion of Islam.
- Natural resource contestation.
- Narcotics and Drug Trafficking.
- Violent Crime.

The following legislative acts provide insight into the origin of actual and perceived threats that confronted the nation and the various regimes from 1990 to the beginning of the armed conflict in 2002;

- Article 35 of the Ivorian Constitution of 2000 which stipulates that a presidential candidate must be of Ivorian origin, born to parents who are Ivorian by origin, and the candidate should not have acquired citizenship other than that of Côte d'Ivoire.
- *The Rural Land Ownership Law*, Law No.98-750 of 23 December 1998. This restricted land ownership to citizens of Ivorian origins and abolished the system of automatic ownership of land by virtue of use.
- *The National Identification Law*, Decree No. 2001-103 of 15 February 2001, which among others established the National Office of Identification (ONI) to co-ordinate identification of Ivorians and foreigners.
- Law No. 90-437 of 29 May 1990 on the *Entry and Stay of Foreigners* which introduced a residence permit regime to control migratory flows.
- *The Electoral Code*, Law No 2000-513 of 1 August 2000. This restricted eligibility for elected office to Ivorians by origin, whose parents are also Ivorians by origin and a residency clause of five years continuous residence in Côte d'Ivoire. It also annulled the right of foreigners to vote.

The enactment of these laws implied that migration, ethnicity, the question of identity and competition over natural resources, notably land; were the main threats that were identified by the regimes from 1990 to 2002.



Broadly, some of the threats could be deemed as objectively assessed existential threats while others appear to be more subjective perceptions of threats to secure the various regimes. Thus, the threats are a combination of objective or actual threats and subjective or perceived threats to the nation, state and the regimes. Consequently, the following will be analyzed as the main threats that confronted Côte d'Ivoire, and formed the fundamental causes of the armed conflict in 2002. The analysis will indicate both the objective and subjective elements of the threats. It will also assess how the strategies adopted to manage perceived threats created actual threats to the nation, state and the regimes since independence:

- The governance system and the question of succession.
- Migration.
- Ethnicity.
- Religious polarization.
- Manipulation of identity.
- Other threats such as natural resource contestations, economic mismanagement and corruption.

### **3. ANALYSIS OF THE THREATS**

The following sub-sections will analyze the identification and the evolution of threats under the various regimes in the post-independence period leading to the armed conflict in 2002. In doing so, attempts will be made to establish the threat management strategies adopted by the regimes as well as the relationship between threats to the nation, state and regimes.

### 3.1 THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE AND SUCCESSION

The basis of any threat analysis of Côte d'Ivoire is a consideration of the system of governance established in the immediate post-independence period as it was fundamental to the determination and evolution of threats to the regimes and the nation. This equated security to regime and élite protection, laying the basis for security and threat assessment by subsequent regimes (Akindès, 2004; Crook, 1989; Almàs, 2007; Konaté, 2004; Bakary, 1997).

The system established by the first president was characterized by personal loyalty to him built on the culture of dialogue and peace. The system was thus based on political patronage that permeated every fabric of Ivorian society including the public service from the national to the district level, and through the state bureaucratic machinery. Patronage was dispensed in the form of monetary inducements from rents extracted from the plantation economy through *La Caisse de Stabilisation de produits Agricoles* (CAISTAB), the central marketing organisation. CAISTAB guaranteed producer prices which were about 50 percent of the global market prices. The surplus was the main resource that supported the patronage system (Crook, 1989:209; Banégas 2006:537).

The system of patronage was reinforced by co-optation of potential opponents and pressure groups, both ethnic and professional groups, into the political élite and in the form of privileges as well as strong rule that silenced critics. The governance system was therefore sustainable as long as there was continuous economic growth. The period between 1960 and the 1970s when the economy recorded high growth rates, marked the peak of the paternalistic regulation of Ivorian politics, creating some stability (Bakary, 1997:73; Akindès, 2004:7-11; United States of America: Congress, 1988). Such a system was manifestly deprived of legitimacy, mass participation and political consciousness to engender national cohesion. It was thus designed to protect a few individuals, primarily the plantation owners who invariably were the government leaders.

The system was based on three key relationships. Firstly, the alliance with France for external security and controlling internal dissent; secondly, alliance with local planters to generate the needed finance to sustain the patronage system; and thirdly the alliance with migrant workers for labour and neutralization of the *indigènes* (Banégas, 2006:537).

The relationship between the Ivorian leadership and the plantation owners originated during the independence struggle, which was essentially spearheaded by the SAA and was organised, partly to secure the interests of the local planters *vis à vis* their European counterparts. The leaders of the SAA, mostly plantation owners, metamorphosed into the ruling élite. Hence policies pursued appeared to create a conducive atmosphere for the African plantation owners. In this context, the state and the political élite became a source of accumulation and patronage, and state power became an instrument for the survival and wealth accumulation of the élite rather than the survival of the nation (Crook, 1990(a):26, 27). Thus, the interests of the élite became coterminous with that of the state.

But who constitute the Ivorian élite? As with all societies, the élite includes those who govern. In the Ivorian context, the political élite comprised the 320 men and women, mostly plantation owners, who occupied the 1,040 leadership positions in all arms of government and the PDCI from 1957 to January 1981. Although it was a multi-ethnic group, the preponderance of the Akan and the under-representation of the Kru was evident (Bakary, 1984:24-27).

Under this coalition, the state was secured as long as the élite was united, using foreign factors of production to create a resource base to enhance control and secure the regimes. Conversely, the state could be threatened by the division within the élite marked by personal and familial factions, generational and institutional conflicts (Crook,

1990(a):28). Plantation farming was therefore a source of both political consensus and cleavages.

According to Crook (1990(a):27), since the state was structured on the terms of the political élite, it lacked the mobilization of civil society associations, class or interest aggregation and therefore lacked any agreed identity or legitimacy. Security thus tended to focus on the regime which invariably influenced political choices to the detriment of the state. It was therefore difficult to disentangle the interests of the élite and holders of state power from their interests in the coffee industry. The distinction between the state, nation, one party system and public and private property, therefore became blurred.

The fallout of this system of governance threatened the basis of the existence of the state. Bakary (1997:70) notes that the roots of the crisis were in the system of governance itself as the dwindling revenue created a mismatch between available resources and requests from opponents and pressure groups. Following the liberalization of both the political space and the agricultural sector (with the dissolution of CAISTAB), the basis of regulating political tensions ended in open manifestations of dissension and violent conflict (Banégas, 2006:539). This development, coupled with the differences that emerged within the élite in the 1990s, was one of the main catalysts that eventually led to the 1999 *coup d'état* and subsequent armed conflict in 2002 (Gberie and Addo, 2004:2).

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that within the Ivorian context, the nature of the state and the question of nationhood and consequently national security, was defined in terms of the élite and regime security (Yéré, 2007: 57-58). The inability of the governance system to ensure mass mobilization creating an élitist club that derived legitimacy from rents from the plantation economy, was a source of threat to the Ivorian nation; a threat that manifested in the armed conflict.

Related to the governance system was the question of succession as a threat to security. To ensure the security of his regime, Houphouët-Boigny failed to encourage potential successors since doing so could pose a challenge to his authority. Indeed, Banégas (2006:538) argued that the appointment of Ouattara as prime minister was based on the fact that he could never become president in view of his northern background and lineage with Burkina Faso. Crook (1989:224) similarly contends that Houphouët-Boigny's extreme caution on the matter of his succession was linked to the desire to maintain élite cohesion. The security of the regime and the élite was thus superimposed on that of the nation.

When Article 10 of the Constitution was amended to pave the way for the president of the National Assembly to succeed the president of the republic, Ouattara as Prime Minister had not only entrenched himself in power, but the northern élite had assumed that a northerner would replace Houphouët-Boigny and break the Akan hegemony. The inability of a northerner to assume the presidency created divisions within the élite (in the PDCI) leading to the formation of the RDR by the northern élite. The lack of a clearly delineated succession plan was intended to secure the regime but had serious consequences for national security as divisions within the élite created the basis for the armed conflict (Banégas, 2006; Akindès, 2004:50). The political and security interests of the élite also reflected in the manipulation of the question of migration which created a real threat to national security in the long term.

### **3.2 MIGRATION**

Migration is a complex if not a fundamental issue in Ivorian security dynamics. As argued by Almås (2007:12), the political history of the Ivory Coast is intimately linked with immigration. To Houphouët-Boigny, migrants were a source of security whereas it was a source of threat to successive regimes and to the nation. Winslow (n.d:8) and Yéré (2007:56) also highlight internal and external migration as sources of threats to

both the state and regimes in Côte d'Ivoire. Crook (1990(a):28) similarly confirmed that the number of foreigners is central to an understanding of the regimes in Côte d'Ivoire.

To place it in perspective, it was estimated that 30 percent of the Ivorian population are believed to be first, second or third generation immigrants (Almås, 2007:12). In 1973, foreigners made up 25 percent of the total population reducing to 20 percent in 1985. Migrants accounted for 41 percent of the population between aged 15 and 60 years in 1980; 57 percent of the jobs in the urban sector in 1976; 42 percent of the unskilled sector; and 72.7 percent of all paid jobs in the primary sector in 1971 (Crook, 1990(a):28). Between 61 percent and 67.8 percent were internal migrants mainly from the savannah north and the east to the forest south. About 95 percent of the foreign migrants were from West Africa with Burkina Faso accounting for 56 percent and Mali 19.8 percent. Given the pervasiveness of migrants in every echelon of Ivorian society, it was not surprising that relations between the *indigènes* and foreigners have been tense since the pre-independence period, leading to sporadic xenophobic attacks, particularly by the Bété and the Kru (International Crisis Group, 2003(a); United States of America: Congress, 1988; Winslow, n.d; Banégas, 2006; Woods, 2003).

