AFRICA'S SECURITY PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE REMEDIES

Ambassador (R) Numan HAZAR

Key words:

Africa's security problems, Democracy and Human Rights, Economic Development, Terrorism, Transparency and Corruption.

For a researcher of international relations, the African continent is only a very rich laboratory where it will be possible to analyze all the problems facing, at the present, the international community.

What are these problems? Before addressing this issue, it must be emphasized that they do not always have their roots in the process of colonization. However, there are certain problems that are caused by the colonial period. This means that the problems of the past are at the root of today's difficulties.

Past problems such as the partition of the African continent by the colonial powers, the arbitrary delimitation of the borders between the colonies according to the economic and strategic interests of the European powers, two traumas, namely the colonization and the slave trade, have prevented to realize the creation of nation-states in Africa in a timely manner. This state of affairs has also had an adverse effect on the growth of the African population since African countries had lost their young human resources and producers because of slavery. We must also take into account the psycho-sociological problems created by these developments.

Partition of the continent also meant the division of existing tribes by the colonial powers. This fact also created some problems for the future. Present problems of Africa, however, could be enumerated as follows:

Underdevelopment, poverty, lack of democracy and the rule of law, lack of respect for human rights which means serious violation of human rights, bad-governance, lack of transparency, corruption, leadership problems, intestinal wars, illegal arms trade, trans-boundary disputes and hostilities, genocides and massacres, exploitation of natural resources by some foreign powers, refugees, illegal migration, human trafficking, problems emanating from the adverse effects of globalization, international terrorism, environmental issues such as climate change and drought etc.

All these problems do not fail to create insecurity in African countries, not only an environment of physical insecurity, but also economic, political and social. The above-mentioned problems are also interconnected. On the other hand, it is necessary to take the question of security in a broad sense, latosensu[1]. Indeed Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the UN stipulates the concept of security as follows:

''Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person''. It means that security is a human right.

Achievement of economic development and prosperity, establishment of democracy, realization of quality education, a hygienic environment that provides sanitary security, these achievements eliminate problems arising from insecurity.

In order to achieve these goals, African countries now have the awareness of addressing all these problems in the African context, i.e. the African Union and NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development). The international community in particular developed countries must assist African states to realize their aspirations.

As a matter of fact, according to Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, sustainable development can only be possible in a democratic society where existed the rule of law and the respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. They also emphasized that totalitarian and authoritarian regimes can only provide a temporary economic development as well as progress in science and technology as exemplified by the case of the Soviet Union, where a human element was missing as well as individual security was not granted particular importance.

---

1   In the broad sense. Speaking or writing approximately, broadly, or generally in Latin language.

From the process of decolonization in the sixties to the present day, there have been many armed conflicts in Africa, civil wars, coup d'états and acts of genocide. The international community, in particular the United Nations, has made efforts to ensure security and stability through the dispatch of peace-keeping forces. There were also the political and military interventions of the United States, France and Belgium. In my opinion all these efforts were only of a palliative nature. The sustainable remedy is undoubtedly the economic and social development as well as the creation of the democratic regimes in the continent in the real sense of the word.

When we take a look at everything that happened in Africa, we could make these observations:

Some problems or conflicts in Africa had been caused by the ambitions of some countries to seize or to control the natural wealth of African countries. In the past the secession of Biafra and Katanga were examples. In the case of Biafra France and Belgium had supported secession because of the oil wealth in this region of Nigeria. On the other hand, in the case of Katanga, Belgium's ambition to control cobalt and copper ores was the main cause.

The support given to the totalitarian regime of Mobutu by the United States and certain European powers emanated from the fact of controlling the natural resources of this country.

On the other hand, China's economic commitment to Sudan to carry out oil extraction as caused embarrassment for the United States. This state of affairs led to a very severe policy against Sudan as demonstrated in the case of Darfur and the secession of South Sudan.

