



COUNTRY CONFLICT-ANALYSIS STUDIES

THE DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT

IN THE TRI-BORDER REGION OF THE SUDAN, CHAD AND THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

by

Patrick Berg

upon the commission of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation

March 2008

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This study has been drafted by an independent expert. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

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The author of the study is Patrick Berg, an experienced sociologist and political scientist specialised in African affairs. This study does not necessarily reflect the views of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

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Table of contents

1	Prior Remarks on the Methodology	7
2	Introduction and Executive Summary	8
3	Chad	10
3.1	The French Colonial Era	10
3.2	From Colony to Autocracy: Characteristics of Post-Independence Politics	11
3.3	Civil War and The Division of Chad	12
3.4	The Unfulfilled Promise of Democracy	14
3.5	Round Dance of Coalitions in the Struggle for Power	15
4	Central African Republic	18
4.1	French Colonial Period and Independence	18
4.2	Passing the Baton: From One Authoritarian Regime to Another	19
4.3	An Attempt at Democratisation from Within	20
4.4	An Attempt at Democratisation from Outside?	21
4.5	Rebellion in the Northwest	22
4.6	Rebellion in the Northeast	24
4.7	Squaring the Circle: Clinging to Power Through Participation	25
5	Sudan / Darfur	28
5.1	Escalation Following the Conclusion of Peace: The Darfur Peace Agreement	28
5.2	Partnership with Mixed Feelings: United Nations and African Union	29
5.3	New Player or Pawn in the Game? The Darfur Conflict in the Context of the CPA	30
6	The Conflict System in the Tri-Border Region	33
6.1	From Friends to Foes: Bashir and Deby	33
6.2	Strategic No-Man's Land: The Central African Republic	34
6.3	Collateral Damage: « Secondary Effects » of Regional and International Policy	35
7	International Peace Efforts	37
7.1	Focus on Darfur	37
7.2	Chad As the « Simpler Darfur »	38
7.3	Distant Bystanders: German Foreign Policy	39
8	Scenarios for the Near Future	41
8.1	Risks	41
8.2	Opportunities	43
9	Options for Action	45
10	Literature	48

Glossary

AEC	Assessment and Evaluation Commission, a body for monitoring the implementation of the CPA
AMIS	AU Mission in Sudan
APRD	<i>Armée pour la restauration de la République et la démocratie</i> (Army for the Restoration of the Republic and the Democracy), a rebel group in the Central African Republic
AU	African Union
CEMAC	<i>Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale</i> (Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa)
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CNS	<i>Conférence Nationale Souveraine</i> (Sovereign National Conference), Chad
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Sudan
CPDC	<i>Coordination des Partis politiques pour la Défense de la Constitution</i> (Coordination of the Parties for the Defence of the Constitution), Chad
DED	<i>Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst</i> (German Development Service)
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
EU	European Union
EUFOR	Military operation of the EU in Chad and the Central African Republic (within the framework of MINURCAT) since 2008
FACA	<i>Forces Armées Centrafricaines</i> (Central African Armed Forces)
FAN	<i>Forces Armées du Nord</i> (Armed Forces of the North), Chadian rebel group in the 1970s under the leadership of Hissene Habré
FDPC	<i>Front Démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain</i> (Democratic Front of the Central African People), rebel group in the Central African Republic
FOMUC	<i>Force multinationale en Centrafrique</i> (Multinational Force in Central Africa), military mission of CEMAC in the Central African Republic
FPP	<i>Front Patriotique pour le Progrès</i> (Patriotic Front for Progress), Party in the Central African Republic
FROLINAT	<i>Front de Libération National du Tchad</i> (Chadian National Liberation Front), Chadian rebel group in the 1960s and 1970s
FUC	<i>Front Uni pour le Changement</i> (United Front for Change), Chadian rebel group under the leadership of Mahamat Nour
GTZ	<i>Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit</i> , the German government's agency for development cooperation
GUNT	<i>Gouvernement d'Union Nationale de Transition</i> (Transitional Government of National Unity), name of a series of transitional governments in Chad at the beginning of the 1980s, also the name of the rebel group led by former President Oueddei after he was toppled

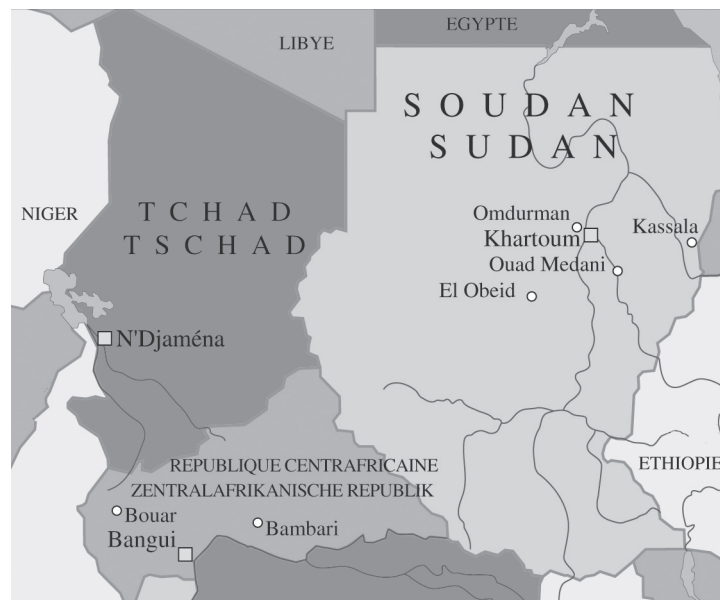
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement, rebel group in Darfur/Sudan
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army, rebel group from Uganda
MESAN	<i>Mouvement pour l'Évolution Sociale de l'Afrique Noire</i> (Movement for the Social Development of Black Africa), political party of the Central African Republic in the 1960s
MINURCA	<i>Mission des Nations Unies pour la Centrafrique</i> (Mission of the United Nations for Central Africa), UN Mission 1998-2000
MINURCAT	<i>Mission des Nations Unies en République Centrafricaine et au Tchad</i> (Mission of the United Nations in the Central African Republic and Chad), UN mission since 2007
MISAB	<i>Mission interafricaine de surveillance des accords de Bangui</i> (Inter-African Mission for the Surveillance of the Accords of Bangui), African Peace-Keeping Mission in the Central African Republic 1997-1998
MLC	<i>Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo</i> (Movement for the Liberation of the Congo), Congolese rebel movement under the leadership of Jean-Paul Bemba
MLPC	<i>Mouvement pour la Libération du Peuple Centrafricain</i> (Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People), political party in the Central African Republic
MPS	<i>Mouvement Patriotique du Salut</i> (Patriotic Salvation Movement), party of Chadian President Deby
NCP	National Congress Party, party of Sudanese President Bashir
PPT	<i>Parti Progressiste Tchadien</i> (Chadian Progressive Party), Chadian party in the 1950s and 1960s
RFC	<i>Rassemblement des Forces pour le Changement</i> (Assembly of the Forces for Change), Chadian rebel group under the leadership of the Erdimi brothers
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/ Army, rebel group from Darfur
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/ Army, Southern Sudanese rebel movement, member of the Government of National Unity since 2005
UDT	<i>Union Démocratique Tchadienne</i> (Democratic Union of Chad), Chadian Party in the 1950s and 1960s
UFDD	<i>Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement</i> (Union of the Forces for Democracy and Development), Chadian rebel group under the leadership of Mahamat Nouri
UFDD-F	<i>UFDD-fondamental</i> , splinter group from the UFDD under the leadership of Acheikh Ibn Omar
UFDR	<i>Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement</i> (Union of Democratic Forces for Unity), rebel group in the northeastern Central African Republic
UFVR	<i>Union des Forces Vives de la République</i> (Union of the Driving Forces of the Republic), amalgamation of political parties in the Central African Republic
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	United Nations - African Union Mission in Darfur
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in the Sudan

1 Prior Remarks on the Methodology

The analysis in this study and the information contained herein are based on the many years of experience of the author working as a country expert on the Sudan for various organisations. In this context he repeatedly travelled to various regions of the country over the period 2002-2006, including the south, Darfur and the border region with Eritrea.

To perform this study, the author travelled to Chad and the Central African Republic from the middle of November to the middle of December 2007. While in the region he also visited the crisis regions in eastern Chad and the northeast of the Central African Republic. In preparation for the journey, the author carried out an intensive research of the literature and, in October 2007, met with regional experts and diplomats in Paris and Brussels. In addition to representatives of the

French government, the EU Commission, the EU Council secretariat and representatives of various EU member countries, he also held discussions with human rights activists and humanitarian organisations working in these countries. In Chad and the Central African Republic, a series of expert interviews were conducted with representatives of the respective governments, the political opposition and civil society as well as members of international organisations and diplomatic missions. With the exception of the UFDR, however, no contact could be established with rebel movements in the two countries. A majority of the discussions were confidential. Hence, the study does not cite any individuals' names or provide information allowing statements to be traced to individuals.



2 Introduction and Executive Summary

The Darfur crisis raging in Western Sudan, with its millions of refugees, hundreds of thousands of people killed and unabated violence against the civilian population, has been at the centre of global public attention since the conflict escalated in autumn 2003. Movements of refugees and cross-border attacks have since also drawn attention to neighbouring regions in eastern Chad and the northern Central African Republic. The security situation there has deteriorated dramatically since the end of 2005, a development interpreted by the media as well as those involved in the political debate as a direct spill-over of the Darfur conflict.

National Causes of the Conflicts

This point of view, however, fails to fully explain the origins of the crises in the neighbouring countries. Although the crisis in Darfur has undoubtedly contributed to the further escalation of pre-existing conflicts, the problems in Chad and the Central African Republic each have separate causes of their own. This study seeks to provide a better understanding of the factors underlying these current crises by exploring their historical development and their specific dynamics. Special attention is devoted to Chad and the Central African Republic, whose role in the region has to date been given too little attention in the international, and in particular the German, debate. On this basis, the genesis of a new, complex conflict system is then described in which the conflicts, which originally developed separately, have today become closely intertwined. Finally, a summary of efforts by the international community to solve the crisis down to the present and a discussion of the opportunities and risks to future developments in the region form the basis for recommendations for international policy to help achieve a lasting, peaceful solution to the conflicts in the region.

Regional Interrelationships Instead of Spill-Over: Sudan, Darfur and Chad

What the three countries have in common is an almost permanent political instability emanating from the short-term policy of the former colonial powers and later on solidified by a series of vio-

lent power changes. Chad, for instance, has been marked by a division of the country along ethnic and religious lines since as far back as the colonial period. The lack of trust between the various groups of the population has led to the development of a repressive and authoritarian political culture in which ethnically homogenous elites exploit the resources of the country for their own benefit. Groups of rebels, which are also based on ethnic identity, compete for this exclusive control over the state machinery, showing little interest in a democratic reform of the authoritarian presidential system. Since independence changes in power have thus always been the result of military force and have merely led to a replacement of the ruling elite while otherwise maintaining the existing political system – a vicious cycle of violence and repression which has yet to be broken.

The tense security situation in the east of Chad, which has been deteriorating since 2005, can be attributed to three different factors. To begin with there is the continuous presence since the 1960s of various rebel groups, which use the sparsely populated eastern part of the country as a rear base. Support for these groups by the Sudanese government in recent years has not only exacerbated the regional security situation but also contributed to a weakening of the Chadian regime itself. Furthermore, Sudanese militia groups have been crossing the border and attacking the civilian population since 2005. Although these raids have somewhat subsided in the meantime, they have led to a dramatic escalation of the third factor, namely violent conflicts between ethnic groups in the region. The Sudanese strategy of destabilising Chad, however, is for its part a reaction to Chad's support for the rebel groups in Darfur. This support for armed opposition in the respective neighbouring country has led to such a close interrelation of the crises in both countries that a lasting peace in the region can only be brought about if both conflicts are addressed simultaneously.