The philosophy of using foreign factors of production, mainly labour and capital, manifested in the "open-door" policy on immigration that produced a steady flow of foreign migrants into the rural areas intended to benefit the plantation owners (largely the élite) (Crook, 1990(a):27; Crook, 1990(b):651). This liberal attitude to migrant labour and capital was encouraged with incentives for migrants to own land and participate in elections while an attractive investment code encouraged migrant entrepreneurs, particularly French and Lebanese (Akindès; 2004:8). Woods (2003: 648) contends that this was a recipe for future conflict.

The issue of migrants for regime security was evident in the approaches of the regimes to migration. The security significance of migration under Houphouët-Boigny was twofold. Firstly, economic migrants from Africa provided cheap and available labour

whilst the European (French) and Lebanese migrants were the source of foreign capital to develop the plantations. The rent received from both investment and labour was the source of the patronage system that kept the regime in power.

Secondly, the high levels of expatriate manpower in the early years of independence formed part of a strategy by the political leaders to control the administration and by extension, control the possibility of mass political mobilization by workers (Crook, 1990(b):652). By allowing them to vote in elections, migrants aligned themselves to the PDCI which they perceived as their guarantor. Moreover, land rights granted in the cocoa and coffee growing areas was another strategy to neutralize sections of the population, notably the Bétés, who were perceived as an opposition to the Baoulé dominated government (Riehl, 2007:33). While these measures secured the regime, it also created opposition from areas that were threatened by the expansion of coffee and cocoa plantations mainly by the “cocoa élites” from the southeast (Crook, 1990(a):26).

In contrast, Bédié portrayed foreigners as “invaders” and a threat to security and social cohesion when confronted with economic decline and questions over legitimacy, while at the same time using migrants to perpetuate the supremacy of the Baoulés (Akindés, 2004; Crook, 1990(b); Banégas, 2006). The *Report of the Economic and Social Council*, as quoted by Moussa (2009:4), warned that “the tolerable threshold (of immigration) has been largely exceeded in our country, exposing the latter to serious risks to the socio-demographic equilibrium and to the social unity of Côte d’Ivoire...each country must in its interests, take adequate steps to avoid being invaded by foreigners... it is simply a matter of safeguarding the nation”.

Gbagbo, on his part, exploited the question of migration for political expediency, particularly to arouse the resentments of, and assert Bété control over arable lands in the west (Akindés, 2004; Banégas, 2006; Djobo, 2009; Crook, 1990(b)). The difference between Bédié and Gbagbo was that while Gbagbo led the anti-foreigner drive, Bédié

supported the anti-northerners' efforts to engender the support of the southerners (Woods, 2003:649).

While migrants were exploited for regime interests, the phenomenon increased pressure on arable land; created concerns over the status of children of migrants born and brought up in Côte d'Ivoire; heightened inter-community conflicts; placed a strain on basic social infrastructure; and led to a rise in crime, among other problems. These are factors that have enormous consequences for national security (Moussa, 2009; Djobo, 2009).

The potential consequence of the manipulation of migration for national security emerged in the 1990s as it degenerated into an identity crisis for generations of migrants and Ivorians of northern extraction. This was a defining issue for the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

### **3.3 ETHNICITY**

As discussed previously, with over 60 ethnic groups, Côte d'Ivoire is a multi-ethnic society divided into five main regional and language clusters. However, most Ivorians identify themselves with the numerous sub-groups rather than the five clusters. This made ethnicity a potential source of conflict. For instance, the Mandés in the northwest and west include the Malinké, Dan, Kwéni and Yacouba; Voltaic in the northeast includes Senoufo, Lobi and the Koulango; and the Krahn (Kru) from the southwest includes the Bété, Wê, Néyo and the Guéré. The Akans include the Baoulé, Agnis, Avikam and Abron (Akindès, 2004:12; Kohler, 2003:25). The contestations within these sub-groups are personified in the leaders of the main political groups. Hence ethnic affinity tends to correlate positively with political parties.



Admittedly, as a potential source of conflict, ethnicity was largely managed through the policy of co-optation and ethnic balancing. Thus, ethnicity was not a source of political mobilization despite the dominance of the Akans in the political élite (Bakary, 1984) prior to the 1990s. It nonetheless remained an important security threat to Côte d'Ivoire in view of the failure of the élite to build a cohesive Ivorian national identity.

The threat posed by ethnicity was derived from the system of ethnic stratification or stereotyping based on an alleged mythology that ranked the ethnic groups in order of superiority. This placed the Mandé first, followed by the Akan and the Kru, a development that changed the ethno-religious balance and threatened the perceived interests of the élites (Daddieh, 2001:14). This classification was redefined by the Akan group that dominated the Ivorian political class after independence, placing the Akans at the top followed by the Mandé and the Kru. At the level of the sub-groups the Baoulés and the Anyi were at the top followed by the *Dioula* and Senoufo with the Bétés at the bottom. The new classification was reinforced by a myth that the Baoulés are aristocratic in nature and have the pre-destined vocation to govern the state, and that the Bétés were presumed unreliable, violent, unpredictable, immoral and incompatible with presidential functions. The *Dioula* were described as foreigners, lawless and likely to establish Islam in the country. The Bétés and the *Dioula* therefore constituted a threat to the state and nation (Memel-Foté, 1999 cited in Konaté, 2004:5; Akindès, 2004:13; Bakary, 1997:52; Yéré, 2007:57).

From this perspective, the negative anthropological description mainly applies to two ethnic groups, namely the *Dioula*, from the north and therefore Muslims, as well as the Bété from the west. This became a source of separation and exclusion resulting in ethno-regional cleavages and a potential threat to the existence of the nation (Memel-Foté, 1999).

By 1990, the ethno-regional factors began to aggregate, creating three regions of political mobilization. Against the background of ethnic mythology, ethnicity became

the platform for political mobilization when the economy contracted. The Akans, who were concentrated in the centre, south and the southeast, identified with Bédié. On the other hand, the Bété origins of Gbagbo made the FPI a focus for rallying of the Bété and other marginalized groups in the west who were aggrieved by the myth of the exclusion, while the PDCI dissidents from the north, mainly Muslims, were represented by Ouattara. The basis of the ethno-regional and ethno-religious coalition that threatened to divide the country, began to take shape. In this sense, some areas became centres for mobilization of ethno-regional interests (Crook, 1997:220; Akindès, 2004:17, 19).

Allied to ethnicity was the question of regionalism. The pattern of the pre-independence economy and the plantation system produced disparity in regional development between the north and south. The southern region of Côte d'Ivoire became relatively more developed than the north as the latter was deemed a labour reservoir. In 1974, the *per capita* income of the four northern departments was significantly below the national average, while "in 1998 the northern regions and the northern ethnic groups were significantly less well-off from a socio-economic perspective than the southern groups" (Langer, 2005(b): 39). Dozon, (1977 cited in Institute for Security Studies, 2007:2) notes that within this context "ethnic significance became overloaded with the sense of unequal structuring of Ivorian society, manipulated by the colonial state". This aroused the resentment of politicians and groups from the north. The first signs of the threat posed by this resentment were an alleged plot by discontented politicians, including northerners, to overthrow the southern dominated government in 1963 (United States of America: Congress, 1988). Unequal development and unequal access to power created ethno-regional demands fuelled by identity politics.

As with migration, the myopic exploitation of ethnicity to perpetuate regimes was a threat to national cohesion and a fundamental grievance that led to the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire and the near collapse of the state.

### 3.4 RELIGIOUS POLARIZATION

Given the initial proselytizing patterns of the two religions, Christianity and Islam became identified with the south and the north respectively. This broad identification equated certain ethnic groups with the two religions. The ethno-religious argument was, on the one hand, explained by Memel-Foté (1999) namely that the *Dioula* were discriminated against to prevent them from propagating and establishing Islam. On the other hand, it was the exclusive responsibility of the Akan to protect Christianity.

The potential of religion as a threat to national security was exacerbated by migration. In view of their Sahel background, the bulk of the migrants were Muslims and the influx affected the religious balance as indicated in the 1998 population census. The results showed that Muslims accounted for 86 percent of immigrants in Côte d'Ivoire and were mainly Burkinabés, Guineans and Malians (Akindès, 2004:29). This development was described by the *Report of the Economic and Social Council* as "upsetting the religious balance and could be exploited for political ends and a threat to social peace". Against this background, Muslims, irrespective of their nationality (including Ivorians) became targets of exclusion (Côte d'Ivoire, 1998(b)).

Religion as a threat to national security or cause of the armed conflict, manifested in the definition of identity as witnessed by the implementation of *Ivoirité* by the regimes. Both the PDCI and the FPI shared the view of a symbiotic relationship between Christianity and Ivorian identity. Simone Gbagbo, wife of Laurent Gbagbo and also an influential politician, shared the view that the war was between Christians and Muslims. Within the context of their neo-Pentecostal belief, the FPI assertion was within the imagery of deliverance and salvation under the power of the spirit, to fight against the forces of evil, which in this instance were the foreigners and the French (Nordås, 2007:21; Banégas, 2006:546,547).

The posturing in the north provided the first indication of religious mobilization. The RDR, composed mainly of PDCI dissidents from the Muslim north, also lent support to religious aggregation and mobilization that separated the north from the south (Akindès, 2004:19). Considering their geographical distribution, the mobilization of religious sentiments was the basis of the north/south division in the country, creating the perception of a religious war. This posture created a sharp cleavage between the followers of the FPI and PDCI, respectively the southern Christians and the RDR deemed as Muslims from the north.

The pronouncements of the leaders of the two religions (Supreme Council of Imams in Côte d'Ivoire and the Bishops Conference) supported the positions of the respective political leaders making religion a political issue (Konaté, 2004).

Religious mobilization provided the basis for broad coalitions effectively dividing the country into two parts. It was also one of the factors that drew foreign actors into the conflict. These mutual suspicions between Christians and Muslims reinforced each other, creating a security dilemma (Huntington, 1996:266; Kirwin, 2006).