With regard to the facts concerning the Genocide in Rwanda, it is accepted that the separation of Hutus and Tutsis was encouraged by the Belgian colonial regime. This was the main reason for the frictions between the two ethnic groups and indeed the root-cause of Genocide occurred at a later stage. France was accused of doing anything on time despite the fact that she knew what was going to happen. The United Nations on the other hand proved apathetic and only intervened in a delayed stage.

On the other hand, the diamond wars occurred in Sierra Leone had devastated that country. The war started in 1991 and ended in 1999. Peace was declared in 2002. Rich diamond reserves caused bloody struggle and turmoil in

this poverty-stricken country with the involvement of various forces and states. The attacks of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) against the legally elected government and coups as well as support by Liberia in particular provided for the rebels and the use of child soldiers disturbed international community. Burkina Faso was also accused of fueling the war. The RUF was united with Liberian rebel group National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Weapons were financed by the illegal trade of diamonds. Child soldiers were recruited and used causing much of the violence. The RUF rebels took advantage of the easily accessible alluvial diamonds and the lack of government regulations surrounding the country. This state of affairs allowed RUF to sell blood diamonds to obtain weapons. Civilians living in diamond mining zones were forcibly removed from their homes so that RUF should maintain its control over the mines. Many of the blood diamonds from Sierra Leone were traded to the Liberian president, Charles G. Taylor, in exchange for weapons and military training. The United Nations Peacekeeping forces, ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and the United Kingdom were involved in order to ensure peace, security and stability in the country. Charles Taylor was later charged with crimes against humanity committed during the Sierra Leone's civil war, and he was sent to The Hague where he was tried before the Special Court for Siera Leone. Taylor's sentence, which was handed down on May 30, 2012, was for 50 years in prison—effectively a life sentence. At this point, it is necessary to draw the attention on the fact that diamonds were sent to Europe and especially to the United States where markets existed for buyers.

In this context, it should be mentioned the so-called Africa's World War with widespread civilian suffering. The war started in 1998 claimed up to six million lives, either as a direct result of fighting or because of disease and malnutrition. The center of the war was Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This war had an economic as well as a political side. Fighting was fueled by the country's vast mineral wealth, with all sides taking advantage of the anarchy to plunder natural resources. Some militias fought in the east where a large United Nations force was struggling to keep the peace.

Even before that in early 1960's, just after the independence, the Republic of the Congo had also become an area of confrontation during the Cold War, between the West and the East, two opposing blocs.

During the civil war in Rwanda a great number of Hutus took refuge in the DRC. After the genocide and the new regime established in Rwanda

under the control of Tutsis, it helped Congo's militia leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila to seize the power. Mobutu SéséSéko who seized power in 1960 ruled the country as a strong totalitarian leader. He was supported by the West in particular the United States and France. Kabila was struggling against him for decades. After Kabila seized power in 1997 disagreements occurred with Rwanda's Tutsi leadership. War had drawn several neighboring countries in particular, Angola and Zimbabwe which militarily supported Kabila regime. Laurent-Désiré Kabila was later assassinated in 2001 and his son Joseph Kabila became president.

In Somalia instability was a continuous phenomenon due to the struggle of warlords in the country. The United Nations Peacekeeping Forces were sent to Somalia to ensure peace and security. At a later stage in 2008 piracy attacks off the Somalian Coast against commercial vessels caused concern for the safety of this important waterway in the World trade. Indeed, major operators of the world's merchant fleet carrying 90% of the world's traded goods by volume used the Gulf of Aden and Suez Canal. Nearly 20 000 ships pass through the Gulf of Aden each year heading to and from the Suez Canal. The international community organized an international force to combat piracy in this region.

In 1998 Al Qaeda terrorists bombed US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killing more than 200 people. In retaliation the US cruise missiles attacked and destroyed Al Shifa Pharmaceutical Factory which was suspected of housing or producing chemical weapons. The US had criticized Khartoum which allegedly supported terrorism and gave al-Qaeda Leader Osama bin Laden harbor in the Sudan in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, a UN report indicated at a later stage that no chemical weapons were produced at Al Shifa Factory.