On the Sudanese side of the border the process of fractionalisation among rebel movements accelerated following the collapse of the Darfur Peace Agreement in the spring of 2006. In view of the bewildering number of tiny splinter groups, the

chance of obtaining a common rebel position for possible peace negotiations has further plummeted. To grasp the full complexity of the Sudan's crisis, the focus of analysis has to be extended beyond Darfur to include the nationwide conflict between the small elite in the centre of the Sudan and numerous marginalised groups throughout the country. Experience since 2005 with the peace agreement concluded with the southern Sudanese rebel group SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) and the simultaneous outbreak of the rebellion in Darfur clearly demonstrates that an isolated solution of individual sub-conflicts cannot resolve the issues at the core of the Sudan's overall problems. The SPLM faces a dilemma with regard to this question, however. On the one hand, inclusion of all marginalised groups in an overall political solution would weaken the position of the dominant National Congress Party and significantly improve the chances of permanent self-determination for the south and peaceful coexistence in the region. On the other hand, the involvement of additional groups would mean at least in part giving up the privileges agreed upon by the SPLM and NCP in the peace accord. Then again, given that the implementation of the CPA has come to a virtual standstill, these privileges are themselves in jeopardy. The crucial factor deciding the future of the Sudan will therefore be whether the SPLM maintains its coalition with the National Congress Party or whether the Government of National Unity unravels – a development which in all probability would lead to a renewed outbreak of the civil war.

Central Africa: Settling Old Scores within National Borders

The Central African Republic has also seen an escalation of violence over the last few years. This is primarily due, however, to internal conflicts in the wake of the military coup in 2003. In addition to supporters of the former president, the very soldiers who originally helped the new President Bozizé seize the reigns of power are now fighting him. These mercenaries feel insufficiently rewarded for their services and are trying to settle the score by way of rebellion. It is scarcely surprising then, that rebel groups have cropped up not only in the region bordering on Darfur, but in the northwestern part of the country as well.

In spite of sporadic points of tangency with conflicts in the neighbouring countries such as, for instance, Chadian rebels passing through the northeastern part of the Central African Republic in their attempted coup d'état in April 2006, the problems besetting the Central African Republic can still be analyzed and solved largely separately from the problems in its neighbouring countries.

Blind International Activism without Strategy

The international community has for years been attempting in vain to contribute to a solution to the crises in the tri-border region of Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic. An analysis of the efforts undertaken so far exposes three main deficits which need to be avoided in the future. First of all, the individual conflicts should not be viewed in an isolated manner as they have in the past. Instead a common strategy needs to be developed for the closely intertwined national and regional levels of conflict. Secondly, the actors in the international community must look beyond their own particularistic interests and better coordinate their efforts to obtain a peaceful solution. Finally, the belief that an international military mission stationed in the region could contribute to a pacification of the region must be dispensed with in favour of a return to the primacy of a political solution. In this context, it is crucial to recognise the autocratic nature of their regimes – and many of their domestic political opponents – as the one underlying cause of conflict in all three countries under scrutiny. Political solutions must for this reason not be limited to a short-term power-sharing agreements between the forces which happen to be dominant on a particular day. Instead, political reforms aimed at institutionalising conflict-resolution mechanisms which are independent of particular actors must be assigned priority.

3 Chad

Chad has been marked by permanent conflict since its independence from French colonial power in 1960. A whole host of authoritarian regimes have followed one another, with power changes usually coming about through military coups. Each regime is characterised by a concentration of power in the person of the president and a small, usually ethnically homogenous leadership clique which seeks to defend its privileges by any and all means. The result: not only does the country lack any nationally oriented social and economic policy – it is also ruled by a repressive state apparatus which crushes any form of opposition. Resistance initially coalesced at the regional level and was primarily aimed at fending off government decisions which were perceived as negatively impacting on local living conditions. With the protests escalating into open civil war at the beginning of the 1980s, however, a change in the pattern of conflict can be witnessed: the desire, however diffuse, for an improvement in the political system has given way to a competition for the control over the repressive state apparatus, which in and of itself is no longer questioned.

3.1 The French Colonial Era

Prior to the establishment of French colonial power, there was no cohesive political structure in the territory comprising present-day Chad. In the predominantly Muslim north¹, however, state structures existed in the form of competing sultanates and kingdoms. In the south, where animist religions prevailed, there was scarcely any political organisation above the village level. Relations between the two regions were limited to regular raids by the northern kingdoms to abduct slaves from the south.

Given these different situations, the reactions to French efforts to establish a uniform administrative structure varied considerably. The kingdoms in

the north resisted by force of arms, but were eventually subdued by the French through military force. Although the ensuing radical restructuring of administrative structures as dictated by the colonial power² achieved the intended reduction in the power of indigenous rulers at the time, it also led to a firm rejection of the imposed system. In the south, on the other hand, there was initially, in the absence of any organised forces, no significant resistance to colonisation.

The political conditions prevailing at the outset of colonisation combined with geographic and climatic differences between the two regions (fertile soils in the south as opposed to a largely arid climate in the north) led to the colony being divided in a “useful” Chad (*le Tchad utile*) in the south and the remainder, which was deemed to be unimportant. The French colonial masters decided to prioritise development efforts in the south, and limited their ambitions for the north to merely preserving control of the territory. Economic development of the south went hand in hand with the establishment of schools to train local personnel needed to perform simple administrative tasks. Christian missionaries, who also tended to focus their work on the animist population in the south and ignore the north, established additional schools, which over time led to the formation of an educated elite – even if small in number – in the south.³

² Initially, Chad was assigned to the administrative territory of French Equatorial Africa (Afrique équatoriale française, AEF), which included the regions of present-day Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and the Central African Republic. There were numerous reforms in AEF administrative structures till independence in 1960, often including changes in the internal and external borders of the territory. The present-day borders of Chad date back to 1929.

³ After experiencing initial setbacks, the colonial administration showed little enthusiasm for the establishment of educational facilities in the north. The population of the north, which in general exhibited a disliking for the innovations of the French, who it perceived as occupiers, looked upon the secular French schools as inappropriate for Muslims, forcing the first schools to close down after a few weeks for lack of pupils. The success of private Islamic schools and a Franco-Arabian school on the other hand refutes a prejudice maintained down to the present day to the effect that the population of the north is wary of education.

¹ The “north” of Chad generally designates the region to the northeast of the Chari River, which accounts for about two-thirds of the country. Most of the region, particularly the extreme north, is desert, however, and only sparsely populated or uninhabited.

3.2 From Colony to Autocracy: Characteristics of Post-Independence Politics

With the coalescence of independence movements all over the world following World War II, France began to prepare for an orderly withdrawal from Chad. The new French Constitution of 1946, which provided for both representation of the colonies in a consultative chamber of the National Assembly and the establishment of local parliaments in the colonies, prompted two political parties to form in Chad. The *Parti Progressiste Tchadien* (PPT), whose clear aim was the complete independence of Chad and a modernisation of the social and political structures of the country, and the more conservative *Union Démocratique Tchadienne* (UDT), whose members came from traditional elites and were intent on maintaining their existing privileges. Over time the political discourse became more and more marked by regional and religious undertones, however, as the UDT, which was dominated by traditional Muslim elites from the north, began to increasingly view the modernisation efforts of the PPT as a strategy of the Christian south to follow in the footsteps of the colonial power and dominate and control the north. As the regional and in particularly religious nature of the UDT became more and more pronounced, France resolved to support the PPT, which it had previously regarded with a wary eye. So it was that a leader of the PPT, Francois Tombalbaye, was appointed Prime Minister during the transitional phase leading to complete independence in 1959. In elections held the same year, Tombalbaye was able to win a clear victory over the conservative alliance, which was beset by internal differences, to become the first president of an independent Chad.

An economy exclusively focused on export, weak administrative structures and a shortage of adequately trained domestic skilled labour posed considerable problems for the government. When there were no perceivable improvements in the everyday lives of the population and with taxes increasing to finance public spending, which until then had been subsidised by France, criticism of the new leadership began to mount rapidly. Tombalbaye interpreted this criticism as an attack on his political prowess and reacted by adopting a hard line. The regime developed a siege menta-

lity while Tombalbaye set about concentrating power in his own hands. After initially alienating all the various groupings and regions of the country equally through repressive measures, a government reshuffle in 1963 for the first time manifested a clear dominance of southern representatives – a dominance which was later also reflected in parliament and leading positions in the bureaucracy and state-run enterprises⁴.

The disenchantment of the population with the regime and its generally corrupt civil servants took an increasingly violent turn in the middle of the 1960s, with initially local conflicts tending to spread rapidly. The first step towards a permanent organisation of armed resistance was taken in 1966 with the formation of the rebel movement FRONLINAT (*Front de Libération National du Tchad*) in exile in the Sudan. At the beginning of the 1970s FROLINAT entered into a loose alliance with the Toubou, who were also rebelling in the north, and began to apply considerable pressure to the regime, not least due to the massive support furnished to the new alliance from Libya. An initiative on the part of Tombalbaye to get the rebels to negotiate failed dramatically after his mediator Hissene Habré switched sides, joining up with the insurgency. The regime was ultimately only able to cling to power with the support of a French military force, which had been requested by Tombalbaye as far back as 1968. When the French withdrew in 1972, fighting erupted again in no time. Faced with growing criticism, including from his own ranks, Tombalbaye responded by increasingly putting the population and leadership elites under the surveillance of the security services. Set against this atmosphere, the announcement of a radical restructuring of the army accompanied by the simultaneous arrest of the army leadership in 1975 triggered a revolt by younger officers, in the wake of which Tombalbaye was killed in a firefight between the army and the presidential guard.

⁴ The link between political power and ethnicity became progressively more institutionalised over time. Tombalbaye dissolved the PPT in 1973 in order to make himself even more politically unassailable as founding father and *spiritus rectus* of the new party of unity *Mouvement national pour la révolution culturelle et sociale* (MNRC). The abandonment of colonial structures, hailed as a “return to the roots”, was not limited to merely renaming French settlements (the capital Fort Lamy did not receive its present-day name of N’Djamena until 1973), but rather developed as a tool for political subjugation. Thus, the Yondo initiation ritual of the Sara intended for adolescents was turned into a humiliating prerequisite for membership in the public service.

Tombalbaye's regime has left its mark on the political culture of Chad down to the present day. The ongoing crisis which set in at independence can be described as a cyclical repetition of various phases of his rule: a new president takes over the reigns of power, usually through the violent overthrow of the *ancien regime*, and with the help of repressive security forces concentrates government power in his own hands and members of his own ethnic group while paying no heed whatsoever to notions like separation of powers. The exploitation of state resources for private purposes goes hand in hand with the neglect of public services. Criticism of the regime is brushed aside or suppressed, and in lieu of any democratic or other legal channels, the opposition ultimately turns into an armed resistance, for its part also organised along ethnic lines. The regime takes repressive measures, leading to the further erosion of its backing among the population and a continuously escalating vicious cycle of resistance and repression. The manner in which the president copes with the crisis leads to differences within the regime, and members of the ruling clique join the opposition or establish their own rebel movements. The regime, by this point weakened from within, is no longer a match for the combined strength of the rebel groups and forfeits power to one of them, for the cycle to begin anew.

3.3 Civil War and the Division of Chad

The military government appointed after the death of Tombalbaye constitutes an exception here in certain respects. It did not primarily pursue an ethnic agenda, for instance. The brief period of its existence was marked by constant instability, however, which meant that it was not able to develop and institute any new political processes or structures. The overthrow of the old regime was ultimately the result of impulsive action taken by young army officers without any political preparation whatsoever. The new president placed in power by the military, former Chief of Staff Félix Malloum, did not qualify for this office because of any political vision, as it were, but rather pure and simple because of his position as highest-ranking military officer.

FROLINAT continued its insurgency despite the change in government. However, a dispute bet-

ween its two leaders, Goukouni Oueddei and Hisseine Habré, over the role of Libya⁵ in the middle of the 1970s, led to a split in the group and the creation of the *Forces Armées du Nord* (FAN) by Habré. President Malloum took advantage of the rift, and with the help of foreign mediators succeeded in enticing Habré to conclude a peace agreement and form a Government of National Unity (*Gouvernement d'Union Nationale de Transition*, GUNT), in which Malloum retained the office of president while Habré took up the position of prime minister.