Thus, much as the *Bété* and the *Dioula* were marginalized, discriminated against and excluded from political participation, they could not build a coalition in view of their strong leanings towards Christianity and Islam respectively, forming opposing camps with the south and north, representing Christianity and Islam respectively.

### **3.5 MANIPULATION OF IDENTITY**

The combination of the governance system, migration, ethnicity, regionalism and religion, resulted in an identity crisis during the 1990s. Confronted with socio-economic insecurity, and the desire to maintain the status of the élite irrespective of the changing

socio-political environment, successive regimes after Houphouët-Boigny similarly turned to migrants to enhance their legitimacy and protect their regimes.

In contrast, however, in the 1990s migrants were perceived by the regimes as a threat to the survival of both the nation and the regimes. This threat was embodied in the concept of *Ivoirité*, an ideology that distinguished between *autochtone* (national) and *allogène* (foreigner) (Banégas, 2006:536,537).

An appreciation of the threat to national security posed by the identity question requires an understanding of the main tenets of the concept of *Ivoirité* as espoused by the different regimes. Banégas (2006:540) defines *Ivoirité* as an “instrument of exclusion adaptable for a range of techniques of stigmatization and discrimination”. Riehl (2007:34) defines the concept as a nationalist dogma based on a condition of ‘pure’ Ivorian ancestry in order to enjoy political rights.

The ethno-sociologist, Bouah, (cited in Akindès, 2004:27) defines the socio-cultural foundations of *Ivoirité* as a “set of socio-historical, geographical and linguistic data which enables us to say that an individual is a citizen of Côte d’Ivoire or an Ivorian. The person who asserts his ‘Ivoirité’ is supposed to have Côte d’Ivoire as his country, be born of Ivorian parents belonging to one of the ethnic groups native to Côte d’Ivoire”.

The concept manifested at the tribal, religious and regional levels and spheres. Tribal *Ivoirité* sought to safeguard the position of the Akans by emphasizing Akan supremacy based on the anthropological constructs which also viewed Christianity as an element of Ivorian identity. The regional manifestation identified an Ivorian with the south, centre and west (or the broader south) to the exclusion of those from the north or the *Dioulas* (Malinké, Senoufo) who are mainly Muslims and for historical reasons ethnically affiliated with Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea. In other forms, *allogènes* applied to Ivorians of northern extraction who migrated to the south and the west as agricultural

labourers and Baoulé planters who migrated from the east and established farms in the west (Akindès, 2004:27-29; Banégas, 2006:538). Thus, Ivorian identity became a combination of migrant status, ethnicity, religion and language; a concept that implicitly or explicitly included Ivorian nationals who settled in other parts of the country, thereby alienating a large number of Ivorians by virtue of their ethno-religious affinity, with the propensity of dividing the country into two.

*Ivoirité* was implemented through constitutional amendments on nationality and eligibility clauses as outlined in Article 35 of the Constitution, the *Rural Land Code* and the *Electoral Code*, amongst others (Akindès, 2004:30; Crook, 1997:228).

The consequence of this construct was the creation of two types of Ivorians namely; Ivorian *de souche* (pure blooded Ivorian) or Ivorians whose parents were born in Côte d'Ivoire and those who were born to parents without Ivorian citizenship. Henceforth, citizens were defined in terms of *autochtonie* or *autochthony* and *allogènes* (Kohler, 2003; Konaté, 2004:8). It also created three levels of non-Ivorian identities, namely French, immigrants from West Africa, and Ivorians whose geographical origins, ancestry, religion and family name made them doubtful nationals. This widened the geopolitical and regional blocs into north and south, or northerners versus southerners forming the basis of the seemingly religious war (Banégas, 2006:535; International Crisis Group, 2003(a):6).

It is important to note that the élite represented by Bédié, Guéi, Gbagbo and Ouattara exploited the various versions of *Ivoirité* as a basis for legitimacy to secure their regimes (Almås, 2007:16).

Ethno-nationalism was first mooted by the FPI (Gbagbo) in his attempt to deprive 'foreigners' or non-citizens of the right to vote in the 1990 elections, and by projecting himself as defending the interest of Ivorians against one-party regimes, the élite, immigrants and the French monopolists (Almås, 2007:16). While the exclusion of

foreigners from elections conforms to global practices, the definition of a ‘foreigner’ in the Ivorian sense was contentious and in many ways used to legitimize the various regimes. Some native Ivorians, mainly northerners, were thus denied the franchise in this sense. Bédié legitimized the concept to secure his regime and to win votes while Guei, who on assumption of office described *Ivoirité* as a threat to national unity, later reverted to the foreigner as a threat in his bid to garner support for his presidential ambitions (Akindès, 2004; Daddiéh, 2001).

Finally the RDR similarly appealed to ethno-religion through the mobilization of the northerners, mainly Muslims, through the *Charte Grand Nord* (Charter of the Grand North). This document, issued in 1991, outlined the grievances of the north including under representation in key government positions. It also denounced the domination by the Baoulé and pointed towards the possibility of a civil war and secession of the north. The RDR thus became a rallying point for anyone threatened by *Ivoirité* (Almås, 2007:14; Yéré, 2007:55; Banégas, 2006:538; Crook, 1997:229).

In a country where the population is more than 40 percent immigrant, the threat to national security posed by the above issue can hardly be over-estimated (Gberie and Addo, 2004:2). It was therefore not surprising that the mutiny and the subsequent armed groups that emerged in 1999 and 2002, identified the elimination of exclusionary politics as their main objective (Almås, 2007:15; Akindès, 2004:30).

As evident from the preceding discussions, identity politics and the definition of an Ivorian were measures to ensure the security of the regimes. The result was the unintended consequence of creating a threat to national security and cohesion, a threat that became the “heart of the armed conflict” in 2002 (Akindès, 2004:33).

At the national level, a definition of citizenship was central in the determination of candidates for elections, while at the local level it created conflict over the ownership of land (Woods, 2003:648).

### 3.6 OTHER THREATS

Natural resource contestation, economic mismanagement, unemployment and corruption were other threats that faced Côte d'Ivoire.

Migration, both internal and external to the cocoa growing areas in the country, and the liberal land policy, were part of the sources of tensions long before the war erupted in 2002. On the one hand, there was tension between *indigènes*, notably the Baoulés, Malinké and *Dioula* who migrated to the west, and foreigners from Mali and Burkina Faso who acquired large tracts of land in the rich cocoa and coffee belt. Faced with low commodity prices and scarcity of land, Baoulé planters saw their foreign counterparts as competitors, hence a threat to their wealth. On the other hand, there were conflicts between the owners of the land, the Kru, and the migrant community leading to land disputes that divided rural areas. A rebellion by the Bété in the 1970s over the control of land was forcefully crushed (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):5; Dozon, 1985:345; Woods, 2003:645-650).

The threat posed by the natural resource conflict was exacerbated as conflicts over control and access to land, especially in the cocoa belt, became acute. The notion that the land belongs to those who work on it, was a strong incentive for acquisition of land by migrant plantation owners as well as migrant labourers who were granted land in return for their labour (Woods, 2003:646).

As land became scarce and the value of the plantation diminished, ownership of land became a source of conflict as *indigènes* attempted to reclaim it from the 'outsiders' raising the question of citizenship as the 'outsiders' included Ivorians. Moreover, the state tended to side with internal migrants in conflict situations, as the majority of them were Baoulés who dominated the government and were also the planters (Woods, 2003:645-650). The 1998 *Rural Land Code* sought to address this trend. However its implementation led to dispossession of land owned by 'foreigners', either by voluntary



sale or by farm occupations by Ivorians (Konaté, 2004:10). These grievances formed the basis of the armed conflict in 2002.

As indicated in chapter three, economic mismanagement and the subsequent collapse of commodity prices in the 1990s created shocks that reversed the favourable economic trends in Côte d'Ivoire. The combined effects of the SAP, recession and growing debt resulted in a deterioration of the standard of living, increased unemployment and increased poverty, creating social tensions that became a source of threat to the nation, the state and regimes (Akindès, 2004; Almås, 2007; Bakary, 1997:80).

These tensions were fuelled by massive corruption by politicians and state officials. For instance, in 1997 state officials, including government ministers, embezzled about 20 billion CFA Francs (27.5 million euros) in European Union aid. This led to the suspension of over US\$700 million worth of combined credits from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Kohler, 2003: 19; Centre for Democracy Development, 1999; Human Rights Watch, 2001). This decreased the capacity of the state to deliver, leading to increased poverty, inequality and social unrest (International Crisis Group, 2003(a)). For a system that owed its existence solely to commodity prices, economic problems sounded its death knell.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

It is difficult to understand the threats faced by Côte d'Ivoire and the causes of the armed conflict without an understanding of the basis and identification of threats by the various regimes. While political, economic, ethnic and religious arguments have been advanced, the conflict was more about the preoccupation of the élite, symbolized by the various regimes, to secure their position and wealth. In this instance, regime security and the desire to acquire legitimacy took pre-eminence over a conscious attempt to establish and maintain national security and national cohesion as the foregoing reveals.

Consequently, the threats identified by the regimes were a combination of threats to the nation, the state, ethnic groups that were custodians of the land, and to the regimes. While some of the threats could be real threats to the nation, they owe their origins to a perception of security that was intended to secure the interests of the regimes. This obviously subjective perception of security created objective threats with wider ramifications for national security.

The system crumbled under increasing pressure and the widening of the demand-bearing groups during a period of economic contraction. This weakened the basis of coalition formation and raised questions over the legitimacy of the politics of allocation (Bakary, 1997:79). Under the circumstances, strategies for regime security led to decreased state capacity and a lack of national integration and social cohesion, bringing into question the legitimacy of the regimes.