In Africa al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and in Somalia al Shabab terrorist groups threatened peace and security in the continent. In 2012 France assisted with its military intervention the Government of Mali in its struggle against Boko Haram, an extremist Islamic group. In 2002 after the overthrowing of democratically elected government in Côte d'Ivoire a civil war started. A UN Peacekeeping Force was sent. France also intervened and sent troops. We should also bear in mind that some western Powers were also involved in the past in engineering coups against the existing governments.

There were also other developments in Africa within the so-called Arap Spring in particular, in Tunisia, in Egypt and in Libya. Right after the indepen-

dence of the new states in Africa there were also many border confrontations, armed conflicts, civil wars, apartheid, as well as a great number of economic, political and social problems which I already mentioned before.

In addition to all these also existed various natural disasters, droughts and climate change. The NEPAD called for the reversal of this abnormal situation referred to, by changing the relationship that underpins it. Africans appealed neither for the further entrenchment of dependency through aid nor for marginal concessions.

The NEPAD also declared the following:

''Across the continent, Africans declare that we will no longer allow ourselves to be conditioned by circumstance. We will determine our own destiny and call on the rest of the world to complement our efforts. There are already signs of progress and hope. Democratic regimes that are committed to the protection of human rights, people-centered development and market-oriented economies are on the increase. African people have begun to demonstrate their refusal to accept poor economic and political leadership. These developments are, however, uneven and inadequate and need to be further expedited. ''

NEPAD also called for a new relationship of partnership between Africa and international community, especially the highly industrialized countries, to overcome the development chasm that has widened over centuries of unequal relations.

In this context I would like to touch upon two different concepts or approaches, namely ''Beijing consensus'' and ''Washington consensus''. China disregard to take into consideration in its economic relations with Africa whether there exists or not a democratic regime in a country. This is called as Beijing consensus. International institutions based in Washington, however, namely, IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) or World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund) prefer to deal with democratic regimes respecting human rights and the rule of law in its economic and financial relations with African countries. It is called Washington consensus.

I must indicate my personal belief that the reality may be somewhere in between these two concepts or approaches. It must also be noted that there are presently several reactions in African countries against some of the Chinese attitudes. We should also add that foreign countries must refrain from any inter-

vention in internal affairs of African countries with the sole aim of exploiting them for their own economic and strategic interests.

In the light of the above-mentioned ideas, I believe, it could be said that Turkey as a democracy based on the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms should serve as a good model for Africa. Turkey's message to be directed to the African continent should focus on this goal.

In conclusion, the real security could be assured in Africa through democracy based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law which is a precondition for a sustainable development.

REFERENCES

Acemoglu, Daron-Robinson, James A. : Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Powerty, Crown Business, New York, 2012.

Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of South Africa: Constitutive Act of African Union (AU)-Part 1 and The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) -Part 2, Pretoria.

Pesnot, Patrick: Les Dessous de la Françafrique, Les Dossiers Secrets de Monsieur X, Editons Nouveau Monde, Paris 2008.

Reybrook, van David: Congo uneHistoire, Actes Sud, Babel, 2013.

Reynolds, Jonathan T. : Africa in World History, From Prehistory to the Present, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008.

Santander, Sebastian: (Sous la Direction de), L'Afrique, nouveau terrain de jeu des émergents, Editions Karthala, Paris, 2014.

Scholl-Latour, Peter: AfrikanischeTotenklage, Der Ausverkauf des SchwarzenKontinents, Goldmann Verlag, München 2003.

Scholl-Latour, Peter: Mord am großenFluß, Ein VierteljahrhundertafrikanischeUnabhängigkeit, Deutsche VerlageAnstalt, Stuttgart, 1986.

Shinn, David H.-Eisenman, Joshua: China and Africa, A Century of Engagement, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2012.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): Abuja, Nigeria, Interlink Print, October 2001.