The unclear division of powers between the two offices, particularly in view of Habré's lust for power, quickly led to conflicts, however. The new government formed by Habré retained only three ministers from the south, with all other posts going to members of ethnic groups from the north. This polarisation led to a growing split in society, even in the capital of N'Djamena, which had been marked by tolerance up to this point. When in 1979 the power struggle between the President and the Prime Minister degenerated into open fighting in the streets of the capital, one part of the national army fell in behind Habré, who also received additional support from factions of FROLINAT which had not participated in the government until then. With the help of these forces, Habré was able to take control over N'Djamena. Malloum fled into exile while the troops still loyal to him withdrew to the southwest of the country, soon joined by an exodus of members of southern ethnic groups out of N'Djamena.

Not only did the fighting destroy buildings and infrastructure, it also shattered the heterogeneous social structure of the capital. The civil war hence marked the solidification of north-south antagonisms, which had at least until then been considered reversible. While in the years 1979-1982 a largely autonomous region was established in the southwest under the leadership of an officer and former foreign minister of Malloum, Wadal Abdelkadar Kamougué, a series of dysfunctional transitional governments succeeded each other in

⁵ Libya had occupied the so-called Azouzou Strip in 1973, a belt several hundred miles wide running along the Chad-Libyan border. While Habré insisted on the territorial sovereignty of Chad and unconditional Libyan withdrawal, Oueddei, the son of the traditional Toubou leader living in Libyan exile, advocated negotiation and a compromise.

N'Djamena, their common distinguishing feature being the dominance of northern groupings. Although a government with the FROLINAT leader Oueddei acting as President, Kamougué as Vice President and Habré as Minister of Defence was formed in 1979, it was marked by power struggles between Oueddei and Habré. New fighting broke out in the capital as soon as March 1980, this time exclusively involving factions from the north. Libya hastened to the relief of the beleaguered Oueddei, supporting all the factions fighting against Habré, who Tripoli would not tolerate as a member of a Chadian government due to his anti-Libyan stance. Libya bombed FAN positions and even deployed its own ground troops. Habré was ultimately unable to hold his ground in the face of this military superiority and fled in 1981 to the Sudan. But already in June of 1982 he left his Sudanese exile to advance once again on N'Djamena. Obtaining the support of additional factions involved in the civil war, and with Oueddei this time lacking Libyan protection, Habré was able to seize power virtually without a struggle.

The return of Habré also meant the return to the cycle of power changes in Chad described in the foregoing. Habré immediately disbanded all existing political structures and appointed himself new president with far-reaching powers. All important positions in the government were occupied by members of the Gorane, Habré's ethnic group. Zaghawa and Hadjerai combatants, who were members of the FAN and had helped Habré to victory, felt that they had been deceived, as did members of southern ethnic groups which had aligned with Habré against Kamougué in a rebellion in 1982. To cement his control and put a halt to oppositional activities, Habré established the notorious secret service, the DDS (*Direction de la Documentation et de la Sécurité*), also controlled by the Gorane, which is said to have tortured more than 50,000 prisoners and killed 40,000 people⁶.

Habré's rule is characteristic of the political culture in Chad in another respect, the so-called *ralliement*, a French term designating a short term tacti-

cal alliance between leaders of competing groups which have neither any common long-term strategic interests nor any real will to cooperate. A common practice among rebel groups, Habré turned this into a tool of government, with the alliance usually being forged through the award of a ministerial post. While this is meant to demonstrate to the outside world the President's willingness to engage in a dialogue and accept compromises with all "reasonable" forces, it allows the regime – by temporarily neutralising *one* of its opponents – to concentrate its offensive on the remaining rebel groups. With the political system entirely geared to the President and limited legal possibilities for a minister to do anything of significance, the *ralliement* is not associated with any change in direction by the government whatsoever. The reward for the rebels, rather, are the opportunities for personal enrichment offered to the leader through the ministerial post and regular payment of wages for his troops, whose integration into the national army is usually stipulated in the agreements. In many cases the rebels use the period of the *ralliement*, however, to regroup and rearm, leaving the government again when a propitious moment comes along.

Habré was able to persuade a whole host of rebel groups to join up in a *ralliement* over the years 1985-1987. Even his long-standing arch-rival Oueddei joined the government in 1987. However, in view of the growing surveillance and repression, ranging all the way to political assassination, from which even Habré's own companions and comrades could not feel secure, the unpopularity of the regime grew. The Zaghawa, who felt they had not received their just rewards for their contribution to Habré's seizure of power, staged an initially unsuccessful attempt to depose Habré in April of 1989. One of the leaders of the coup attempt, Idriss Deby, however continued his scheming with the support of the government in Khartoum, but also France and Libya, from his exile in the Sudan. Under the banner of the *Mouvement Patriotique du Salut* (MPS), founded by him, and with the aid of additional rebel groups in Chad, Deby ultimately succeeded in bringing down Habré at the end of November 1989.

⁶ For a detailed presentation on crimes committed under Habré, see the report by the Chadian Investigation Commission *Les crimes et détournements de l'ex-Président Habré et de ses complices*, Éditions L'Harmattan (1993). A summary has been published by Amnesty International: Chad – The Habré Legacy (2001).

3.4 The Unfulfilled Promise of Democracy

The renewed change in power in Chad took place at a time of revolutionary reorganisation of the international nation-state system following the end of the Cold War and in the middle of a wave of democratisation of authoritarian regimes in Europe and Africa. Against this background, it is scarcely surprising that Deby pledged to institute freedom and democracy in his first speech following the seizure of power. Deby's policies, however, followed the same familiar format. Although he appointed, for public consumption, a commission to investigate violations of human rights under Habré and disbanded the secret service (DDS), the recommendations of the commission, published in 1992, were for the most part ignored.⁷ After his military victory, Deby's pro-democracy rhetoric was buying time to arm for the political struggle. His MPS was the only legally recognised party until the end of 1991, and most of the important posts in the government, party and state-run enterprises were awarded to Deby's ethnic group, the Zaghawa. This concentration of power rapidly summoned forth resistance, and Deby had to ward off a total of three coup attempts from October 1991 to June 1992. The attempts were followed by arbitrary arrests, torture and execution of suspected members of the opposition and a series of purges of the government bureaucracy and the army. In spite of these obstacles, the belated legalisation of a multi-party system in 1991 was followed by a wave of parties being founded and a lively debate over the organisation of the national conference pledged by Deby to draft a new constitution.

The *Conférence Nationale Souveraine* (CNS) finally convened from January until April 1993. With around 800 participants from the government, political opposition, civil society and representatives of traditional and religious authorities, it was viewed by all sides as being largely representative of the Chad population. In spite of this, the CNS was not able to meet the high expectations and hopes for a genuine democratic transformation,

not least because Deby succeeded through skilful manipulation before and after the Conference to turn its resolutions into non-binding recommendations.⁸ Although the Conference was able to have its way in appointing a prime minister from its ranks, considerable strife among the opposition allowed Deby to carry on the business of government without paying much heed to other forces. Even the drafting of the new constitution was performed without any consultation whatsoever. The draft constitution, which was not completed until 1996, once again provided for a strong presidential system in which both the prime minister, as head of government, and the judiciary, as the guardians of justice, were not only appointed by the president but could also be replaced by him at any time. The opposition, whose proposals for changes were rejected out of hand, boycotted the referendum on the constitution and rejected the majority vote in favour of it, arguing that it had been manipulated. The parliamentary elections in 1996/97, in which Deby and his MPS won a clear victory, were also clearly rigged.

The election-rigging illustrates how much hopes for a real democratisation of the country in the early 1990s had been dashed. Although the promise of a serious debate over the future of the country within the framework of the national conference initially galvanised all relevant groupings and strata of the population, infusing the entire country with a new dynamic, the opposition did not succeed in setting aside particularistic interests for the sake of a common societal project and bringing sufficient pressure to bear on the regime to force it to carry out fundamental reforms.

In view of the weakness of the civil opposition, the government tended to attach priority to combating the numerous rebel groups in the ensuing period. Even with the protests in the wake of obviously rigged elections in 2001 and 2002, in which the opposition lost almost all its seats in Parliament, the political opposition and civil society still proved unable to attain enough coherence to seriously threaten the regime. While

⁷ The human rights organisation Human Rights Watch has been working together with victims to bring charges against Habré since 1999. A procedure is currently being prepared in Senegal, where Habré is living in exile. For a summary of the current situation, see <http://www.hrw.org/justice/habre/>.

⁸ On this see Robert Buijtenhuijs : *Transition et élections au Tchad 1993-1997. Restauration autoritaire et recomposition politique*, Paris 1998. For a detailed description of the CNS, see Robert Buijtenhuijs : *La Conférence nationale souveraine du Tchad. Un essai d'histoire immédiate*, Paris 1993.

civil society had organised as far back as 2002, the political parties only followed suit in 2004 after the announcement of an amendment to the Constitution aimed at making possible a third term of office for Deby. In the face of bitter opposition the amendment was finally pushed through in a referendum held in June 2005, which was boycotted by a considerable section of the population and prompted the opposition parties to break off all dialogue with the government. In elections which were also widely boycotted, Deby had himself re-elected president in 2006. However, not least due to his initially pro-Sudanese stance in the Darfur crisis but also due to differences over the use of crude oil revenue,⁹ he had lost the backing of the Zaghawa, and began to run up against considerable opposition to his renewed candidacy from his own ranks. The months leading up to his re-election were marked by a series of desertions by close advisors as well as entire units of the presidential guard,¹⁰ seriously jeopardising the survival of the Deby regime.

3.5 Round Dance of Coalitions in the Struggle for Power

The Deby regime is facing a serious crisis and the struggle over its succession is in full swing. At least 10 groupings can be identified in the camp of the armed opposition alone,¹¹ each of which is pursuing its own objectives in frequently shifting alliances. On the part of civil opposition, the most

important political parties joined together in an effective alliance in 2004 to fight against the amendment to the Constitution (*Coordination des Partis politiques pour la Défense de la Constitution*, CPDC), after broad sections of civil society had already taken a stance one year before by issuing a general call for peace and reconciliation, thereafter organising in a stable network structure (*Comité de Suivi de l'Appel à la Paix et à la Réconciliation*, CSAPR). As mentioned previously, members of the inner-most part of the regime also turned on Deby in 2004 and have since then been actively engaged in efforts to get rid of him.

But in spite of this opposition on all sides, Deby is far from being beat. Probably his greatest advantage is the lack of unity among the opposition. The rebel groups are at odds with one another, as their objectives, namely to place their own respective leader and ethnic group in power, are incompatible. The civil opposition parties also lack a political program, on the basis of which a viable coalition of interests between different forces could be negotiated. Finally, there is no communication between the different oppositional circles. Distrust between political parties and civil society is already rampant, and no real cooperation takes place. Moreover, neither grouping has contact to the rebel groups, which for their part also exhibit little inclination to cooperate in democratic structures.

Deby is well aware that his strength lies in the weakness of his enemies and is therefore seeking to take advantage of existing differences and if possible amplify them. In his dealings with rebel movements, Deby resorted to the tried-and-proven method of *ralliement* in December 2006, concluding a peace agreement with the *Front Uni pour le Changement* (FUC) and co-opting its leader Mahamat Nour¹² as new minister of defence. The FUC was considered to be the strongest military force at the time after nearly having ousted the regime in April that year in a drive from the east of the country all the way to the capital. Through the at least temporary neutralisation of this danger

⁹ Oil production commenced in Chad in 2003 and has accounted for a considerable increase in government revenue. A loan from the World Bank to build a pipeline to Cameroon was made contingent upon most of these funds being spent on social services in the area of education and health. Deby was able to water down the terms of the agreement in 2005 to also allow revenue to be used to purchase weapons. On this see also Basedau, Matthias: *Politische Krise und Erdöl im Tschad: ein "Modell" am Ende?*, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies 2006, http://www.giga-hamburg.de/content/publikationen/pdf/gf_afrika_0603.pdf.