According to Riehl (2007:43), the main function of the state and source of legitimacy lies in its capacity to ensure the welfare and security of its citizens. The negation of this fundamental responsibility of the state to protect all its citizens was the starting point of the civil war in Côte d'Ivoire. The preoccupation with regime security reflected by the system of governance, generated or intensified the other threats such as migration, ethnicity and identity polarization, which led to high levels of insecurity and to the violent conflict in 2002, and the consequent involvement of regional actors in the conflict. It must be emphasised however, that some of these threats were relatively actual existential threats, while others were based on perceptions and therefore loaded with subjectivity and manipulated by the regimes.

The identification, operation and management of these threats blurred the distinction between regime, state and national security. It also revealed that the obsession with regime security could create threats to national security and could elicit the participation of external actors, as the conflict in 2002 suggests.

The next chapter discusses the regional and international dimensions of the Ivorian conflict in 2002. It delineates the factors that intermesh domestic threats and vulnerabilities into regional insecurity.

## CHAPTER 5

# REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE IVORIAN CONFLICT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

As indicated in the preceding chapters, the Ivorian conflict was primarily an internal conflict that began in September 2002 as a protest by eight hundred soldiers against their planned demobilisation. The protest subsequently developed into a mutiny with the rebel soldiers consolidating their hold in the northern part of the country. However, as it progressed, external actors including state and non-state actors with diverse interests and objectives, were drawn into the conflict (Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007; International Crisis Group, 2003(a); International Crisis Group, 2003(b), United Nations Security Council, 2003(a)).

The spillover of the conflict beyond Côte d'Ivoire validates Acharya's (1998: 203) assertion that domestic struggles in West African states have an enormous impact on neighbouring states, with insurgents operating from foreign bases; leaders supporting rebels in the states of their rivals; while wars create a general flow of refugees, arms, mercenaries, plundering of national resources, and movement of child soldiers across borders, leading to the spread of conflict and conflagration across the sub-region. Based on these considerations, domestic armed conflicts in West African states tend to be influenced by neighbouring states in diverse ways. In some instances, neighbouring states could be compelled to either reluctantly or otherwise, engage in such conflicts to mitigate the security consequences.

While this view explains, to an extent, the causes of the widening of conflicts across borders, that of Côte d'Ivoire could be attributed to structural or systemic factors that were similarly exploited by the ruling élite which created actual security threats for the region. These interconnected factors included, amongst others, the socio-cultural relations among the inhabitants of the states bordering Côte d'Ivoire; the nature of political alliances in the sub-region (the MRU, Burkina Faso, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire); the conflict existing within and between the countries in the Mano River Union (MRU) before the beginning of the Ivorian crisis and economic factors including the interests of states and mercenarism. As noted by the UN Security Council, (UNSEC) a number of interrelated cross-border problems underlie the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire and the MRU countries (United Nations Security Council, 2004:5). The AU similarly affirmed the regional dimension of the Ivorian armed conflict (Africa Union, 2004:10). There is therefore an inextricable linkage between the domestic factors and the external dynamics of the conflict (Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007:83).

This chapter focuses on the internal and regional dynamics and factors that transformed the internal armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire into a source of interstate and regional insecurity with international ramifications. In particular, this chapter discusses the socio-cultural factors or the ethno-religious and linguistic relations between Côte d'Ivoire and its neighbours and how these impacted on the formation of armed groups; the nature of the political alliances in the sub-region; and how it created the basis for participation of both state and non-state actors in the Ivorian conflict. The personal ambitions and posturing of some of the political leaders in the sub-region in the period prior to the conflict, as well as the existing conflict in the sub-region and the interests of other international actors, will also be analyzed.

## **2. SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS BETWEEN CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND NEIGHBOURING STATES**

The socio-cultural factors relate to the ethno-religious and linguistic configuration between West African states. This also formed the basis of political alliances and the formation of rebel groups that operated across borders. States then seem to have direct interests in the domestic developments of their neighbours. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, this also determined the aggregation of the interests of the various groups that participated in the conflict, following the politics of identification and land ownership introduced in Côte d'Ivoire.

Banégas and Marshall-Fratani (2007:91) argue in this regard that irrespective of other explanations offered, the Ivorian conflict is transnational in its very nature as the politics of identification involved various nation-states, from which one-third of the Ivorian population who were considered strangers, originate. Thus, the internal political conditions became a catalyst for extension of the conflict beyond the borders of Côte d'Ivoire. This development is partly due to the nature of the post-independence state and the migration policies pursued by the Ivorian regimes in the post-independence period, which created conditions for the formation of armed groups that resembled irredentists.

### **2.1 THE NATURE OF THE POST-INDEPENDENCE STATE**

As argued in the previous chapters, the arbitrarily drawn borders of African states divided nations and ethnic groups. Moreover, since political mobilization and aggregation tended to be influenced by ethnicity, ethnic groups tend to support or influence political groups of their kinsmen or ethnic 'cousins' across borders. Under such conditions, the security of an ethnic group which is equated to political power, assumes primacy over that of the state. Similarly, socio-economic insecurity involving ethnic

affinities transcends state borders. These interconnections have the propensity to create interstate tensions and form a strong basis for the participation of external actors in domestic conflicts. Côte d'Ivoire is no exception (Buzan, 1991; Ayoob, 1995; Job, 1992:17; Kohler, 2003:24).

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the ethnic groups have a significant if not a larger number of their ethnic kins or 'cousins' in the neighbouring countries than within Côte d'Ivoire itself (Culture of Côte d'Ivoire, n.d:4).

For instance, the northern Mandé that make up 17 percent of the Ivorian population are also found in parts of Guinea and Mali (Nordås, 2007:7). The Voltaic group, which also constitute 17 percent of the population, live in parts of Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana. The southern Mandé and the Kru forming 10 percent and 11 percent of the population respectively are also found in Liberia. The Akan group constituting 42 percent of the population also have strong ethnic affinities in Ghana (Kohler, 2003:24-25).

For the purposes of this study, however, the focus is on the ethnic relations between Côte d'Ivoire and its western and northern neighbours, namely, Liberia, Burkina Faso and Guinea, which constituted the frontlines at the start of the conflict.

To place it in perspective, the Mandés in Côte d'Ivoire include the Yacouba group in the west. The Gio, across the border, constitute their ethnic counterparts in Liberia. The Bété and Guéré (or Wê) that constitute the Kru sub-group in Côte d'Ivoire, have the Krahn as their ethnic kinsmen in Liberia, while the Sénoufo and Malinké are found in southern Mali, the extreme west of Burkina Faso and north-western Ghana. There are therefore strong socio-cultural ties with neighbouring countries forming a catalyst for the creation of a security dilemma in view of the strong positive correlation between ethnicity and politics in the sub-region. This is compounded by the porous, unsecured and sometimes virtually non-existent borders (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):2; Culture of Côte d'Ivoire, n.d:4).

The intricate nature and complexities in the ethnic composition of Côte d'Ivoire and the correlation with regional political alliances have to be appreciated to understand the regional dimensions of the Ivorian conflict. On the one hand, Gbagbo and the FPI drew support from Gbagbo's ethnic group, the Bété, as well as the larger Kru group including the Guéré. On the other hand, their ethnic 'cousins', the Krahn in Liberia, lent support to Master Sergeant Doe, the ex-President of Liberia who was killed by Charles Taylor's rebel forces in 1989. Doe, who was a Krahn from eastern Liberia, was rumoured to be a Kru from Côte d'Ivoire. His death therefore became a source of antagonism between the Krahn in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, and Charles Taylor, who subsequently assumed the presidency of Liberia (Kohler, 2003:26; United Nations Security Council, 2003(b):16). The Kru and Krahn were therefore ready to offer support to any government or group opposed to Taylor.

However, Guei who overthrew Bédié belonged to the Yacouba ethnic group while ex-President Taylor is a Gio which made the two natural allies (Kohler, 2003: 26, 41). The ethnic factor was the basis of an alliance that began under Houphouët-Boigny and partly explained the nature of support offered to Taylor's rebel forces by FANCI under Guei while he was the chief of the Ivorian Army.

In the case of Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea, besides ethnic affinities, a large number of immigrants in Côte d'Ivoire originated from these countries while a significant number of Ivorian nationals were descendants of Burkinabé, Malian and Guinean migrants who settled in Côte d'Ivoire. This also explains the reason for Burkinabé support and identification with the RDR led by Alassane Ouattara, who is also considered to be of Burkinabé origins (Toungara, 2001:65; International Crisis Group, 2003(a):19).



## 2.2 IMPACT OF ETHNICITY ON THE FORMATION OF ARMED GROUPS

As with the domestic causes of the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002, such as religious polarization and identity politics, ethnicity was reinforced by the history of migration. Since immigrants constitute 30 percent of the population, a large number of Ivorians identify with ethnic groups that live wholly or partly in surrounding countries. (Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007:91; Toungara, 2001:65). This raised the stakes for the participation of ethnically related but non-Ivorian nationals, to support their kinsmen in the event of an imminent threat. In this context, state and non-state actors in Liberia, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea, therefore had interests in the political developments in Côte d'Ivoire. (Kohler, 2003:26).

After the first Liberian civil war which lasted from 1989 to 1996, members of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) rebel group that emerged in 2000 (composed of Krahn and Mandingos) as an opposition group to Taylor, retreated to the Mandingo and Krahn areas of Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire respectively. In addition, about 60,000 Liberian refugees, mainly Krahn, retreated into western Côte d'Ivoire notably the Bété areas and assimilated with their kinsmen, the Kru of Côte d'Ivoire, particularly the Guéré group. Buoyed by their numbers, the Krahn formed the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy-Movement for Democracy in Liberia (LURD-MODEL) as a rival to the Mandingo dominated LURD, with the assistance of Gbagbo. Western Côte d'Ivoire became host to Liberian Krahn from Grand Gedeh that formed the nucleus of the anti-Taylor groups. Gbagbo aimed at using these fighters to win the western part of Côte d'Ivoire and in turn support them with FANCI (United Nations Security Council, 2001:30; United Nations Security Council, 2003(b):17; Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007:91; International Crisis Group, 2003(a):2).

