

THE INFLUENCE OF POWERFUL STATES OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL DURING DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESSES THE CASE OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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Summary. I. INTRODUCTION. II. DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESSES AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL. III. DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESSES IN AFRICA AND THE ROLE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. IV. CASE OF STUDY: CÔTE D'IVOIRE. V. CONCLUSION.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Security Council is composed by 15 states: five of them (France, United Kingdom, United States, Russia and China) exercising on a permanent basis and ten others exercise for two years¹. This difference is important to observe their influence on the global policy. Permanent states are in a better position to organize the Council's agenda, but also to control the decisions to take thanks to their right of veto².

Concerning the case of Côte d'Ivoire, France has played a crucial role in fostering the political process and deploys peacekeeping troops, also initiating the Council's involvement and preparing statements and resolutions. For this reason, the measures concerning democratization processes taken by the Security Council in the African continent in general and in Cote d'Ivoire in particular provides a striking example of how the building or dismantling of states depends critically on external influences, both multilateral and unilateral pressures³.

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¹ During 2009, there will be members of the Security Council the following States: Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Vietnam and, recently, the General Assembly has elected Austria, Japan, Mexico, Turkey and Uganda to serve as non-permanent members of the Security Council for two-year terms starting on 1 January 2009. The newly elected countries will replace Belgium, Indonesia, Italy, Panama and South Africa.

² The existence of a permanent membership and veto in the Security Council contradicts two basic principles of democracy: elective appointment in executive bodies and the majority rule. More details in Daniele ARCHIBUGI: "Democracy at the United Nations", in Takashi INOBUCHI, Edward NEWMAN and John KEANE (eds.): *The changing nature of democracy*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo/New York/Paris, 1998, p. 249.

³ Richard JOSEPH : *Nation-State Trajectories in Africa*, *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Winter/Spring 2003, available on-line <http://www12.georgetown.edu/sfs/publications/journal/Issues/ws03/josephlocked.pdf> (accessed on November 19, 2008)

II. DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESSES AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Democracy is a universal value which implies for people the free expression and determination of their own political, economic, social and cultural organization. Nevertheless, the nature of democracy is diversifying in the course of the years and is conditioned by economic and social development.

Although the concept of democracy is discussed as well as different approaches to democratization, the holding free elections in a multi-party setting is underlined as a common denominator. Even if this element is the most basic one, it is necessary to reveal the extreme difficulties found in the case of post-conflict societies and former colonies, where opposition has often been based on a tradition of extra-constitutional (and sometimes violent) forms of activism⁴.

In this context, international organizations have playing an important role in promoting and supporting democracy and pluralism in numerous countries and regions⁵. The practical assistance of United Nations system and regional organizations has contributed to establish democratic institutions and a culture of democracy, especially in transitional societies.

United Nations subscribes to a wide conception of peace and human security within which democracy is an integral component⁶. In particular, the UN Security Council considers “security” in very broad terms, such as environmental security, economic security or human security⁷. Consequently, the Security Council has an important responsibility related to the protection of democracy as long as it should intervene in order to maintain international peace and security when democracy could be threatened. Nevertheless, not all situations are equal, since notions of “international peace and security” and “threats to international peace and security” may vary quite considerably, depending above all on the permanent member’s advice

As long as democracy promotes peace and international security⁸, the Security Council could be tempted to intervene more frequently using the traditional means overexploited since the end of the Cold War: the peacekeeping operations and sanctions⁹. In one hand,

⁴ Takashi INOBUCHI, Edward NEWMAN and John KEANE (eds.): *The changing nature of democracy*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo/New York/Paris, 1998, p. 7.

⁵ Thomas D. ZWEIFEL: *International Organizations And Democracy: Accountability, Politics, And Power*, London, L. Rienner, 2006, p. 67.

⁶ Takashi INOBUCHI, Edward NEWMAN and John KEANE (ed.): *The changing nature of democracy*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo/New York/Paris, 1998, p. 12.

⁷ A.J.R. GROOM: “The Security Council: a case for change by stealth?”, in Vincent CHETAIL (ed.): *Conflits, sécurité et coopération – Conflits, security and cooperation. Liber Amicorum Victor-Yves GHEBALI*, Bruylant, Bruxelles, 2007, p.283.

⁸ See Morton H. HALPERIN: *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace*, Routledge, London, 2005, 314 p.