¹⁰ A coup attempt from the ranks of the Zaghawa was staged as early as May 2004, with another attempt following in October 2005. At the same time the formation of the *Socle pour le changement, l'unité et la démocratie* (SCUD) served as a rallying point for armed Zaghawa resistance to Deby. In addition to members of the Republican Guard, Deby's closest advisors, such as for instance his nephews Tom and Timan Erdimi, have also joined SCUD.

¹¹ For a summary of the most important rebel groups and alliances, see the HRW report «They Came Here to Kill Us» (January 2007) or <http://www.ialtchad.com/opposition.htm>.

¹² Nour initially supported Deby in his seizure of power in 1990, but then withdrew to the Sudan as a private businessman as a result of growing differences. In 2005, with considerable Sudanese aid, he founded the FUC, most of whose ranks are members of his own ethnic group, the Tama.

and the simultaneous strengthening of the army through the purchase of substantial amounts of new arms (including armoured vehicles, helicopters and jet fighters), Deby has been able to put the remaining rebel groups under considerable military pressure.

These groups, however, have been encouraged by the desertion of a previous minister of defence, Mahamat Nouri (not to be confused with the leader of the FUC, Mahamat Nour!), who succeeded in June 2006 in uniting different, mostly Gorane-dominated, groups of rebels under the umbrella of the newly founded UFDD (*Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement*).¹³ Meanwhile, Deby's foes among the ranks of the Zaghawa finally joined together, following a series of formations and mergers of smaller groups, under the leadership of the Erdimi brothers in the *Rassemblement des Forces pour le Changement* (RFC). The small rebel group *Concorde Nationale Tchadienne* (CNT), led by Hassan Saleh Al-Djinédi and whose combatants come from various Arab tribes in the eastern part of Chad, also continued to play a role.

In tandem with his ongoing attempts to obtain a military solution, Deby continued his efforts to co-opt additional opposition groups into the government. In September 2007 he signed a peace agreement in Tripoli with a less important rebel group and reached an accord with a group of exile politicians in Cotonou the following month. Separate negotiations, under the auspices of Libya and with the support of the Sudan, culminated in the conclusion of the Sirte Peace Accord on October 25 between Deby and the rebel groups listed above. The strategy of concluding several parallel agreements instead of one single accord, however, clearly demonstrates that the regime's aim was not a lasting peace accommodating the interests of the various actors involved, but rather the consolidation of its own control. This is also highlighted by a review of the agreements themselves, which instead of trying to solve the country's structural problems exclusively deal with the issues of an amnesty for the rebels and their integration into

the government and army. The lack of any specific arrangements with respect to these endeavours, where the details pose considerable difficulties, is an indication of the disinclination to actually implement the arrangements. It is, then, scarcely surprising that the Sirte Peace Accord was repudiated scarcely one month after it was signed – ostensibly because of insufficient implementation – and the UFDD and RFC began a new offensive against the Chad army at the end of November 2007. The FUC also took part in the fighting, following Mahamat Nour's withdrawal from the government at around the same time. The confrontation caused heavy losses on both sides and failed to produce any clear victor. Both UFDD factions and the RFC then agreed upon closer military cooperation, regrouping with Sudanese support. At the beginning of February 2008 the three groups advanced on N'Djamena, penetrating all the way to the presidential palace there. Thanks to French and Libyan help, Deby was able to frustrate the coup attempt, however, and force the rebels to retreat.

Before this latest coup attempt, Deby had opted for integration and negotiation in his dealings with the civil opposition. In February 2007, for instance, he appointed the leader of an opposition party, who had opposed him in the three previous presidential elections, successor to the recently deceased prime minister. Under the pressure of the international community, and in particular the European Commission, Deby declared his willingness to engage in a political dialogue "to strengthen the political process in Chad" shortly thereafter. The EU was also successful in persuading the political parties aligned in the CPDC to end their boycott on talks with the government declared following the 2005 amendment to the Constitution. The ambassador of the EU Commission also assumed an important role as mediator between the government and the opposition in the further course of the dialogue. Actual talks got under way at the end of July, with the government and all 85 registered parties, 30 to 40 of which can be considered to be from the government camp (the so-called *majorité présidentielle*), taking part. An accord signed on 13 August by no less than 82 parties essentially provides for the parliamentary elections originally planned for later that year to be postponed by two years as well

¹³ His deputy, Acheikh Ibn Omar, left the new organisation a few months later to found *UFDD-fondamental* (UFDD-F), but has been working closely with the larger sister organisation down to the present.

as a host of measures to ensure their fairness, such as the creation of a voter registry on the basis of a new census, the establishment of an independent election commission and a number of changes in the Electoral Law.

One drawback to the Accord remains its exclusive nature. Both the government and the opposition parties rejected involvement by civil society, thereby sowing doubts in their ranks as to the serious will to create the foundations for a truly democratic process through the dialogue. The absence of the armed rebel groups in the talks also harbours a certain risk, as unclear articles in the Accord may be interpreted as contradicting the separately negotiated peace agreements and could lead to complications later. In view of the fact that the Sirte Peace Accord has in the meantime failed for other reasons, these misgivings are of secondary importance, however. More important are those elements of the Accord which already early on encouraged the shifting of attention from the actual issues in the political dialogue to the jockeying for political power in the run-up to possible elections. On the one hand, the agreement concentrates on technical and administrative aspects of the elections instead of solutions to the causes of crisis in Chad. On the other hand, a passage in the Accord suggests the possibility of integrating representatives of the opposition in the government even before the planned elections. The hope of individual politicians to seize this opportunity has caused the oppositional alliance CPDC, which had been firmly united in the fight against a third term for Deby, to already begin to show cracks.

The coup attempt in February 2008 now calls into question the further implementation of the Accord more fundamentally and in particular the hoped-for gradual opening of the regime. Directly following the retreat of the rebels from N'Djamena, arrests were made among the oppositional leaders, including among others the chairman of the committee for the monitoring of the Accord of 13 August. A few days later martial law was decreed throughout the country. Under these conditions an open political dialogue with the government has become a distant goal.

4 Central African Republic

The Central African Republic is not only one of the poorest countries in the world – it also has to bear some particularly weighty burdens of the past. In addition to the deficient physical infrastructure, the absence of government administration throughout much of the country poses a constraint to development. Even when it was a French colony, the present-day republic had been unable to cover the costs of the administrative apparatus on its own, and till this day the country remains dependent on direct budgetary aid of international donors in order to plug the biggest holes in the state budget. Through this and other types of assistance, France in particular has been able to maintain its influence over the former colony even after its formal independence. The degree of this influence is illustrated, for example, by the fact that there has not been any change in the country's government to date without at least the consent, if not the active intervention of France.

These governments have produced a sobering balance sheet, however. Instead of promoting the country's development, a series of kleptocratic regimes have availed themselves of the resources of the country to enrich themselves while embroiling peacefully coexisting ethnic groups in competition with one another. In this situation France is attempting to shirk its responsibility and persuade international organisations to assume the tasks of solving the country's problems. There may even be an opportunity herein, provided that France aims not merely at spreading the costs of an engagement in the Central African Republic among several actors, but also allows more neutral players to develop a strategy to cope with the crisis.

4.1 French Colonial Period and Independence

The Central African Republic has a relatively young history, as many of the groups living in the country at present did not arrive to settle there until the middle of the 18th century, most of them moving into the area from the south and the west. Similar to the situation in the south of what later became Chad, people living in the region, back then

called Oubangui after the river, were not organised much politically and were frequently the victims of slave raids by the surrounding sultanates.

At the end of the 19th century the Europeans arrived in the region, dividing it among themselves on the drawing-board at the Conference of Berlin. France's interest in the region was in particular based on its plans to expand its colonies all the way to the eastern coast of Africa. After this strategy was thwarted by the British, the newly won colony quickly receded in importance. Instead of investing its own resources in the development of the country, France awarded generous concessions to private enterprises, which for their part exploited the population with exceedingly brutal methods.¹⁴

The ensuing colonial history of the Central African Republic mirrors in part that of Chad. The establishment of a public administration was even more confined to the capital city here, which meant that there was scarcely any need for qualified indigenous staff nor thus, as a consequence, any reason to build schools. The minuscule elite in the colony was for the most part educated in Christian missionary schools. It is scarcely surprising, then, that the first Catholic priest in the colony, Barthélemy Boganda, was also the initiator of the first political party. Founded in 1949, the *Mouvement pour l'Évolution Sociale de l'Afrique Noire* (MESAN), whose declared goal was independence, enjoyed the undisputed domination of the political arena into the 1960s. To begin with, Boganda represented the colony in the French National Assembly and was later appointed as the first prime minister of the Central African Republic in 1958. He died a few months later in a plane crash, however, before the colony officially attained independence in August 1960.

¹⁴ The colonisation of the Oubangi-Chari region is frequently characterised as the most brutal in the history of the French empire. See Pierre Saulnier, *Le Centrafrique: Entre mythe et réalité* (Paris 1998). See also the travel report by the French contemporary and writer André Gide "Voyage au Congo" (Paris 1927).

4.2 Passing the Baton: From One Authoritarian Regime to Another

Abel Goumba, a companion of Boganda over many years, succeeded him as prime minister, but – like Boganda before him – met with little enthusiasm in Paris for his emancipatory ideas.¹⁵ France instead threw its support behind the Minister of the Interior, David Dacko, who a few weeks later, with the building surrounded by his armed supporters, had himself elected as the new head of government by parliamentary deputies.

The challenges facing the new government were enormous. The population had hoped that independence would lead to a rapid, perceptible improvement in their living conditions, which was, however, scarcely possible given the lack of infrastructure, sufficient indigenous skilled labour and steady state revenue. Overwhelmed by the challenges posed by the task of developing the country, Dacko concentrated on buttressing his own power by expanding authoritarian structures on the one hand (through the institution of a one-party state, restrictions on freedoms, arbitrary arrest of critics, etc.) and including elites in a system of personal enrichment from resources of the state apparatus on the other. As a result of his obvious inability to at least slow down the economic malaise, Dacko began to contemplate, in the middle of the 1960s, the possibility of stepping down voluntarily. The commander of the army, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, however pre-empted this move and seized power in a coup staged on New Year's Eve in 1965.

In addition to securing the interests of a tiny elite, Dacko had also served the interests of the French economy while disappointing the expectations of the general population. For this reason, Bokassa, with his promises of fighting corruption and pushing forward the economic development of the country, was able to gain the – at times enthusiastic – support of a majority of Central Africans for his take-over. Thanks to at least symbolic successes, such as the construction of the first modern buildings in the capital, he also managed

to maintain his popularity for a few years in spite of his measures evidently taken to consolidate an increasingly autocratic system. Bokassa dissolved Parliament, suspended the Constitution and did not hesitate to also use torture and assassination to suppress the opposition.

In view of excesses which were no longer to be overlooked¹⁶ and the growing oppression, resistance finally grew. In 1976, Bokassa's Prime Minister Felix-Ange Patassé resigned in protest over his policies and subsequently organised the opposition in exile with the aid of his newly founded party, *Mouvement pour la Libération du Peuple Centrafricain* (MLPC). The brutal suppression of protests over back-pay owed to the public service, in the wake of which hundreds of demonstrating schoolchildren were tortured and killed in 1979, ultimately caused France to withdraw its previously unswaying support for Bokassa. While he was wooing the support of Gaddafi in Libya in September 1979, French paratroopers reinstalled David Dacko, who had accompanied them in the same plane from Paris, in the presidential palace in the capital of Bangui.