Ethnic lineage appears to have been an important consideration in what appeared to be symbiotic strategic relations. At the beginning of the Ivorian conflict, Krahn political

figures allied to Doe, supported Gbagbo by recruiting anti-Taylor forces, mostly Krahn fighters who were Doe loyalists, to protect the west of Côte d'Ivoire against the MPCl. Gbagbo also offered training, recruitment and arms for the LURD-MODEL through FANCI and in some instances the LURD-MODEL received arms shipments through the Port of Abidjan. Both FANCI and the Port were headed, at the time, by officials from the Guéré ethnic group. Guéré businessmen and FPI loyalists also recruited for, and armed and financed, the LURD-MODEL forces to fight alongside FANCI in return for support to oust Taylor (International Crisis Group, 2003(b):22).

Taylor similarly created the MPIGO and MJP to secure the eastern front. Although these groups were organized by Taylor's senior commanders and Sierra Leonean warlords, the ethnic composition of the group was largely Yacouba and Gio from Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia respectively. Thus, while Gbagbo increased the alliance with the LURD-MODEL, Taylor did the same for the MPIGO and MJP (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):23; International Crisis Group, 2003(b):19). This situation created a security dilemma in the sense that attempts by both Taylor and Gbagbo to secure their respective states on the basis of ethnicity, created insecurity for the other.

The northern border reflected a similar pattern. The relationship between the *Dioula* who inhabit both northern Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, and their sympathies with the RDR, have been set out in previous chapters. While President Compaore of Burkina Faso, trained and financed the MPCl, wealthy *Dioula* businessmen with political and financial networks close to the Burkinabé presidency, also lent support to the northern rebels (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):12).

As with the domestic causes of the conflict, ethnicity played an important role in the regionalization of the Ivorian conflict through the participation of both state and non-state actors. To a large extent, it also constituted the basis of political alliances in the sub-region and served as a source for the escalation of the conflict as outlined in the following section.

### **3. POLITICAL FACTORS**

The participation of regional and international actors was based on an interplay of religion, culture, security and economic interests, as well as political alliances among the leaders in the sub-region, notably those of Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Liberia and the Ivory Coast. As noted by the International Crisis Group, (2003(a):12), “state powers with political interests and regional alliances and networks” were responsible for the Ivorian conflict and not the action of wandering bands or mercenaries. The political factors included regional alliances and personal ambitions of the leaders in the sub-region.

#### **3.1 REGIONAL ALLIANCES**

It has been argued that other countries engaged in the Ivorian conflict as a form of vengeance in view of the long-standing culture of interference in other conflicts in the region by Houphouët-Boigny (Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007:91). Such arguments were founded on the intricate nature of alliances that existed among the leaders of the various states in the region in the years prior to the Ivorian armed conflict. Most of the alliances were intended to sustain the regimes in power. For the purposes of this study, the analysis will focus primarily on the alliances between the leadership of Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia and Burkina Faso, and how this impacted on the Ivorian armed conflict.

##### **3.1.1 LIBERIA**

The reports of the UN Security Council Panel of Experts on Liberia in 2003 (United Nations Security Council, 2003(a); 2003(b)) respectively confirmed the involvement of Liberians in the Ivorian armed conflict. The involvement of Liberia stemmed from the diplomatic and political backing that Houphouët-Boigny offered Taylor and his rebel

forces, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), to launch the rebellion against the then President Doe (Adebajo, 2002:48; International Crisis Group, 2003(b):15).

Houphouët-Boigny's support for Taylor was based on his longstanding rivalry with Doe. This rivalry was heightened after the political purge that followed the *coup d'état* by Doe during which the then President of Liberia, William Tolbert, an ally and friend of Houphouët-Boigny, was assassinated. His son, Adolphus Tolbert, who was married to the adopted daughter of Houphouët-Boigny, was also killed in spite of pleas for clemency from Houphouët-Boigny (Adebajo, 2002:48; International Crisis Group, 2003(b):15). This was the basis of the vendetta between Houphouët-Boigny and Doe.

Besides the personal animosity, Houphouët-Boigny extended patronage to Taylor in a bid to divert domestic tensions and a possible internal crisis that was brewing in Côte d'Ivoire in the 1980s, as a result of the collapse of commodity prices and increasing xenophobia (Aning, 1997:14). Another factor that influenced Houphouët-Boigny's support for Taylor was the fear that Liberia under an *indigène* or a native (Doe) might pursue efforts to reclaim Liberian territory that was lost to Côte d'Ivoire (under the French) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Clapham, 1994:47-49).

Houphouët-Boigny subsequently allowed Taylor to launch the rebellion from Côte d'Ivoire on 24 December 1989. Côte d'Ivoire offered military assistance through FANCI under Guei, then Chief of Staff of FANCI. Guei's involvement could be coincidental, but quite revealing. Guei, a Yacouba from Gouessesso in western Côte d'Ivoire, easily bonded with Taylor and the leadership of the NPFL who were all Gios from Liberia. Indeed the Gios constituted the bulk of Taylor's army as were his commanders such as Benjamin Yeatin and Roland Duo. The ethno-political alliance between the Gios and the Yacouba's began to emerge. The assumption of power by Guei following the *coup d'état* in Côte d'Ivoire in 1998, marked the climax of this alliance which was intended to reinforce the rule of Guei and Taylor (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):19; International Crisis Group, 2003(b):15).

It is therefore not surprising that the MPIGO and MJP, the Ivorian rebel groups that emerged from the west ostensibly to avenge the death of Guei, were created by Taylor (International Crisis Group, 2003(b):17; Kohler, 2003:27). Thus Taylor's involvement in the Ivorian conflict was due, in part, to vengeance for the death of a "kinsman". At the same time, the rebel groups constituted a platform for Taylor to assume political leadership of both the Gio and Yacouba ethnic groups in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire respectively. This obviously escalated the Ivorian conflict.

### 3.1.2 BURKINA FASO

The involvement of Burkina Faso in the conflict was similarly based on a number of strategic interests. Firstly, the politics of identification of the Ivorian leadership presented security challenges for Burkina Faso since the policy affected a large number of Burkinabés. Compaore's involvement, whether directly or indirectly, was firstly portrayed as necessary to protect the interest of Burkinabés and raised his stature as a nationalist. The Ivorian conflict thus presented an opportunity for the security of the regime in Burkina Faso by establishing the nationalist credentials of Compaore, which was intended to undermine his domestic opponents (International Crisis Group, 2003 (a):13).

Secondly, Compaore's desire to oust Gbagbo, a previous ally, was due to a fallout between them. From 1989 to 1999, Compaore directly financed Gbagbo in his bid to wrest power from Houphouët-Boigny. As a *quid pro quo*, Compaore expected Gbagbo to enact or pursue policies that would enhance the cause of Burkina Faso or Burkinabés. However, the continued implementation of *Ivoirité* under Gbagbo undermined their friendship and obviously the interests of Burkina Faso (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):13). A combination of personal interests and regime security was therefore a determinant for Compaore's involvement in the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

As with ex-President Taylor, Compaore assisted with the creation of the MPCCI and directly supported the group as a military movement to oust Gbagbo. The government of Burkina Faso was involved with the planning, organization, arming and financing of the MPCCI. Burkina Faso also constituted a recruitment area in view of ethnic affinities with the *Dioula* in northern Côte d'Ivoire. Significant numbers of young civilians were recruited from Bobo Dioulasso (southern Burkina Faso) and Mali as well as mercenaries from the conflicts in the region into the ranks of the MPCCI (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):8-13; Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007:91, 92).

Support for the MPCCI by Burkina Faso, is also explained by the fact that the original leader of the group, Sergeant-Chief Ibrahim Coulibaly who was a bodyguard of Ouattara (when he was the Prime Minister) was also one of the leaders of the *coup d'état* that ousted Bédié. Coulibaly, together with other Ivorian soldiers who were exiled in Burkina Faso, were hosted by the government of Burkina Faso. They trained openly and their plan to launch a rebellion was an open secret (Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007:93).

Other countries supported the belligerents on the principle that "the enemy of my enemy is my ally". Angola supported the Ivorian government to contain Burkina Faso as the latter allegedly supplied weapons to the then Angola rebel movement, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) (Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007:91; Kirwin, 2006:49).

Thus the cross-border interests of countries such as Liberia, Burkina Faso and Mali who have significant nationals in the Diaspora in Côte d'Ivoire (Kirwin, 2006:50), formed an important reason for their involvement in the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

### 3.1.3 GUINEA

Guinean interests in Côte d'Ivoire stemmed from the fact that Guinea hosted LURD which emerged in 2000 to challenge Taylor. LURD, composed of Mandingos and Krahns, was initially based in Guinea with the direct support of the Guinean government which supplied ammunition, communication facilities and operational bases, and assisted in the recruitment of fighters. Guinean support was based on the assumption that LURD provided a cheap alternative for the security of the Guinean border with Liberia, and the protection of the regime in Guinea against armed Guinean dissidents operating from Liberia with Taylor's support (International Crisis Group, 2003(b):9-13). It is however instructive to note that the leadership of LURD was mainly Mandingo who also share ethnic ties with Guinea. The breakaway Krahn group, LURD-MODEL, which was supported by Gbagbo, was seen as a competitor, hence the need to neutralise the group (Kohler, 2003:26-30).

The nature of the alliances and ethnic backgrounds influenced the composition of the rebel groups. Thus, the MPCCI included Burkinabés and Malians while the groups that emerged from the west, the MPIGO and the MJP, included Sierra Leonean and Liberian mercenaries. Indeed FANCI under Gbagbo also included about 2,000 Liberians, 95 percent of whom were Krahns with ties to LURD-MODEL (Kohler, 2003:34; Sawyer, 2004:450). The configuration of the armed groups created the semblance of a multinational force, eliminating national boundaries.