⁹ Pascal TEIXEIRA: *The Security Council at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: To What Extent is it willing and Able to Maintain International Peace and Security?*, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Geneva, 2003, p. 4.

these last peacekeeping operations (so-called second and third-generation peacekeeping) are designed to implement a peace agreement and build conditions for stable and long-term peace where principles of democracy are increasingly integrated¹⁰. On the other hand, sanctions are discredited for the negative consequences on the civilian population. Moreover, they are ineffective, counter-productive, harmful to the economic interests of those imposing sanctions, damaging to relations with allies, morally questionable, yet difficult to lift once imposed¹¹.

Democratization processes have more possibilities to success in intern conflicts and “failed states” when the Security Council tries to restore peace and stability in a society dealing with the underlying causes: governance; social, regional or inter-ethnic inequalities; power-sharing; respect for human rights and respect for minority rights¹². Through mediation and negotiation processes, the Security Council should intervene in this kind of conflicts in order to convince the parties to choose political rather than military means of defending their political, economic and cultural interests.

Theoretically, where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the Security Council has the responsibility, under Article 24 of the UN Charter, to preserve international peace and security¹³. However, to know why the Security Council acts in some situations and abstains in similar circumstances concerning other states is necessary to analyse the interests of its member states.

Two main problems are connected to this discretionary power to determine and interpret the situations of “threats to international peace and security”: the use of a double standard (principle of non-intervention versus responsibility to protect) and the conditionality of democratization processes (imposition of values or institutions)¹⁴. Thus, whereas the situation can directly affect one of the permanent members (e.g. Ulster, New Caledonia, Chechnya or Tibet), the interest of peace and security not always prevails. Nonetheless, the problem is relatively easy to solve when considerations and interest about democracy and national security can coincide or not interfere with domestic affairs (e.g. Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia or Côte d’Ivoire).

¹⁰ Margaret P. KARNS and Karen A. MINGST: “The Search for Peace and Security”, in *International Organizations. The Politics and Processes of Global Governance*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 2006, p. 306.

¹¹ For more details, see Ramesh THAKUR: *The United Nations, Peace and Security. From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2006, pp. 134 – 155.

¹² For more information, Danilo TÜRK: “The Role of the UN Security Council in Preventing Internal Conflicts”, *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, Volume 8, Number 1, 2001, pp. 71-73.

¹³ Bertrand G. RAMCHARAN: *The Security Council and the Protection of Human Rights*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Hague / London / New York, 2002, p. 4.

¹⁴ This technique is also used by the World Bank and IMF, which apply the conditionality principle to democratic reforms. See, for example, Fabian BIANCARDI: *Democracy and the Global System. A Contribution to the Critique of Liberal Internationalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, p. 205.

Accordingly, it is possible to affirm that national interests of permanent members dominate, directly or indirectly, global policy. The protection of democracy is not generally on the top of the list of priorities, but it depends on national interest (for instance, Denmark promotes different programmes with external projection concerning good governance, human rights and democratization whereas Canada emphasizes “human security” in diplomacy)¹⁵.

When the temporary states represented in the Security Council have among their priorities the protection of democracy in general or in a specific country can encourage a resolution in a forum where non-permanent states makes proposals risking to find the opposition of a permanent member State¹⁶. In other occasions is the own permanent states which support democratization processes, such as the second term of the George W. Bush’s foreign policy, when its administration argued that democracy brings peace and prosperity¹⁷. Sometimes the permanent member states use the promotion of democracy with regard to non-permanent states in order to influence their votes in the Security Council, e.g. US used its aid budget to sway developing country non-permanent members by an increase of 59% while they hold a seat and elsewhere uses it influence to channel UN aid in their direction¹⁸. Likewise British and French permanent membership of the UN Security Council provided a channel of access for those former colonies which retained good relations with them¹⁹.

Many questions related to the role of the Security Council in democratization processes are still unresolved, for example, in which situations, in such a case, the Security Council has the right and the duty to intervene, using force if necessary, in a state’s domestic affairs in defence of democracy?²⁰ Or, should the Security Council promote democratization in poor countries in order to promote peace and international security?²¹ The aim of this article is, however, the analysis of the measures taken by the Security Council in a particular case in order to clarify the direct implications on the field.

¹⁵ Concerning Denmark, see <http://www.netpublikationer.dk/um/6051/index.htm>. As for Canada, see Jutta BRUNNEE and Stephen J. TOOPE: “Canada and the Use of Force: Reclaiming Human Security”, *International Journal (Canadian Institute of International Affairs)*, Vol. 59, 2004, pp. 247-260.