In spite of the rejoicing over the end of the Bokassa regime, Dacko's return to power met with little sympathy among the population, all the more so as he was obviously under French tutelage.¹⁷ Dacko soon began to once again doubt his suitability for the office of president and resolved in September 1981 – with approval from Paris – to put the affairs of state in the hands of the military. The new military government under André Kolingba suspended the Constitution once more, thereby undoing Dacko's first cautious steps towards democratising the country, and returned to a neopatrimonial style of government. Kolingba for the most part left decisions affecting daily policy up to French advisors, while he himself concentrated on awarding lucrative positions to his extended family and began a massive recruitment of

¹⁵ Down to the present day there have been rumours that the crash of Boganda's plane was an assassination ordered by the French. On this see, for example, the book by the French colonial official who served as advisor to Boganda's government: Pierre Kalck, *Bathélémy Boganda 1910-1959 "élu de Dieu et des centrafricains"* (Saint Maur 1995).

¹⁶ At the beginning of the 1970s Bokassa's projects lost all connection to the development of the country, instead serving the purpose of sating his growing megalomania. After Bokassa had himself declared president for life in 1972, he instituted a monarchy in 1976, ascending the throne as Emperor Bokassa I.

¹⁷ Paris placed a host of political advisors in key positions in the government. One staff member of the French secret service, the Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (DGSE), Jean-Claude Manton, was given the post of personal advisor to Dacko, and control over virtually all governmental affairs.

members of his ethnic group, the Yakoma, for the army. Officers from other ethnic groups, such as François Bozizé, who was a member of the Gbaya, soon enough began to fear for their own chances of promotion and attempted to topple Kolingba in March 1983. The coup attempt failed, however, and its leaders, among them the chairman of the civil opposition party MLPC, Patassé, fled into exile. Kolingba reacted with a bloody punitive campaign in the home region of the rebels in the northwest of the country, thereby establishing for the first time ethnic identity as the crucial factor in the political culture of the Central African Republic.

4.3 An Attempt at Democratisation from Within

At the beginning of the 1990s, oppositional forces from all parts of the spectrum joined together in an effective coalition with the aim of democratising the country. After month-long strikes by the public service and the private sector, supported by massive pressure from the international donor community, the opposition was able to bring about the reintroduction of a multi-party system in 1991. The country's first free elections – on the execution of which even France had insisted¹⁸ in the spirit of the wave of democratisation following the end of the Cold War – were held in 1993, with Patassé and his MLPC emerging as victors.¹⁹

In the three decades of their rule, authoritarian regimes contributed more to an exacerbation of the country's structural problems than to their solu-

tion. The new government thus not only took on the colonial legacy of absent state structures and an undiversified subsistence economy – it also had to cope with a bankrupt treasury, high foreign debt and a substantial backlog of unpaid wages of civil servants and the military. Patassé quickly capitulated in the face of these challenges, choosing instead to tackle another problem – the dominance of the Yakoma in the armed forces,²⁰ whom he viewed to be a threat as a result of their punitive campaign in his home region in the 1980s. He immediately set about reorganising the Presidential Guard, which was responsible for his personal protection, by replacing Yakoma with members of his own ethnic group, the Kaba. Similar purges followed in public offices and state-run enterprises. Instead of introducing cautious reforms to restore a representation reflecting the nation's diversity, Patassé continued – though in a different direction – Kolingba's policy of restructuring state institutions along ethnic lines. He even aggravated this tendency by on the one hand exempting the regular army (*Forces Armées Centrafricaines*, FACA) from lay-offs, while on the other hand putting it at a clear disadvantage in terms of pay and equipment in comparison with the Presidential Guard. It was against this backdrop that a profound rivalry developed between the two groupings, each of which resembled more an ethnically based militia than a national armed force.

In the absence of any improvements in their everyday lives, the enthusiasm of the population for the democratically elected government subsided quickly. Although Patassé was able to make up 12 whole months of back-pay for the civil service, the government fell into arrears again soon enough. Disenchantment was on the rise among the population on the whole but in particular among the ranks of the FACA, which staged a total of three mutinies between April and November 1996. While the Presidential Guard – with French support – was able to put these down, they had become bloodier and bloodier each time. Negotiations ultimately led to the participation of the opposition and civil society in the government and the deployment of the African peace-keeping missi-

¹⁸ Kolingba resisted democratic change until the very end. Although he called for a “national debate” in 1992 under the pressure of mounting protest and demonstrations, he did not assign it any power whatsoever, causing the opposition to boycott it and turning it into a dead letter. The presidential elections held the same year were annulled by the Supreme Court due to irregularities. In 1993 Kolongba attempted to manipulate elections by changing the Election Law in his favour right before the elections. France, Germany and other donors were able to effect a retraction of the law by immediately cutting off bilateral cooperation. The elections themselves were carried out under the supervision of the French military.

¹⁹ In addition to the former presidents Kolingba and Dacko, the field of candidates also included François Bozizé, who returned from exile, and Abel Goumba, the candidate of the party *Front Patriotique pour le Progrès* (FPP, which had emanated from the protest movement. Patassé, who had left the FPP to allow him to become a candidate, won the second round of elections by a slim margin over Goumba. In parliamentary elections his MLPC won 34 of 85 seats, while Kolingba's RDC gained 13 seats to become the second strongest party before the FPP with 7 seats.

²⁰ 70% of the army was made up of members of the Yakoma, who account for less than 5% of the population.

on *Mission interafricaine de surveillance des accords de Bangui* (MISAB). France, which had itself been caught between the fronts in the fighting and had begun to withdraw its troops, initially funded the mission, but then successfully lobbied for its hand-over to the UN. Established in March 1998, the *Mission des Nations Unies pour la Centrafrique* (MINURCA) was withdrawn following new elections – despite accusations of fraud from the opposition – as early as the spring of 2000.²¹

While the opposition parties achieved a clear victory in the parliamentary elections, Patassé was able to win the presidential elections by a slim margin. Nonetheless, he continued to rule the country without Parliament as he saw fit, but remained as unsuccessful as ever. Public servants' pay was in the meantime backlogged 30 months, causing social discontent to mount again. The frustration erupted in violence in May 2001, with parts of the army attacking the presidential palace in an attempt to drive Patassé out of office. Without the protection of the French army or the peace-keeping troops of MINURCA, Patassé was in dire straits, but was in the end able to beat back the coup attempt with the help of Libyan troops which he had hastily requested. In the ensuing, almost paranoid effort to hunt down the masterminds behind the putsch attempt, Francois Bozizé, who had in the meantime been appointed commander of the army, also came under suspicion. He was able to avoid arrest and flee to Chad, however, where he began hatching new plans to topple Patassé. In the meantime Patassé sought and found new partners to prop up his regime militarily. In addition to making arrangements with the Congolese rebel group *Mouvement pour la libération du Congo* (MLC)²², which was operating in the vicinity of Bangui, he was able with Libyan support to secure the deployment of a "peace-keeping force" from the Community of Sahel-Saharan states (CEN-SAD) established by Gaddafi. In

October 2002 the two groups were able to fend off an initial assault on Bangui by Bozizé²³.

France and the neighbouring francophone countries viewed the new alliance as an undesirable meddling in their sphere of influence and urged Patassé to replace the CEN-SAD troops with a mission of the Central African Economic Community (CEMAC), which has been operating under the name FOMUC (*Force multinationale en Centrafrique*) since October 2002. This step weakened Patassé's internal political position considerably, however, as the CEMAC states had reservations about his regime and could not be counted upon as reliable support in the event of a coup attempt. France hoped in this situation to be able to move Patassé to consent to a national dialogue aimed at solving the crisis in the Central African Republic. To further step up the pressure France at the same time began lending support to the rebels rallying around Bozizé. Patassé, who did not have the least inclination to engage in negotiations, instead took the offensive in November 2002, driving Bozizé's northern-based followers into neighbouring Chad – once again with the support of the Congolese MLC.

4.4 An Attempt at Democratisation from Outside?

After this offensive, Patassé appeared to pose too great a threat to regional power constellations from the perspective of neighbouring states. In a rare show of unity, the presidents of Chad, the Congo, Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon jointly backed Bozizé's rebellion. With sufficient funding and logistic support, Bozizé was able to field a potent force mainly consisting of Chadian mercenaries, but also elite soldiers from the Chadian presidential guard. On 15 March 2003, while Patassé was attending a CEN-SAD summit, Bozizé finally entered Bangui and took over the leadership of the country without any resistance whatsoever.

²¹ All that remained to support the democratic process was the *Bureau d'observation des Nations Unies en Centrafrique* (BONUCA), a skeleton civil structure with approximately 70 persons.

²² Jean-Pierre Bemba's MLC conducted a large part of its illegal business via the Central African Republic and was for this reason interested in staying on good terms with the government there.

²³ In addition to Patassé's forces, the MLC displayed particular brutality, including against the civilian population. The human rights organisation *Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme* (FIDH) documented a host of war crimes, including massacres and mass rape, and was able to convince the later government under Bozizé to take action before the International Criminal Court.

Just like in previous changeovers in power, more than anything else the population breathed a sigh of relief this time as well given that an authoritarian regime had come to an end, all the more as Bozizé was promising speedy democratisation. The inclusion of numerous opposition groups in the new transitional government appeared to substantiate this rhetoric. The pledges also seemed to be corroborated by the swift organisation of a national dialogue – a long-standing demand. The political parties and civil society groups were involved, and a detailed analysis of the problems of the country was produced along with a long list of recommendations to the government. All these steps could not conceal the fact, however, that Bozizé's coup was not – as he fondly characterised it – a national insurrection. Bozizé had seized the reigns of power with the aid of mostly foreign mercenaries who were neither personally loyal to him nor the Central African Republic. Disgruntled over the pay they had received for their services, they proceeded to begin systematically pillaging and plundering the population only a few days after the take-over, thereby undermining confidence in the new government. Although Bozizé was able to drive his former troops from the capital relatively quickly, he had to call upon additional Chadian soldiers in the process, revealing his dependence on support from neighbouring countries²⁴.

Bozizé thus began searching for ways to strengthen his political legitimacy, hoping that he could achieve this by means of general elections to confirm his tenure as President. Worth noting in this context are not only Bozizé's attempts to manipulate the elections in his favour, but more importantly the frustration of these plans by the concerted action of the political parties and civil society. In spite of this prelude, Bozizé won the second round of the general presidential elections, which were generally regarded as fair, in the spring of 2005.²⁵ In the parliamentary elections which took place at the

same time, the party alliance *Kwa na Kwa*, founded by Bozizé, was able to garner most of the votes, but failed to attain an absolute majority. The election result was widely interpreted as a mandate for Bozizé to carry on the policy of national reconciliation he had begun and to jointly work with the other political forces towards a stabilisation of the security situation as a basis for economic revival. As it were, Bozizé used his victory to consolidate his own personal power and appoint family members and members of his ethnic group, the Gbaya, to key posts. In the face of new cases of corruption and nepotism, Bozizé's image as a reformer began to tarnish, while the flagging implementation of the recommendations forwarded by the national dialogue gave rise to growing criticism. Dissatisfaction with Bozizé's government also grew among the rural population, who were still being harassed and terrorised by his former mercenaries. Scarcely half a year after elections an armed resistance formed in the northwestern part of the country, while another group in the northeast took up arms against the government in the spring of 2006.

4.5 Rebellion in the Northwest

The northwest of the Central African Republic, one of the country's most densely populated regions, is where a large part of the country's economic activity is concentrated, in particular cotton farming and cattle breeding. Its geographic position on the transit routes between Cameroon and Chad on the one hand provides access to the markets of neighbouring countries, but on the other hand has also attracted highly professional bands of highway robbers, the so-called *Zaraguinas*, since the 1990s. The *Zaraguinas* are transnational groups of criminals who move freely in the border region and are active in all three countries. They use modern weaponry, telecommunications and motor vehicles and are thus clearly superior to the state security forces. The Central African police and the FACA have for this reason largely retreated back into their barracks, abandoning the field to the *Zaraguinas*.

This already difficult situation for the population took a dramatic turn for the worse at the end of 2002 after Bozizé's first coup attempt was foiled and elements of his mercenaries began trickling back to the northwest. The self-proclaimed "liberators" be-

²⁴ Chad played a particularly prominent role here. In addition to a new contingent for the CEMAC forces, whose mandate continued to be to protect government institutions, it also provided two dozen soldiers for the personal protection of Bozizé.