## 3.2 PERSONAL AMBITIONS

Besides the political alliances, personal ambitions of some of the leaders in the region such as Taylor, were a source of motivation for their involvement in the Ivorian conflict. In the case of ex-President Taylor, the grand design to establish a sphere of political

control in the West African sub-region beyond the MRU, was one of the reasons for his involvement in the Ivorian conflict (Sawyer, 2004).

Taylor's ambition was not only the establishment of a "Greater Liberia" to include the Kru areas of Côte d'Ivoire, but also to exercise his political leadership and control over the natural resources in the MRU, thereby assuming the leadership of one of the three blocs of West Africa; the other two being Nigeria and the francophone bloc (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):20; Sawyer, 2004:445).

This ambition was tied to a "Pan-African revolutionary plan" developed under the tutelage of Libya. This was a grand strategy that involved dissidents from Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Liberia who were trained and financed by Libya, ostensibly to act as a check on Western imperialism, and to install the Libyan brand of governance in the sub-region. Côte d'Ivoire under Houphouët-Boigny was spared as it provided a safe haven and tacit support for the rebel groups such as Taylor's NPFL. However, in the post-Houphouët-Boigny era and especially following the death of Guei, Liberia under Taylor and Burkina Faso under Compaore, acting as main agents of Libya, had to install *protégés* and puppets to complete the plan (International Crisis Group, 2003(b):26). Taylor therefore took advantage of the internal problems in Côte d'Ivoire, which presented an opportunity to execute his plans to destabilize the region for his political and economic benefit (Kohler, 2003:34; Sawyer, 2004:445, 446). Since ethnicity was the conduit for the participation of non-Ivorians, the Ivorian conflict created a form of irredentism on the part of the regional actors.

Personal ambitions and the perceptions of irredentism were reinforced by the existing conflicts in the MRU which owed their origins to the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone and to a limited extent, the political instability in Guinea, as discussed in the next section.



#### 4. EXISTING CONFLICTS IN THE REGION

Ethnicity and political alliances created a “system of conflicts” in the MRU since the 1980s involving Liberian, Sierra Leone and Guinea of which Côte d’Ivoire became an integral part irrespective of the domestic origins of the Ivorian conflict. The conflict was based on a complex network of ethnic allegiances, personal friendships and vengeance and alliances involving heads of state, army officers, politico-financial networks and entrepreneurs whose interests went beyond economic and financial considerations (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):1; Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007:91). The UN Security Council Panel of Experts on Liberia similarly concluded that the Ivorian armed conflict became part of the conflicts in the MRU (United Nations Security Council, 2003(a):10).

The “system of conflicts” was sustained by the porous borders of the states in the region. This was the case in western Côte d’Ivoire. While the country was not part of the MRU, the virtually non-existent border between Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia aided the spillover of the Liberian civil war into Ivorian territory as Liberian rebels used Ivorian territory as a base for military-related activities inside Liberia (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):2; Galy, 2003:41-56). The exploitation of ethnic affinities as well as the use of elements in the military by both Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire, ultimately led to the extension of the “system of conflict” in the Mano basin area to include Côte d’Ivoire (Sawyer, 2004:446).

As explained, this created a security dilemma between Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia, as strategies designed to increase the security of one state were either perceived as a threat, or in some cases became a source of actual threats to the other. For instance, the ethnic composition of the MPIGO, MJP and LURD-MODEL turned the Ivorian conflict into a Gio/Yacouba coalition against a Guéré-Krahn alliance. The Ivorian conflict thus

effectively became inter-ethnic conflict across national borders (International Crisis Group, 2003(a); 22).

The prevailing “system of conflict” involving countries in the MRU and the ambitions of Taylor provided strong incentives for the participation of other states in the Ivorian conflict even if the intention was to secure their borders. This notwithstanding, the economic interests of the neighbours of Côte d’Ivoire, notably Burkina Faso and Liberia, seem to have influenced their involvement in the Ivorian conflict to a large extent.

## 5. ECONOMIC INTERESTS

The complex economic relationship between Côte d’Ivoire and neighbouring countries was also a factor in the involvement of both Burkina Faso and Liberia in the Ivorian conflict. The history of this relationship has been explained in previous chapters. In the case of Burkina Faso, besides Ivorians of Burkinabé descent, the number of Burkinabé migrants living in Côte d’Ivoire was of strategic economic significance to Burkina Faso. Burkinabé economic interests in Côte d’Ivoire cannot therefore be understated. Consequently, *Ivoirité* became a source of security concern to Burkina Faso at the levels of state, regime and human security.

With over two million Burkinabés living in Côte d’Ivoire, the country constituted an important economic lifeline to Burkina Faso in terms of remittances. The loss of this source of revenue and the possibility of expropriation of their land acquired over the years, as well as the reversal of the flow of migration, were factors that Burkina Faso could not ignore (Kohler, 2003:28, 29; International Crisis Group, 2003(a):14).

Besides, the marginalization of Burkinabé immigrants in Côte d’Ivoire and the possibility of their expulsion as reflected in the question of identity, was a source of irritation for Burkina Faso, considering the security implications and the humanitarian consequences

including the need to integrate returnees (International Crisis Group, 2003(a):14). Hence the attempts by the Burkinabé leadership to influence developments in Côte d'Ivoire, either directly or through Liberia as a proxy.

In the case of Liberia, the motivating economic factor was the control of the Ivorian Port of San Pedro which became a strategic port for Liberia as well as for the Ivorian government and the rebels. Taylor needed access to the port to export timber, rubber and iron ore from territories controlled by his forces in eastern Liberia. The control of the port would also give Taylor control over the export of Ivorian cocoa, the main revenue earner for Côte d'Ivoire. This was intended to increase revenue for Taylor and stifle the Ivorian economy. But more importantly, San Pedro was also vital for arms shipments to Liberia, hence its strategic importance and the need to capture it (Ellis, 2001:90).

As the Ivorian armed conflict progressed, the MPCJ attempted to seize San Pedro thereby reducing the revenue base of both Gbagbo and Taylor. Moreover, the seizure of the port by the MPCJ would have indirectly conferred control to Burkina Faso. Taylor's involvement in the conflict was partly to secure this vital route. Similarly, the MFIGO and MJP also served as a buffer for Taylor's commercial and military strategic interests in Côte d'Ivoire (International Crisis Group, 2003(b):20). It was also established that the MJP included Ibrahim Bah, a diamond dealer and a former commander of the Sierra Leonean rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). In this context, the conflict was interpreted as an economic adventure based on greed and "illicit economic gain" (International Crisis Group, 2004:2-3; Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007:91).

Mercenarism was another important economic factor that accounted for the spread of the Ivorian conflict beyond Côte d'Ivoire. The various wars in the sub-region created a pool of mercenaries and child soldiers whose only vocation was fighting. The Ivorian conflict provided yet another opportunity for Liberian, Sierra Leonean and Burkinabé mercenaries who were given ten-year contracts by the leadership of the Ivorian rebels

to fight in Côte d'Ivoire and beyond (International Crisis Group, 2003(b):1). The UN Panel of Experts on Liberia found that Sierra Leoneans acted as mercenaries and fought alongside Liberian government forces, LURD, the MJP and the MPIGO (United Nations Security Council, 2003(b):10,15). Kirwin (2006:50) notes in this regard that the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia impacted on Côte d'Ivoire as it created a "sub-culture of mercenaries". Some of the rebels in the former two countries, who were not integrated into society, subsequently joined the Ivorian rebellion as a form of employment.

While the movement of the mercenaries was also facilitated by the porous borders, it is emphasised that even secured borders will be irrelevant when mercenaries act at the behest of ruling regimes. Both Guei and Gbagbo recruited Liberian fighters to secure their regimes, while the MPCJ used both Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters. It can be argued, however, that a striking feature of participation in the Ivorian armed conflict by non-Ivorian Africans, be they mercenaries or otherwise, was ethnicity and regional alliances (Foaleng, 2008:61,66-67). This argument is not an attempt to downplay the role of mercenaries in the conflict as Angolans, South Africans, Israelis, French and Eastern Europeans were recruited by the Gbagbo government as trainers and technical assistants to augment the security forces (Banégas and Marshall-Fratani, 2007:100).

## **6. INTERNATIONAL ACTORS**

In the case of international actors beyond the West African region, involvement in the Ivorian armed conflict appears to be French. This involvement was based on historical and geo-strategic interests. That Côte d'Ivoire was the most important country in francophone West Africa was undoubted. This importance stemmed from the fact that France was the biggest trading partner of Côte d'Ivoire, accounting for 13.3 percent and 22.6 percent of Côte d'Ivoire's exports and imports respectively in 2001. Côte d'Ivoire also hosted over 16,000 French citizens while 80 percent of the Ivorian

economy was controlled by the French prior to the beginning of the Ivorian armed conflict. There were about 210 subsidiaries of French companies operating in strategic sectors of the Ivorian economy with a turnover of over 2.2 billion Euros in 1999 alone (Kohler, 2003:31).

Côte d'Ivoire was also the most important country in Francophone West Africa or the CFA franc monetary zone, accounting for a fifth of the total population of the community; a third of all the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and two-fifths of the total exchange within the West African Monetary Union. In 2000, the country accounted for 57 percent of all the exports and 36 percent of all imports from the region. France was naturally inclined to protect these interests (Toungara, 2001:71; Smith, 2003:114).