¹⁶ Pascal TEIXEIRA: *The Security Council at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: To What Extent is it willing and Able to Maintain International Peace and Security?*, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Geneva, 2003, p.

¹⁷ See Mike BOWKER : *Russia, America and the Islamic world*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007, p. 155.

¹⁸ Ilyana KUZEMKO and Eric WERKER: “How Much Is a Seat on the Security Council Worth? Foreign Aid and Bribery at the United,” *Global Policy Forum*, 25 August 2006.

¹⁹ Steve SMITH (ed.), Christopher BROWN, Robert W. COX and others: *Africa and the international system*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations, Cambridge University Press, Edinburgh, 1999, p. 86.

²⁰ See Karin von HIPPEL: *Democracy by Force. US Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War World*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 224; and Kenneth A. SCHULTZ: *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2001, pp. 332.

²¹ See, for example, Morton H. HALPERIN, Joseph T. SIEGLE, Michael M. WEINSTEIN: *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace*, Routledge, London, 2005, pp. 290.

III. DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESSES IN AFRICA AND THE ROLE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

United Kingdom and France, both permanent members of the Security Council, possessed considerable colonial empires in Africa and were able to develop complex linkages with their colonies which provided the basis for a transfer of power with direct consequences in the processes of democratization. Nevertheless, their strategies were focused on different interests. While Britain was more concerned with the “white dominions”, in particular India, and reinforcing its special relationship with the United States, France, especially after the loss of Indochina, focused on strengthening its influence in African dominions in diverse ways: in some cases, supporting a domestic leader (e.g. President Mba in Gabon or Felix Houphouët-Boigny in Côte d’Ivoire), and in other unsuccessful cases, monitoring democratisation processes (e.g. Western Sahara).

After the decolonisation processes and more specifically during the late 1980s and early 1990s, some remarkable changes took place in Africa concerning democratization processes: a marked general trend towards plural politics and multi-party electoral competition. In this process, the Security Council participated directly asking the secretary-general, in that moment the African Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to provide it with a report outlining the ways in which UN might deal with international peace and security issues in the new environment created after the Cold War²². The report, adopted in 1992 and entitled *An Agenda for Peace*, states that:

“Carried forward in the spirit of the Charter, and as envisioned in Chapter VIII, the approach outlined here could strengthen a general sense that democratization is being encouraged at all levels in the task of maintaining international peace and security, it being essential to continue to recognize that the primary responsibility will continue to reside in the Security Council”²³.

Between 1985 and 1991, no less than 28 authoritarian regimes were forced to liberalise the political arena, while multi-party elections were held in eight countries. By 1997, about three-fourths of the African countries were under the so-called “democratic rule” succumbing to the logic of periodic elections²⁴.

Even though improvements should be done in the future, it is possible to affirm that Africa has made significant progress as regards democratic governance as long as most

²² For more information about the influence of African States in the United Nations after the Cold War, see Sola AKINRINADE and Amadu SESAY: *Africa in the Post-Cold War International System*, Pinter Publishers, London and Washington, 1998, in particular pp. 172 – 195.

²³ Paragraph 64, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992. This Report was also adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 1992, doc. A/RES/47/120 A.

²⁴ Suresh Chandra SAXENA: “Democratic Revival in Africa: is it sustainable?” in Pal AHLUWALIA and Abebe ZEGEYE (ed.): *African Identities. Contemporary political and social challenges*, Series The Making of Modern Africa, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002, p. 68.

African countries now have elected parliaments and political leaders (e.g. Togo, Mali, Zambia, Senegal, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau or South Africa). According to Hage GEINGOB “democracy is really taking root in Africa”²⁵. Nevertheless, much work is still required to create the processes, systems and institutions for a real democracy in this continent. In most countries, there is still not authentic political competition, parliaments are learning how to function in an effective way and political power remains concentrated in a limited elites.

Independent, transparent electoral systems and responsible political parties should exist if elections want to be credible. The holding of periodic elections does not guarantee a participatory democracy. Electoral monitoring on election days is not sufficient to assure free and fair participatory processes. For this reason, several elections have been recently questionable in Africa, such as in Angola and Zimbabwe.