²⁵ Most of the candidates for the presidency had initially been excluded from the elections. In response to pressure from the opposition and civil society and with the mediation of Gabon, an agreement was reached on rules for the elections. Ultimately, only former president Patassé, but not his party, was excluded from the elections.

gan plundering the population, not only stealing food, but also destroying the rudimentary economic infrastructure – for example by dismantling cotton-processing machinery and selling it in the neighbouring countries. At the same time massive operations by the Cameroon army against the Zaraguinas drove more and more of the highway brigands to the northwestern part of the Central African Republic, causing the number of armed groups there to swell in a brief span of time. Shortly after Bozizé seized power in March 2003, many mercenaries began drifting back to the region once again and, disappointed over the fact that they had not received the pay promised them, continued their looting and pillaging. The “ex-liberators”, now leaderless, joined up with the existing Zaraguinas or formed new units. As a result, the number of road robberies rose dramatically, bringing transport in the region to a virtual halt. The Zaraguinas then began to direct their focus increasingly at the population, with the mounting violence forcing thousands of people to flee to neighbouring countries. Those who chose to stay organised themselves in village self-protection groups, which were, however, hopelessly outgunned by the Zaraguinas.

Facing dismal job prospects after Bozizé’s victory in the presidential elections in 2005, more and more former FACA soldiers began drifting into the area. In the second half of the year, attacks against police and military bases picked up, with a total of four different rebel movements claiming responsibility. Their leaders and many of their combatants had served under Patassé before, prompting Bozizé to accuse his predecessor of scheming to fight his way back into power from his exile in Togo. Although there were undisputedly contacts between Patassé and the rebels, there is no hard evidence that the latter were operating directly on his behest. This hypothesis is also countered by the fact that three out of the four groups have in the meantime disbanded without, however, joining the sole remaining one, the *Armée pour la restauration de la République et la démocratie* (APRD).²⁶ The APRD itself has thus

²⁶ While the *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Restauration de la République Centrafricaine* (MPRC) of Stève Guéret disbanded relatively quickly, the largest group of rebels initially, *Union des Forces Républicaines* (UFR), led by the former FACA officer Florian Ndjadder, only lost importance in 2006. The *Front Démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain* (FDPC) led by Abdoulaye Miskine concluded a peace agreement with the government in 2007.

far only made vague intimations as to its political objectives. Its fighters are recruited both from the village self-protection groups as well as from former members of Patassé’s presidential guard. It is poorly armed, has scarcely any vehicles and only limited access to modern communications resources. While the APRD thus consists of a number of largely autonomous groups operating within a limited radius, they all claim to have a common leadership – even if it remains in the background. The APRD has effective control over the territory it claims, and by providing tangible protection against Zaraguina raids has won a certain popularity among the local population – although this is held within bounds by the taxes extracted to finance the rebels’ operations.

In spite of the relatively uncoordinated operations of the various groups, Bozizé reacted anxiously to the events in the northwest, accusing the MLPC of planning a violent overthrow of the government together with the rebels. In addition to FACA troops, he sent units from the presidential guard to fight the rebellion in the region. Both groups, but in particular the presidential guard, showed little inclination to directly confront the rebels, opting instead for an extremely brutal campaign against the civilian population suspected of supporting them. A scorched-earth policy was carried out, with government troops destroying hundreds of villages in the space of a few months, slaying large numbers of innocent civilians and putting almost 300,000 to flight. Only about one-third of these refugees fled to the camps of international aid organisations in Chad and Cameroon, with the majority remaining scattered throughout the immediate vicinity, living in fear of renewed attacks – in some cases without access to protection, food or medical care down to the present day.

Notwithstanding various attempts to end the conflict by negotiations, the fighting continued, and in particular the punitive measures taken by government troops against the civilian population, into the fall of 2007. Only with the publication of a report by the human rights organisation Human Rights Watch was the attention of a broader public drawn to the crimes, producing sufficient pressure – together with a donor conference taking place at the same time – to force the government to change its strategy. Bozizé presented an official apology to the population and announced that the guilty parties would be punished, although only

a handful of persons were subsequently suspended from military service and no criminal charges were ever filed. Nevertheless, a part of the military forces returned to their barracks and, with the security situation in the northwest easing perceptively, the government began focusing its attention on the commencement of direct negotiations with the APRD.

4.6 Rebellion in the Northeast

Vakaga Province, located in the northeast of the Central African Republic, has an extremely low population density and is scarcely integrated into the economy. The only major economic activity is artisanal diamond mining, with traders passing through the region reaping considerably greater profits than the resident miners. Vakaga is cut off from the rest of the country during approximately half the year during the rainy period, and even in the dry period the roads are in such a deplorable state that the trip to Bangui, about 800 km away, can take up to six weeks. As a result of these difficult conditions, the region has always had better trade ties to neighbouring Darfur than to the other regions of the present-day Central African Republic lying to the south. Thus both Islam and the Arabic language are much more common in Vakaga than in other parts of the country.

The rebellion in the northeast began a few months after the outbreak of fighting in the northwest, with the “ex-liberators” who had been hired and then abandoned by Bozizé once again playing a central role. After being driven out of Bangui by Chadian troops, numerous fighters found their way to Vakaga, immediately forming several small rebel units there. These then banded together relatively quickly to form the *Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement* (UFDR).²⁷ The frustration of the population over the structural neglect of their province furthermore motivated many people in the region to join the rebels in their struggle against the central government. Of particular significance here is a group of former game wardens, who dispose over weapons

and para-military training, but had been without income since the termination of an EU-funded project at the end of the 1990s. A majority of the UFDR rebels are members of the ethnic group of the Gula, who feel particularly neglected – above and beyond the general neglect of Vakaga province – and among other things are demanding that the region they live in be turned into an autonomous administrative unit. During the early period of its build-up, the UFDR was able to profit from the Chadian FUC rebels when they marched through Vakaga Province in April 2006 on their way from the Sudan towards N’Djamena. In return for tolerating their transit and limited logistical support, the FUC left a number of motor vehicles and weapons in the region. In spite of numerous rumours, however, there is no hard evidence of any targeted, strategic support for the UFDR being provided by the Sudanese government in Khartoum.²⁸

The offensive by the UFDR in September 2006 caught the FACA unprepared, and the rebels were able to take the most important cities in Vakaga in rapid succession, including the capital Birao, and even occupy cities in the neighbouring province to the south. In December, France, citing a defence accord with the Central African Republic, intervened directly, joining up with FOMUC troops and then moving against the rebels. In a few weeks’ time all the larger cities were once again – at least nominally – under the control of the government and the UFDR had withdrawn to its strongholds. Following a fruitless attempt by the UFDR to retake Birao again in March 2007, the military head of the UFDR, Zakaria Damane, concluded a peace agreement with the government on 13 April 2007.

The agreed-upon ceasefire was adhered to until the beginning of 2008. Both sides even conducted joint patrols in Sam Ouandja, a city hosting a camp for Sudanese refugees. Other elements of the agreement, however, have still not been implemented almost a year after it was signed, and in particular the pending integration into the FACA

²⁷ The UFDR consists of the *Mouvement des libérateurs Centrafricains pour la justice* (MLCJ), led by Abakar Saboune, *Groupe d’action patriotique pour la libération de la Centrafrique* (GAPLC) under Michel Détoïa and the *Front démocratique Centrafricain* (FDC), commanded by Justin Hasan.

²⁸ The landing of a Sudanese military plane in Vakaga in April 2006 was held to be evidence of such support. It remains unclear, however, whether the weapons unloaded from the aircraft were destined for the FUC or the UFDR.

has been causing increasing disquiet among the UFDR troops. Furthermore, there is doubt within the UFDR over the status of Zakaria Damane and his entitlement to sign agreements on behalf of the rebel organisation. The actual political leaders of the organisation, Abakar Saboune and Michel Dé-todia, were arrested in Benin in November 2006 upon the instigation of Bozizé. While Bozizé had made their release contingent upon their consent to the peace agreement, Saboune and Dé-todia are demanding their release as a precondition for the political talks.

4.7 Squaring the Circle: Clinging to Power through Participation

In spite of a hiatus in the direct fighting between the rebels and government forces, Bozizé is still under enormous pressure. The APRD in the northwest has refused to sign the peace treaty to date, and the UFDR in the northeast will not allow itself to be placated endlessly by empty promises of its integration into the FACA. The FACA is still – and will remain for the foreseeable future – unable to effectively protect the regime in the event that fighting breaks out again. At the same time, the country's structural problems remain – as does popular discontent. Prompted by a renewed back-log of salaries in the public service, the trade unions organised strikes in January 2008 and kept them going for weeks, finally forcing the entire government under Prime Minister Elie Doté to resign.

Bozizé is certainly aware of the serious threats to his position and knows that his own rule is hanging in the balance if he fails to reach an agreement with at least part of the opposition. Instead of a serious dialogue, in which he would need to offer real concessions, however, he is rather trying to play off his opponents against each other. This is evidenced not only by the peace agreement from 2007, which was for the most part void of any real content, but in particular by the manner in which it came about.

Demands that negotiations take place with the rebels could already be heard in 2006, shortly after the first attacks. The so-called “group of the wise”, a committee of nationally respected individuals which had emerged from the conflicts over the

preparation of the 2005 elections, proposed an inclusive national dialogue aimed at peacefully resolving the country's problems with the participation of both civil opposition and rebel movements. Bozizé first took up the proposal and requested the group to seek contact with the rebels and obtain their consent to a ceasefire as a precondition for talks. The preparations for a meeting along these lines were already under way when Bozizé dropped the national initiative and signed a peace agreement, facilitated by Gaddafi, with the rebel leader Abdoulaye Miskine. The Libyan initiative was poorly prepared, however, and it quickly became evident that, contrary to his claims, Miskine only represented the FDPC, but not the UFDR. A second peace pact was for this reason concluded with the UFDR in April, with the signing this time taking place under the auspices of Gabon's President, Omar Bongo.²⁹

Bozizé also removed the group of the wise from the preparations for the inclusive dialogue, which had in the meantime met with the broad approval of all the actors. In de facto terms, he put the organisation under his own control. In particular he created a monopoly over contacts with the ever-enigmatic APRD, which had still not signed a peace agreement or even appointed a clear interlocutor for talks. In October 2007, without any prior consultation whatsoever, Bozizé decreed the establishment of a committee to prepare the inclusive dialogue, whose composition, however, immediately met with broad rejection. In December Bozizé gave in to pressure, changing the structure of the committee slightly through another decree, this time also naming its members (solely the APRD remained without any specified representative). The individuals on the list, however, had not been consulted beforehand, prompting the UFDR to denounce “its” representative on the committee, who it claimed it had never heard of. The representatives of civil society and the political opposition, on the other hand, appear to have been revived from the more or less hapless National Dialogue of 2003. The majority of the

²⁹ In terms of their content, the texts are almost identical, providing for an end to the fighting and a vague promise to integrate the rebel combatants in the armed forces. The separate sponsorship of the agreements will lead to a predicament, however, if problems crop up in the implementation, as different mediators are to be appealed to.

representatives from the political opposition are members of the *Union des Forces Vives de la République* (UFVR), an amalgamation of political parties and independent candidates which formed in the run-up to the 2005 elections. While the UFVR unites the biggest and most important opposition parties – the parties of ex-presidents Patassé and Kolingba and the FPP of Abel Goumba³⁰ – it has lost cohesion as a result of internal quarrels (for instance, internal party strife in the MLPC between supporters of Patassé and his successor as party chairman, Martin Ziguélé) as well as the initial jockeying for position in the scramble for possible government posts. It is not particularly surprising, then, that no criticism has been heard from this direction over the scanty presence of rebel movements, which are only to provide three of the 25 members. Bozizé, on the other hand, has two status groups representing his interests on the committee: the “government” on the one hand and the “administrative apparatus” on the other.