However, despite the *Defence Accord* which allowed France's military intervention even in cases of "internal problems, upon the request of Côte d'Ivoire", the French authorities were largely aloof at the beginning of the conflict, creating a perception of French support for the rebels. It has been argued that French support for the rebels was based on the perception that Gbagbo was a threat to French interests in Côte d'Ivoire, in view of his nationalist credentials. Gbagbo had long advocated a reduction of the country's reliance on France and diversification of the Ivorian economy from French monopolies. This put him on a collision course with France (Souaré, 2006:62-67). French multinational companies, notably *Bouygues*, which has significant investments in Côte d'Ivoire, also financed the rebels for fear of nationalization of their interests (International Crisis Group, 2003(b):12). French involvement was therefore dictated by national and economic interests and the desire to rein in Gbagbo.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The preceding discussion establishes the link between domestic conflict and regional insecurity as characterised by the Ivorian armed conflict.

As with the domestic or internal factors, the interests of the élite, manifested in the preservation of power and the security of the regimes, seem to have taken pre-eminence over state, national or regional interests. These defined the nature of the alliances and the manipulation of ethnicity which formed the linkage between the domestic and regional conflict.

Banégas and Marshall-Fratani (2007:83) assert that two factors account for the internationalization of the Ivorian armed conflict. Firstly, the conflict became part of the contagion effect of the “system of conflict” that engulfed Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Secondly, the Ivorian armed conflict was about interference of governments in the region in the internal affairs of neighbours through personalization of political alliances, ethnic affinities and economic interests. These were reinforced by a lack of state capacity, primarily manifested in the inability to create a strong national cohesion and effective border control, as a consequence of a weak state.

While these factors explain the situation to a large extent, it is argued that the fundamental cause of the spillover of the Ivorian conflict beyond the borders of Côte d’Ivoire was the nature of the ethnic relations. Looking at the correlation between ethnicity and political power in the region, marginalized groups readily obtain assistance and support from their kinsmen outside the borders of their states to contest political power in their respective states.

Under such circumstances, security of an ethnic group assumes pre-eminence over national, state or regime security. In most instances however, the security of an ethnic group is interfaced with regime security.

This is exacerbated by the lack of state capacity as manifested in the inability of the states to secure or control their borders effectively. However, Banégas and Marshall-Fratani (2007:82,91) note in this regard that behind the uncontrolled borders “hide state strategies, policies of interference directed from the highest spheres of

neighbouring capitals” in pursuit of internal political agendas, and that “the mutual instrumentalization by neighbouring states of transnational rebellions increase the potential for the local violence and contribute to the conflict’s encystment”.

In the case of Côte d’Ivoire, the existence of a larger number of its own ethnic groups outside its borders had major security consequences as it raised the stakes for a security dilemma. Attempts to secure the nation, state or the regimes, invariably antagonised ethnic groups that felt marginalised and would receive ‘external’ support from their ethnic ‘cousins’ presumably in the defence of their ‘nation’. Such support becomes more pronounced in situations where ethnic counterparts gain control of the state, which translated into state support for rebel movements. This was the dilemma of Côte d’Ivoire.

It is obvious that the attempts by the élite to secure political power and further their interests on the basis of ethnic allegiances and identity politics, created actual threats for the state and the region in view of the ethnic configuration. It could then be argued that the nature of the ethnic composition that traversed across state borders and the linkage between ethnicity, security and political power, was the basis of the entanglement of Liberia, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea in the Ivorian conflict. Other factors such as the prevailing political alliances and the “system of conflict” are indeed founded on ethnic considerations. The porous borders and perceived economic benefits were only secondary or collateral factors (International Crisis Group, 2003(b):19).

The Ivorian conflict revealed that ethnic affiliation, reinforced by élite interests as reflected in the alliances between political leaders in the region, created a semblance of irredentism and a security dilemma that affected states in the region with the propensity of a large-scale regional system of conflict. Domestic conflicts therefore evolve into cross-border conflicts once the security and political power of ethnic groups are invoked.

## CHAPTER 6

# EVALUATION

### 1. SUMMARY

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the research and an evaluation of the findings based on the assumptions formulated in the introductory chapter of the study.

The objective of this study as set out in chapter one, was to examine the various arguments and causes of insecurity or threats to national security in Third World States and in Africa specifically. Emphasis was placed on the role played by the ruling élite in the determination and evolution of threats which invariably serves the interests of the regimes to the detriment of the state and the nation. The study analyzed the factors that link domestic threats to regional and international insecurity. To achieve these objectives, the research examined the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire as a case study. The question was whether the causes of the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire were a manipulation of the inherent risks to secure the interests of the élite, reflected in regime security, or a result of objectively assessed threats. The study thus attempted to draw a link between the interests of the élite and regime security on the one hand, and the causes of the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire on the other. It also highlighted the role of the governing élite as a main driver or catalyst for conflicts in West Africa.

The concept of security, highlighting the traditional and the post-Cold War approaches to the subject including a distinction of the various levels of security such as national, state, regime and human security, formed part of the theoretical framework in chapter two. This chapter also discussed the concept of threats to national security taking into



consideration the application of the concepts within the context of the Third World, including Africa. The notions of minimal and maximal states, weak and strong states and how these differences impact on the security dynamics of states at different levels of development, were also discussed. The distinctions confirmed the primarily domestic origins of security in Third World States. The concepts of threats and vulnerabilities and the subjective element of threat analysis confirmed that threat assessments in weak states are often equated with regime security, blurring the distinction between national security and regime security. The role of African states as the guarantor of security was equally highlighted, concluding that by the very nature of African states, internal armed conflicts often lead to regional or international crises.

Chapter three provided an historical overview of Ivorian politics up to 2003 to provide an understanding of the political and economic context relevant to a security analysis of Côte d'Ivoire. The chapter thus discussed, among others, the geographical location of Côte d'Ivoire; ethnic and religious composition; the pre-colonial history; French Administration and policies, with particular reference to the development of the plantation economy and its effect on migration; land ownership; and the political and economic development of the country. The dominance of Houphouët-Boigny in the post-independence period in Côte d'Ivoire as well as the patronage system of governance he nurtured, supported by the Ivorian economic "miracle", was also highlighted. Conversely, the fall in commodity prices in the 1980s leading to economic decline and the political and social tensions that followed; the desire for regime security and legitimacy reflected by the introduction of identity politics, embodied in the concept of *Ivoirité*; the implementation of the concept and consequences on national security under the various regimes after Houphouët-Boigny leading to the armed conflict in 2002, were analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter four outlined the causes of the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire as well as the threat perception of the regimes prior to the conflict and how the definition and management of both objective and perceived threats by the regimes, threatened the

existence of the state. This included the identification of the sources of threats to Côte d'Ivoire, and an analysis of the threats and the threat management strategies adopted by the regimes and their impact on the nation, the state and the regimes. The role of the ruling élite exemplified by the regimes, and their preoccupation with regime security, reflected their inability to create national cohesion and legitimacy leading to a subjective perception of threats to security which invariably resulted in objective threats to national security and subsequently the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

The regional and international dimensions of the Ivorian armed conflict were analyzed in chapter five. This included the internal and regional factors that transformed the armed conflict into an interstate conflict with international consequences. Socio-economic factors such as ethnic relations between Côte d'Ivoire and the neighbouring states and its impact on the formation of armed groups; the nature of the political alliances in the region; personal ambitions of the leaders in the region; as well as the existing conflicts in the sub-region, were conditions that influenced the spread of the war. This similarly confirmed the pre-eminence of the interests of the élite over that of the nation, the state and the region.

The following section will test the assumptions formulated in the introductory chapter, based on the findings of the research.

## **2. TESTING OF THE ASSUMPTIONS ON WHICH THE STUDY WAS BASED**

### **2.1 THE DOMESTIC ORIGINS OF THE THREATS AND CAUSES OF THE IVORIAN CONFLICT**

**Assumption: "Threats faced by Côte d'Ivoire and the causes of the conflict were of domestic origin, but were manipulated by the élite and tended to be a function of a lack of social cohesion and government legitimacy".**

As indicated in this study, the causes of the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire originated from the country's history, geographical location and the political and economic circumstances. While some of these were a consequence of the legacy of French rule, to a large extent, the political and economic causes were partly due to the strategies adopted to secure the various regimes following the country's independence in 1960. Since independence, security was defined in terms of the interest of the élite who were also the owners of the plantations. Their interests therefore became coterminous with the security of the state and the nation. In this context, the security of the state or nation correlated with élite unity. Conversely, élite disunity generated diverse views of threats, leading to contested security (Ayoob, 1995:190; Crook, 1990(a):27; Zartman and Delgado, 1984:17).

This subjective view of security created conditions for a manipulation of both actual and perceived threats to the élite. Thus, an issue that was perceived or objectively assessed as a threat or a source of insecurity by one regime, was exploited or deemed as a source of security by the other.

The system of governance, the policy on migration and identity politics were consequences of élite disunity over the processes of achieving national cohesion and legitimacy. The system of governance that sought legitimacy through a system of patronage relying on rents accrued from the plantations, owed its sustenance to the global market forces and was subjected to the vulnerabilities of commodity prices. The system was only as strong as the prices of cocoa and coffee and collapsed during a period of economic contraction.

Ethnicity and regionalism also became pronounced as regime security became intertwined with the security of ethnic groups. This brought to the fore the fractious nature of Ivorian society. Although there was a form of ethnic balancing, ethno-regional and ethno-religious identities were not subsumed under a single national identity. This was partly due to the system of governance as well as ethnic allegiance

that traversed the borders of Côte d'Ivoire. Thus, social cohesion was linked to ethnic allegiance rather than national allegiance. This underscored the problem of legitimacy of the various regimes. In a system where legitimacy was acquired through paternalism and monetary inducements, a lack of the latter erodes the basis of legitimacy. As explained in chapter four, in the absence of legitimacy and national cohesion, the system was vulnerable to manipulation by the regimes to suit their interests and subsequently crumbled under pressure from the various contending groups within the state (Bakary, 1997:79).

Thus, with the collapse of the economy, the source of legitimacy shifted towards an "ethnic definition of nationalism and nativist conception of citizenship" which revealed the deep societal divisions and the façade of cohesion (Banégas, 2006: 549). The collapse of the economy also revealed that nation building strategies based on autochthony to acquire legitimacy, resonated with only a part of society, leading to divisions.