Due partially to these deficiencies, the Security Council has been adopting numerous resolutions concerning democratization processes in Africa. The incapacity of many governments to develop democracy in their countries is linked to other questions related generally to maintain international peace and security, usually internal conflicts but also corruption or poverty. For this reason, during the last years the Security Council has focused on several African countries in order to impose sanctions (e.g. Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d’Ivoire and Sudan²⁶) and establishing peacekeeping missions (Central African Republic and Chad, Darfur, Sudan, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Western Sahara²⁷). To observe the influence of these measures on the field, the case of Côte d’Ivoire will be examined subsequently.

Finally, it is necessary to reveal that in spite of these obstacles, Africa is on the road to democratization and is progressively consolidating a democratic culture, not only improving elections processes, but also entrenching fundamental freedoms, engaging civil society, expanding the protection of human rights and spreading constitutional reforms²⁸. In connection with these improvements, the Security Council, but above all, regional organisations are involved. Based on the principles recognized in *An Agenda for Peace*²⁹, the African Union is spearheading efforts to enhance peace and democracy in Africa helped by other sub-regional organisations, such as the Economic Community

²⁵ Hage GEINGOB: “Democracy in Africa”, in Heraldo MUÑOZ (ed.): *Democracy Rising. Assessing the Global Challenges*, Lyanne Rienner Publishers, London, 2006, p. 55.

²⁶ For more information, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/>

²⁷ For more details, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/index.asp>

²⁸ See Abdoulie JANNEH: “Commentary on Democracy in Africa”, in Heraldo MUÑOZ (ed.): *Democracy Rising. Assessing the Global Challenges*, Lyanne Rienner Publishers, London, 2006, pp. 62 – 64. About the consolidation process, see Hussein SOLOMON and Ian LIEBENBERG (eds.): *Consolidation of Democracy in Africa. A View from the South (Making of Modern Africa)*, Ashgate Publishers, 2000, 367 p.

²⁹ Paragraph 65 of the report states: “(...) the Security Council should choose specifically to authorize a regional arrangement or organization to take the lead in addressing a crisis within its region, it could serve to lend the weight of the United Nations to the validity of the regional effort”.

of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)³⁰.

IV. CASE OF STUDY: CÔTE D'IVOIRE³¹

After achieving its independence from France in 1960 the Côte d'Ivoire became a model of political stability and economic prosperity, avoiding many of the difficulties that plagued other African states. The country, which is divided religiously between a predominately Muslim north and predominately Christian south, was united under the strong leadership of Felix Houphouët-Boigny for more than 30 years (from independence until his death in 1993).

In an effort to democratize the country, political opposition parties were legalized in 1990. Partly thanks to grant citizenship rights to immigrants who settled in Côte d'Ivoire, Houphouët-Boigny won his first contested election, beating out the candidate from the Ivorian Popular Front (IPF), Laurent Gbagbo. Realizing that more reforms were called for, Houphouët-Boigny appointed Alassane Dramane Outtara as prime minister, a post that he kept until his death³². From that moment, the fight for power began triggering a civil war on September 2002.

Although the situation in Côte d'Ivoire has been recovering during the last two years, the presidential elections have not been held yet. A peace agreement to end the conflict was signed in March 2007, which could lead to the holding of elections and the reunification of the country. However, the election announced for November this year has been once more postponed due "technical and financial" complications. According to the committee to oversee the Ouagadougou peace agreement, the independent electoral commission must come up with a new election timetable by 31 December 2008³³.

According to the most recent report of Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire³⁴, the political atmosphere in the country has remained positive during the last months as long as all political parties intensified their

³⁰ For more information, see Jane BOULDEN: *Dealing with Conflict in Africa: The United Nations and Regional Organizations*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003, in particular pp. 11 – 33; and Hage GEINGOB: "Democracy in Africa", in Heraldo MUÑOZ (ed.): *Democracy Rising. Assessing the Global Challenges*, Lyanne Rienner Publishers, London, 2006, pp. 58 – 59.

³¹ The country was originally known in English as *Ivory Coast*. In October 1985, the government requested that the country be known in every language as Côte d'Ivoire.

³² For more details, see for example, Daniel CHIROT: "The debacle in Côte d'Ivoire", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, Issue 2, 2006, pp. 63 – 77; and Bruce BAKER: "Democratisation in Sub-Saharan Africa", in Jeff HAYNES (ed.): *Towards Sustainable Democracy in the Third World*, Palgrave, New York, 2001, pp. 83 – 112.