Bozizé’s manoeuvring has certainly brought him closer to his aim of consolidating his hold on power by engaging in largely meaningless negotiations with a weak opposition. One of his advisors openly admits that Bozizé rejects out of hand any opposition participation in the government, convinced as he is that the 2005 elections gave him a clear mandate. In his view a coalition government would be contrary to the will of the people. Whether he will be able to have his way with this attitude is far from clear, however. The APRD has in the meantime announced that it wants to take part in the preparatory committee, but in the absence of a peace agreement is insisting that the international community be involved and the talks be held in another country, which would significantly weaken Bozizé’s position. Moreover, the trade unions, Bozizé’s biggest nuisance at present, are not even included in the dialogue.

At the international level Bozizé is seeking to diversify military collaboration with other countries particularly in order to reduce his dependence on France and Chad. Within the framework of

this strategy Bozizé personally concluded in the middle of 2007 an agreement for military aid with South African President Mbeki worth a total of \$ 50 million, which in addition to the supply of light personnel carriers also provides for training for the FACA. However, as diplomatic sources have confirmed, Bozizé has failed in an attempt to insulate the South African trainers from the already existing French reform programme for the army. South Africa and France are instead insisting on a tri-partite cooperation, although Bozizé has yet to agree to this. More to Bozizé’s taste, South African soldiers have at present replaced Bozizé’s hitherto Chadian bodyguards.³¹ At the same time Bozizé is attempting to play off the CEMAC against the CEN-SAD, organisations vying with each other for influence in the region. The example of the parallel peace agreements with different mediators shows, however, that so far he has created more difficulties than he has been able to reap advantages.

In spite of Bozizé’s disinclination to share power, the underlying conditions for a democratisation of the political system of the Central African Republic are significantly more promising than in its neighbouring countries. The most important basis for this is that almost all the parties to the conflict believe there is a possibility to find a solution to their differences through political talks. This willingness to engage in talks may in particular be attributable to the fact that, in spite of the undeniable violent excesses in the history of the country, it has not developed a culture of institutionalised suppression of the opposition. The respective regimes have in general tended to concentrate on handing out privileges to their clientele instead of actively suppressing other groups of the population. Thus, in contrast to the situation in the Sudan or Chad, for instance, dissatisfaction with the government has not turned into deeply rooted distrust. This also still applies to the relationship between the various ethnic groups³², which moreover speak a common language. Against this

³⁰ Goumba had withdrawn as chairman of the party back in 2005 when Bozizé appointed him to the newly created post of the National Mediator after he had been removed from the post of prime minister. His son then assumed leadership of the party.

³¹ South Africa is currently training a new group of bodyguard in the Central African Republic which is to take over from the South African bodyguards later in 2008.

³² Relations have deteriorated since Kolingba’s punitive campaign, however, and ethnic distinctions are now being stressed more than in the past.

background, the political opposition and civil society have demonstrated more than once that they are able not only to set particularistic interests aside for the sake of a common endeavour, but that – when united – they can assert themselves vis-à-vis the government. Bozizé in particular had to cave in to this pressure several times, for instance when he had to accept a reduction of the President's powers provided for in the new Constitution and substantial changes to the regulations governing the last elections.

5 Sudan/Darfur

Since its independence from English colonial rule in 1955, the Sudan has experienced continuous conflict. At the centre of attention for many years was the conflict between the dominant, Arabic elite living in the Nile valley in the north, and the mostly black African peoples of the south. With the outbreak of the rebellion in Darfur, in the (north)west of the Sudan, however, the international community could no longer fail to see that this perspective ignored conflicts within the south and in particular within the north as well. The factors underlying both conflicts are described in detail in a separate study and need not be repeated here.³³ The following discussion takes up at the point in time when the previous study leaves off, and for this reason rather addresses strategies to solve the crises than the roots of the crises in the southern Sudan and Darfur.

5.1 Escalation Following the Conclusion of Peace: The Darfur Peace Agreement

At the onset of the Darfur conflict, Idriss Deby, President of neighbouring Chad, initially stepped into the limelight as successful mediator between the Sudanese government and the two Darfur rebel groups, the *Sudan Liberation Movement/Army* (SLM/A) and the *Justice and Equality Movement* (JEM), hammering out a ceasefire agreement in April 2004. The rebels began to have doubts, however, about Deby's neutrality, who had come to power thanks to the energetic support of the Sudanese government, and rejected continued mediation from Chad.

The African Union, which had only just been founded but had nonetheless agreed to despatch a small military mission to observe the ceasefire accord, assumed Deby's role mediating the peace talks. The negotiations, which had in the meantime been moved to Abuja in Nigeria, dragged along without achieving much in the way of progress, however, nor did any of the parties to the

conflict in Darfur appear to be upholding the ceasefire. The Janjaweed militia, an ally of the government, had not even signed it. In view of continuing massacres of the civilian population, the African Union acted to expand the observer mission and turn it into a robust peace-keeping mission with a wider mandate to protect the civilian population. The Sudanese government rejected this as unnecessary, but finally gave in when the UN Security Council got involved. The AU beefed up the number of troops in its AMIS mission (*AU Mission in Sudan*), to around 3,500 and later once again to over 7,000 soldiers, although the force remained ultimately powerless given that the belligerents were obviously intent on achieving a military solution.

Negotiations in Abuja were scarcely more successful, and following the fourth round of talks in December 2004 remained at an impasse for months. The reasons for this were – in addition to the ongoing fighting in Darfur – first of all the unclear objectives of the rebels, who could not agree on a common line, and growing personal feuds and rivalries, in particular in the SLM, which in the meantime had split up into two factions behind the founder of the SLM, Abdul Wahed, and one of its field commanders, Minni Minnawi. Secondly, the delegation of the Sudanese government was not inclined in the least to make any concessions, and skilfully sought to take advantage of differences among the rebels and profit from their lack of experience in negotiations. The new envoy for Darfur, former Tanzanian Foreign Minister Ahmed Salim (appointed as envoy in the spring of 2005), was finally able to revive the process and persuade the warring parties to agree to a white paper setting out principles (*Declaration of Principles, DOP*) to serve as the cornerstone for further talks. Successes failed to materialise in the ensuing period, however, and like the numerous international observers in Abuja before them, the mediators began to lose patience. Salim finally announced that the seventh round of negotiations beginning in November 2005 would be the last and decisive round and later, after months of petty squabbling without any breakthrough, set 30 April 2006 as ultimate deadline for an agreement.

³³ Marina Peter: *Studie zur länderbezogenen Konfliktanalyse: Sudan*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung / Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst 2004.

On the day of the deadline, however, only the government delegation displayed any willingness to sign the draft agreement submitted by the mediators. When the deadline was extended, numerous high-ranking politicians came to Abuja to augment the pressure on all the parties to conclude an agreement after all. By the early hours of 6 May, following a marathon session, they had only succeeded in getting Minni Minawi to sign the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), with the SLM faction under Abdul Wahid and the JEM, led by Ibrahim Khalil, remaining obstinate. Continued efforts by mediators and the international community in the following months to convince the two non-signatories to join the agreement also met with failure.

The initial result was a split in the Darfur rebels between the signatories³⁴ and non-signatories. At the same time, a process of fragmentation into smaller and smaller groups began in both camps. The authoritarian negotiating style of Abdul Wahid, disinclined to accept advice, had already caused the so-called “group of 19” to split off in the course of the Abuja negotiations, after which disputes over its leadership in turn led to the formation of new splinter groups. Minni Minawi for his part lost the support of several commanders who decided not to back the DPA. The JEM was also affected by smaller splinter groups breaking away, but was for the most part able to maintain a stable leadership structure, while the SLM increasingly unravelled into a loose panoply of autonomous and often rival field commanders. Paradoxically enough, a second result of the DPA was an escalation of the fighting. As early as July, a new coalition of non-signatories resumed the armed struggle against the government, quickly leading to conflicts with the signatories, who had now become part of the government camp. In August, the Sudanese government announced that it was deploying 10,000 additional soldiers³⁵ “within the framework of the implementation of the DPA”

³⁴ Some individual field commanders from the ranks of the SLM and JEM subsequently fell in behind the DPA, some through conviction, some enticed by gifts from Khartoum, but their numbers never reached critical mass.

³⁵ The North-South Peace Accord concluded in January 2005 obligated the Sudanese government to withdraw its armed forces from the south of the country; it thereupon transferred these forces to Darfur.

and launched a massive military campaign in which villages were systematically bombed and the civilian population was targeted in joint assaults of the army and Janjaweed militia.

The security situation was furthermore exacerbated by the now bewildering plethora of rebel factions, whose members were increasingly turning to criminal pursuits. The still active Janjaweed militias as well as rebel groups from neighbouring Chad also played their role in the structural deterioration of the security situation. On top of it all, two completely new aspects of violence appeared on the scene following the failure of the DPA. First of all, increasingly bloody conflicts could be witnessed between Arab groups, who began using the weapons they had received from Khartoum to settle scores both old and new. Secondly, a number of Arab groups began to form, comprising new players as well as former Janjaweed, and join the rebellion against the government.³⁶

5.2 Partnership with Mixed Feelings: United Nations and African Union

In this confusing situation, humanitarian aid organisations and even the peace-keeping mission of the African Union were increasingly caught in the crossfire or even became the target of direct attacks. For a variety of reasons, AMIS was no longer able to contribute to an improvement in the situation,³⁷ which led the AU to agree to hand the mission over to the UN as early as March 2006. The UN Security Council, however, passed a resolution on such a mission only in August 2007 (Resolution 1706) and against bitter opposition by the Sudanese government, without whose approval the mission could not be implemented. Khartoum insisted on an all-African peace-keeping force for Darfur, only later and under considerable Chi-

³⁶ The most well-known of these groups, the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF), officially joined the JEM at the beginning of February 2008. Before this there had already been close cooperation between the groups, but clearly separated leadership structures.

³⁷ In addition to the absence of a will on the part of the parties to the conflict, AMIS suffered from bureaucratic obstacles placed in the way by Khartoum, a lack of equipment and insufficient funding. For a detailed analysis of the mission, see Human Rights Watch: *Imperatives for Immediate Change. The African Union Mission in Sudan*, 2006.

nese pressure agreeing to the compromise of a joint UN-AU mission – a so-called hybrid mission. In the following period, the Sudan delayed the deployment of troops again and again, and in the negotiations over the exact timetables, troop strengths and domains of responsibility constantly found new reasons to block implementation. As it were, AMIS remained on site for several months without, however, being able to make any significant contribution to solution of the conflict. The official handover of AMIS to the new mission, UNAMID (*United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur*), finally took place in January 2008, but was also plagued from the very outset by severe logistical problems. Instead of the planned strength of 26,000 soldiers and police, only 9,000 troops have been deployed to date, and it will probably take the entire year before the force reaches full strength.

One crucial advantage of the new mission is its secure funding, which is coming completely from the budget of the United Nations. This gives rise to a whole host of problems when one gets down to the details, however. On the technical side, the fundamentally different administrative cultures of the AU and UN have to be brought together – an endeavour which already led to plenty of frustration on both sides in the provision of EU funding for AMIS. On the political side, the AU runs the danger of being marginalised by its larger counterpart, while the UN fears that it will be degraded to a toothless disburser of funds for a regional organisation. The reputation of both organisations is thus at stake, and Khartoum has taken skilful advantage of fears in this situation to sow the seeds of doubt concerning the viability of the mission. Diplomats from the AU and the UN were bogged down for months over the question of the command structure of UNAMID alone. After a long struggle the two sides finally were able to agree on a joint candidate, the former Congolese Foreign Minister, Rodophe Adada, to act as political head of the mission. Adada is to be equally accountable to the UN Secretary General and the Chairman of the AU Commission and thus consequently bound to instructions from New York and Addis Abeba. Actual practice will show how effective such a mechanism is – especially in times when difficult decisions have to be made.