The question of migration also became a source of legitimacy as well as a threat to factions within the élite. While migration served as a source of legitimacy under one regime, it became a source of threat as manifested by the identity politics embarked on by successive regimes, following independence, to obtain legitimacy. Migration was therefore manipulated to suit factional and not national interests. The country was thus governed as a cohabitation and division of labour between communities rather than a melting pot of cultural and national identity (Banégas, 2006:540).

As contended by Ayooob (1995:190) the low level of social cohesion and an emphasis on state and regime legitimacy, lends the system to manipulation by the élite. This was the root cause of domestic insecurity as in the case of Côte d'Ivoire. In the absence of legitimacy and social cohesion, the élite became preoccupied with strategies to attain élite interests, reflected in regime security. In this regard, all other issues that

threatened the state became of lesser interest or were manipulated to align with élite interests.

The legitimacy of the regimes was also undermined by the lack of state capacity as evidenced by the weakness in ensuring, amongst others, border security and ensuring the welfare and security of its citizens as a result of the preoccupation with regime security (Riehl, 2007:43; Bakary, 1997:79).

The threats to security reflected as causes of the armed conflict were manifestly domestic. These were the system of governance established by Houphouët-Boigny, who governed the country for thirty years, which served his personal interests and that was devoid of a clearly defined line of succession; the incidence of migration that was employed to secure the regimes; the question of ethnicity that was not only manipulated to secure the political bases of the élite but was also a channel for the participation of external actors in the conflict; the appeal to religious affiliation to broaden the support base and legitimize the political leadership; and the manipulation of identity. Consequently, to acquire legitimacy, the different ruling groups appealed to ethno-religious identity, leading to the armed conflict.

The assumption that the threats faced by Côte d'Ivoire and the causes of the conflict were of domestic origin, but were manipulated by the élite and tended to be a function of a lack of social cohesion and government legitimacy, is therefore confirmed.

## **2.2 LINKAGE BETWEEN THE ETHNO-RELIGIOUS FAULT LINE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CONFLICT BEYOND THE BORDERS OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE.**

**Assumption:** "In the case of West Africa, the introduction of ethnicity and religion into conflict situations broadens the base of a conflict into a north-

**south divide, creating the semblance of a fault line conflict, with regional and international dimensions”.**

The cohesion of rebel groups or a rebellion may be “a function of the degree of ethnic or religious diversity of the society” (Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000:247). In the case of Côte d’Ivoire then, the ethnic diversity of the society should therefore reduce the risk of the formation of cohesive rebel groups since the various ethnic groups could not form a broad coalition to contest for power nor mount an effective rebellion. Consequently, although there was a disproportionate representation of some of the ethnic groups in the élite, ethnicity was not a contended issue (Bakary, 1984:26, 27).

However, the study confirmed that in the face of socio-economic and political insecurity, an appeal to ethno-religious sentiments or identity could lead to the formation of broad coalitions to contest political power. This was revealed in the intrinsic link between religion, ethnicity and regionalism on the one hand and political power on the other.

Given the nature of religious proselytizing in Côte d’Ivoire, ethnic groups in the north and south tend to be followers of Islam and Christianity respectively, creating the basis for the formation of broad coalitions (Ajayi and Crowder, 1974:538-541). Hence, while ethnicity was a source of diversity, religion became a uniting force and a source of identity (Kirwin, 2006). Under such circumstances, religion became a source of homogeneity among the diverse groups particularly in the north creating the semblance of a fault line conflict. In their bid to secure political power and political legitimacy, the political élite appealed to religious legitimacy that mobilized the heterogeneous groups into two broad homogenous groups, namely north and south (Toft, 2007). Religion thus became the tool that created a perception of an out-group conflict between the north and the south of Côte d’Ivoire.

The ethno-religious appeal therefore became a means to capture the demographic strength of the ethnic groups and a means to facilitate organization and mobilization.

In this context, the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire could not be described as a fault line conflict, although it bore resemblance to this. Thus religious identity created the demographic space for mobilization into the north/south divide (Nordås, 2008:9).

The combination of ethnicity and religion was the basis of the regionalization of the Ivorian armed conflict as well as involving other international actors. The existence of a larger number of ethnic kinsmen outside Côte d'Ivoire, and the liberal policies on migration, exposed the Ivorian state to a number of vulnerabilities including the participation of state and non-state actors in the internal affairs of Côte d'Ivoire especially in periods of socio-economic insecurity.

The study confirmed that the existence of numerous ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire should not be a necessary condition for conflict as the ethnic diversity created an ethnic balance that formed a basis for coalition and consensus. However, the policies of the regimes pointed to an exploitation and manipulation of the different ethnic groups and migrant communities either into a seemingly cohesive society, on the basis of patronage as in the case of Houphouët-Boigny, or presented the differences as a threat to the nation. In either instance the aim was to secure the regimes (Human Rights Watch, 2001:4). In the case of the minority groups, invocation of ethnicity had wider ramifications as the ethnic kinsmen beyond the Ivorian border became willing participants, since such support created a *quid pro quo* situation that was reinforced by the existing conflict system in the region.

While the appeal to religion enabled an aggregation of internal broad coalitions or a broad identity to create a generic regional identity particularly in the northern part of the country, the appeal to ethnicity was the catalyst for the transformation of the internal armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire into a regional conflict with international dimensions. The nature of the ethnic relations between Côte d'Ivoire and the neighbouring countries; the correlation between ethnicity and political power in the

region; and the porosity of the borders, aided the élite to enlist the support of their ethnic cousins beyond their borders to sustain their regimes.

Thus ethnicity impacted on the formation of the ethno-political rebel groups on the one hand and the formation of alliances between the Ivorian élites and the leadership of the various states in the region, on the other.

In summary, it can be argued that ethno-religious factors not only broadened political mobilization into a north/south divide but also transformed the Ivorian armed conflict into an international conflict.

The assumption that the introduction of ethnicity and religion into conflict situations in West Africa broadens the base of a conflict into a north-south divide, creating the semblance of a fault line conflict, with regional and international dimensions, is therefore confirmed.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

The causal factors of insecurity in the Third World states and in Africa should not be limited to ethnicity, religion or migration among others. More importantly, the role of the élite in the identification and the management of the security debate must be carefully examined in attempts to address the root causes of conflicts and threats to national security in African states.

The nature of the post-colonial state and the exploitation of the institutions of the state to perpetuate the interests of the élite, blurred the distinction between the interests of the élite and that of the state and the nation. In such instances, security therefore tends to connote regime security with threats to security either reflecting the competing



interests of the élite or the manipulation of objective threats to acquire legitimacy. Security then becomes a tool to achieve legitimacy (Ayoob, 1995:191).

Thus, as the study revealed, security becomes a myopic term defined in the interests of the faction of the élite holding power at a given time. At worst, it is a contested concept within the élite and it is invoked to acquire legitimacy. The concept therefore becomes vulnerable to manipulation, leading to conflicts. The ethno-religious factors and the artificial borders bequeathed by colonialism created some of the enabling conditions and provided the avenue for neighbouring states and non-state actors to participate in the internal disputes of states.

The roots of instability were the failures of the state, represented by the ruling élite, to perform its fundamental task, namely, building national cohesion especially in periods of economic prosperity, and the inability of the élite to resolve the nation-state question through the development and building of strong institutions to enhance state capacity (Obi, 2007:7; Azam, 2001:430). The absence of these creates the space for manipulation of seemingly objective and perceived threats to satisfy narrow parochial interests. The failure of the élite in this regard lends credence to their overriding preoccupation to retain their hold on power.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the development of a system of governance that includes mass participation and access to political opportunities and power; access to economic resources; and strong and independent institutions to adjudicate conflict and create national cohesion, should be the source of security in Africa. This also means the dilution of the power and interests of the élite. In effect, contrary to perceived notions, the security/insecurity debate in Africa should start with the ruling élite and their primordial attachment to the manipulation of objective threats to secure their interests and their regimes.

## ABSTRACT

**Topic** : A Security Analysis of the Ivorian Conflict: 1993-2003

**By** : Samuel Adotey Anum

**Study Leader** : Prof. M Hough

**Department** : Political Sciences, University of Pretoria

**Degree** : Master of Security Studies

The objective of this study is to examine the role of the political élite in the analysis of the causes of conflicts and insecurity as well as the determination of threats to national security in the Third World with particular reference to West Africa using Côte d'Ivoire as a case study. To achieve this aim, the study employed a conceptual framework of national security that highlighted the concept of security and the distinction between the traditional notions and widening views of security as manifested in the post-Cold War approaches to the subject. The differences between the various levels of security, namely national security and state and regime security were examined.

A distinction was made between minimal and maximal states on the one hand, and strong and weak states on the other which enabled the application of the concepts to Third World countries, including Africa. The concept of threats and vulnerabilities and how subjective elements of threat assessment blurred the difference between national security and regime security, were also analyzed including the causes of armed conflicts in developing countries and in Africa specifically.

Based on these concepts, the study analyzed the political, socio-economic and security conditions of the Ivory Coast in the period before and during French rule, including the post-independence era. The aim of the historical analysis was to highlight the critical role played by the élite in the identification of threats to national security. This role invariably identified with the protection of élite interest or regime security and often reflected a subjective view of threats to security, the management of which created high levels of insecurity leading to the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002.

The study established that the preservation of élite interests and power is the root cause of conflicts in Africa and West Africa. Subsequently, élite cohesion becomes critical to the security of the state as élite disunity leads to manipulation of objective threats or risks that generates insecurity that not only transcends borders, but also creates a security dilemma for states as well as conditions for irredentism.

## KEY WORDS

Armed conflict	<i>Ivoirité</i>
Domestic insecurity	Regime security
Élite interests	Regional Security
Ethno-Religion	Security
Identity Politics	State security

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