³³ See the article "Côte d'Ivoire: November Poll Officially Cancelled, New Date to Be Announced", accessible on-line <http://allafrica.com/stories/200811111148.html> (visited on November 19, 2008)

³⁴ Eighteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire on October 13, 2008; doc. S/2008/645.

information and sensitization campaign activities throughout the country as preparations for the presidential election. Furthermore, political leaders and party activists were able to move freely throughout the country, including the hitherto volatile western region and the north.

In this democratization process, with an electoral procedure as the first step, the peacekeeping mission UNOCI³⁵, following the peace agreement, supports the registration process by providing technical expertise, logistical assistance and equipment. Likewise, UNOCI has developed a security plan for the elections in order to minimize elections-related security risks and threats, including the prevention of the illegal movement of armed groups across the borders of Côte d'Ivoire. Despite the positive improvements made by UNOCI in this field, some countries, such as United States, have begun to show their reticence about this mission in Côte d'Ivoire concerning its contribution to the peace process³⁶.

Despite of the critical humanitarian situation in the country, the mandate of UNOCI has not been extended to deal with this pressing difficulty. On this matter, both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have revealed a high malnutrition rate among the population sharply deteriorated since the 2006. Moreover, according to the UN Refugee Agency, still more than 3.000 refugees from Côte d'Ivoire are living in a refugee camp in southern Guinea³⁷.

This kind of difficulties interfering in the democratization process gets worse with the maintenance of sanctions by the Security Council. The Committee concerning Côte d'Ivoire was established on 15 November 2004 to oversee the relevant sanctions measures³⁸. In this context, the so-called targeted sanctions imposed by the Security Council involve the freezing of assets and blocking the financial transactions of political elites or entities whose behaviour triggered sanctions in the first place, but have also a negative influence for the rest of civilian population³⁹. It is difficult to know the scope

³⁵ Having determined that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire continued to pose a threat to international peace and security in the region and acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Security Council, by its resolution 1528 of 27 February 2004, decided to establish the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) as from 4 April 2004. UNOCI replaced the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), a political mission set up by the Council in May 2003 with a mandate to facilitate the implementation by the Ivorian parties of the peace agreement signed by them in January 2003. More information in <http://www.onuci.org/>

³⁶ US Ambassador John Bolton told Security Council members that perhaps ONUCI "has become more of a problem than a solution". See the article "Côte d'Ivoire: Anti-UN sentiment rumbles on", in <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=58004> (visited on November 19, 2008).

³⁷ See <http://www.unhcr.org/country/civ.html>

³⁸ The sanctions regime was recently renewed by paragraph 1 of resolution 1842, which was adopted in 29 October 2008 until 31 October 2009. The Security Council will review the sanctions regime in light of the progress achieved in the implementation of the key steps of the peace process and of the progress of the electoral process in Côte d'Ivoire, as referred to in resolution 1826 (2008). For more information, see <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1572/>

³⁹ In this sense, see Ramesh THAKUR: *The United Nations, Peace and Security. From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2006, pp. 134 – 155. See also

of this sanctions regime above the human development index, but what is possible to affirm according to the UNPD report is that Côte d'Ivoire is found in the 166th post out of 177 countries with data (worse than the previous year)⁴⁰.

V. CONCLUSION

France has been the soul of the measures carried out in Côte d'Ivoire by the Security Council. As a permanent member of this body, France has followed very closely the democratization process in this country, influencing the agreements and the measures in the field, what allows asking about the convenience of these implications and interferences by the ancient metropolis through the Security Council. For this reason, in all transitions from a dictatorship to a democracy, the promotion of democratization developments should be considered by the UN Security Council as a global strategy without national interests of permanent members dominating the process because, despite of the positive consequences of these procedures, in particular of the peacekeeping mission concerning electoral processes, the basis of democracy could be in question due to external influences or requirements.

Strengthening Targeted Sanctions Through Fair and Clear Procedures, White Paper prepared by the Watson Institute Targeted Sanctions Project Brown University, March 2006, accessible on-line [http://www.watsoninstitute.org/pub/Strengthening Targeted Sanctions.pdf](http://www.watsoninstitute.org/pub/Strengthening_Targeted_Sanctions.pdf)

⁴⁰ See the Human Development Report concerning Côte d'Ivoire's human development index in 2005 and in 2004, in [http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty fs CIV.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_CIV.html)