In the realisation that a joint peace-keeping mission should also be accompanied by joint peace-making efforts, the AU and the UN have been pursuing a common scheme to revive direct negotiations between the rebels and the government since as far back as December 2006. At that time the UN appointed Jan Eliasson, a former Swedish Foreign Minister, as special envoy to Darfur. A short time later the AU assigned the head mediator in the Abuja talks, Salim Salim, to work with him side by side. This “hybrid mission” was also hampered by problems of its own, however. The Darfur rebels only spoke with Eliasson, as they held Salim responsible for the failure of the Abuja negotiations and refused to communicate with him. Thanks to its superior financial and logistical resources, the UN soon dominated the mediation team’s joint support office, which contributed to more friction between the AU and UN. In spite of this, the dual leadership of Salim/Eliasson was successful, at least for a brief period, in sewing together the numerous competing peace initiatives from Egypt, Libya, Eritrea and the southern Sudan, which for their part had contributed more to a splintering of the rebel groups than to a solution of the crisis. The second step in their strategy, namely obligating the rebel groups to adopt a common agenda, failed, however, due to the refusal of several important factions to take part in the meeting in Arusha in August 2007. Nevertheless, the two special envoys insisted on moving on to the next phase, namely the resumption of direct negotiations between the rebels and the government. The talks slated for the end of October in Sirte were boycotted by a whole host of important rebel leaders, however, and had to be broken off without any result after a few days.

5.3 New Player or Pawn in the Game?

The Darfur Conflict in the Context of the CPA

As the Darfur conflict escalated, the negotiations over a north-south peace agreement taking place in Naivasha, Kenya were nearing their successful conclusion. Facing a common foe in Khartoum, the southern Sudanese rebels of the SPLM initially supported the rebels in Darfur, and in particular

the SLM, by providing weapons and training. On the other hand, the SPLM Chairman, John Garang, was less interested in showing solidarity with a like-minded group, but rather hoped to put the government in a predicament by opening another front and thus allowing him to quickly extract greater concessions in the Naivasha negotiations. Garang's strategy paid off, and the so-called *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* (CPA) was signed in January 2005. In addition to an end to the fighting, the agreement provided for the establishment of a partly autonomous government in the south, the sharing of oil revenue between the central and southern government, a referendum on a possible secession of the south and finally – during a 6-year transitional period – the participation of the SPLM in the central government.

Both the Darfuris and the international community had high hopes with respect to the SPLM's participation in the government, and particularly an end to the military campaign against the civilian population there and a serious offer to solve the conflict by means of negotiation. These hopes remained frustrated for a considerable time, however. First of all, the SPLM was too preoccupied with problems of its own. Appointments to posts in the government and numerous positions on committees dealing with the details of implementation as well as the establishment of a civil administration in the partly autonomous south, in which along with the SPLM other political and military forces also had to be taken into account, posed enormous challenges to the rebel movement. After the sudden death of Garang in a helicopter crash in July 2005, the SPLM became even more engrossed in its own problems. Although Garang's deputy Salva Kiir was quickly and without dispute appointed as the new chairman of the SPLM – and thus in accordance with the provisions of the CPA also became president of the southern Sudan and vice president of the central government – a dispute broke out behind the scenes over the allocation of power in the movement. This conflict has been simmering down to the present day. Another difficulty with respect to the relationship between the SPLM and the Darfur conflict was related to the arrangements stipulated in the CPA itself. The Darfur rebels are demanding among other things a share in the government commensurate with their proportion of

the overall population, which would necessitate a complete revision of the share of government power set out in the CPA for the transitional period and would in all probability mean a reduction in the influence of the SPLM. Putting the hard-fought-for CPA in question would be opening a Pandora's Box for the SPLM, however, which is why it is insisting on solving the Darfur conflict by adhering to the CPA in all respects. When the SPLM finally sent its own representatives to the Sudanese government delegation in the final phase of the Abuja negotiations, the NCP thus had an easy time keeping the SPLM delegation under its control.

The implementation of the CPA lagged behind schedule from the very beginning, eventually faltering to the point of standstill in key areas. Even if the NCP was not solely to blame, it was without a doubt mainly responsible for the delays in measures which appeared capable of posing a threat to its previous hegemony. Examples of this are, for instance, delays in the census and other measures preparing for elections, the non-transparent distribution of oil revenue or the failure to demarcate the border between northern and southern Sudan. It was not least the continued frustration over the NCP foot-dragging that caused the SPLM to re-evaluate its Darfur policy. In March 2007 Salva Kiir travelled to Chad, where he met Darfur rebels, inviting them to a reconciliation conference in the southern Sudan without, however, having any clear strategy on how to proceed from there. As a result, it took the Darfur Task Force established by the SPLM until October 2007 to bring together several splinter groups in Juba in preparation for the new peace talks in Sirte staged by the AU and UN. Instead of helping to bring the talks to a successful conclusion, however, the SPLM confirmed the Darfur rebels' belief that the NCP was unreliable and did not stick to treaties by demonstratively withdrawing from the Government of National Unity to protest against protracted delays in the implementation of the CPA.

This new course made it evident that the Darfur policy of the SPLM was not primarily guided by the desire for a peaceful solution to the conflict there, but rather the pursuit of its own interests. The SPLM has not yet developed a clear strategy, however, as evidenced by their thus far isolated,

tentative and in part also contradictory initiatives. This can be explained *inter alia* by the ambivalent nature of relations between the SPLM and the Darfur rebels. While the latter are on the one hand a welcome tool to increase external pressure on the NCP and thus shift bilateral power relations in favour of the SPLM, they are at the same time also contenders for the reigns of power in Khartoum.³⁸

³⁸ Relations between the southern Sudanese and Darfuris are moreover marked by profound distrust. The underlying reasons for this are for instance the role of Darfuris in the slave trade and the salience of their involvement on the side of the central government in the fighting during the civil war between the north and the south. A majority of the soldiers of the Sudanese army deployed in the south at the time were from Darfur and were accordingly responsible for a series of war crimes. In addition, the secular model of the state propagated by the SPLM is rejected by several Darfuris, which among other things explains why the SPLM helped establish the SLM, but not the JEM.

6 The Conflict System in the Tri-Border Region

The conflicts in Chad, the Central African Republic and Darfur have been treated as national problems in the preceding chapters in order to identify their specific individual causes. These conflicts do not exist parallel to each other in an isolated manner, however, but are rather influenced by the crises in their respective neighbouring countries and the ambitions of rulers there, but also by the interests of regional and international actors. These interconnections and their importance in finding a solution to the conflicts are explored in the following chapter.

6.1 From Friends to Foes: Bashir and Deby

Much has been written over the long history of Darfur³⁹, for instance the period when it was an independent sultanate before being forcibly integrated in the Anglo-Egyptian colony of the Sudan at the beginning of the 20th century. What is important to keep in mind is that while for centuries Darfur has been (just like the territory of the present-day Chad) a meeting point for nomadic peoples, it was at the same a territory coveted by surrounding major powers. Be it Libya, the Sudan or Egypt – they all claimed Darfur as their own hinterland. There were no clear border markings, or to put it in the words of the expert on the Sudan, Alex de Waal: “The borders were not a line – they were a territory which stretched endlessly to East, Central and West Africa up until the point where military resistance became too great”⁴⁰ The result was a colourful mixture of ethnic groups which continued to maintain close economic and cultural ties to the neighbouring great powers – and in particular of course to their relatives in the region.

In the present era this has produced a curious mixture: on the one hand people in the region live unperturbed by the modern borders, which usual-

ly remain intangible in the desert sand, moving freely between the homes of their relatives scattered across different countries. On the other hand the borders have to be respected by state institutions, so crossing the border to a neighbouring state therefore offers a certain protection for dissidents and rebels from persecution by the government of their home country. With the end of the colonial era, the region was thus transformed from a transit area for nomads into a refuge for rebel groups. The Chadian FROLINAT was founded in exile in the Sudan in 1966, at the beginning the 1970s Libya channelled its weapon supplies to Chad rebels through Darfur, in 1976 the Sudanese Muslim brotherhood attacked the Sudanese government from bases in Libya and in 1982 Hissene Habré set off on his successful coup attempt from Darfur.

Idriss Deby’s successful seizure of power eight years later was also prepared in Darfur with the massive support of the NCP, which had just come to power in Khartoum. The Sudanese government was therefore able to bank on Deby’s gratitude in the ensuing years, with both governments maintaining friendly relations for a considerable time. When in 2002 the rebellion began in Darfur and the SLM and JEM began seeking allies among their Chadian neighbours, Khartoum expected Deby to prohibit Sudanese rebel activity on Chadian soil. At first he attempted to do just that. As self-proclaimed mediator he was successful in arranging ceasefires in September 2003 and April 2004. Deby’s neutral veneer quickly began to wear off, however, when he began working in the background to promote a rift between the rebel groups and, according to some reports, even took military action against them. In response, the SLM and JEM rejected Chad as mediator and worked to have the peace negotiations to be placed under the auspices of the AU.

At the same time Deby came under domestic political pressure. The inner leadership circle in Chad, like a majority of the Darfur rebels also made up of Zaghawa, considered it to be their duty to support their Sudanese relatives and were unable to understand Deby’s restraint in the matter. Using their channels in the Chadian army in order to directly

³⁹ For a detailed summary on the history of Darfur against the background of the current conflict, see Gérard Prunier: *Darfur. The Ambiguous Genocide*, 2005 and Julie Flint / Alex de Waal: *Darfur: A Short History of a Long War*, 2006.

⁴⁰ Alex de Waal: *Making Sense of Tchad*, blog from 4 February 2007, <http://www.ssrc.org/blog/category/darfur>.

support the JEM and SLM, they simultaneously began to work for the removal of Deby, who had already become unpopular through his plans to amend the constitution to allow him an additional term of office. Deby ultimately also fell out of grace with the Sudanese government due to his inability to control the Chadian Zaghawa. Khartoum then began supporting the already existing Chadian rebel groups with the clear aim of bringing a regime to power in N'Djamena which would be more amenable to its interests. Deby, his position considerably weakened in the meantime by desertions from the army and the presidential guard, responded by changing course and began to support the SLM and in particular the JEM with weapons and training camps on Chadian territory.

Erstwhile allies, Deby and Bashir thus became bitter adversaries. For Khartoum's strategy of obtaining a military solution to the Darfur conflict to succeed, a regime change in N'Djamena has become absolutely essential in order to cut the rebels off from support and secure rear bases. The Sudanese government is devoting considerable resources to this end: In April 2006 and most recently in February 2008 the rebels were at the gates of the Chadian capital and Deby was one step away from being deposed. Although in both cases different rebel groups were involved, they had both been equipped by Khartoum. Deby's support for the Darfur rebels, on the other hand, is part of a survival strategy. On the one hand, he was able to win at least part of the Chadian Zaghawa back over to his side with this new line. On the other, the Darfur rebels have become aware of the importance of their "Chad connection" and for this reason are more than willing to support Deby in his fight against the Chadian rebel groups - for instance in the coup attempt in 2006.

Towards the end of 2005 a second hot spot began to spread in eastern Chad. The civilian population, which had until then scarcely been involved in fighting between the rebels and government, increasingly became the target of direct attacks. In the initial phase, Janjaweed militia from Darfur began raiding the villages of non-Arab ethnic groups living near the border, looting and pillaging and driving off the inhabitants. When the Chadian security forces remained passive and limited their action to combating the rebellion, tribal-based self-defence groups began sprouting up, eventually taking the offensi-

ve themselves. Instead of concentrating on fending off the Janjaweed militia from Darfur, however, they attacked neighbouring villages of other ethnic groups with whom there were in some cases longstanding feuds over water and land rights. In this second phase, the attacks by the Janjaweed resided, but internal ethnic strife in eastern Chad escalated. The brutal raids have in the meantime driven a total of 180,000 people from their villages.

Since the outbreak of the rebellion in Darfur, violence in Chad, and particularly in directly adjoining eastern Chad, has picked up. This is by no means a simple spill-over effect in which violence is being exported from Darfur into a previously peaceful land. It is much more the case, rather, that developments in Darfur have served as a catalyst causing already existing conflicts in Chad to escalate. It will not suffice to put a stop to the violence in Darfur in order to quell the conflicts in Chad. Instead, the local causes of the conflict in Chad need to be dealt with. In the meantime conflicts on both sides of the border have become so interrelated that they are contributing to their mutual perpetuation. To break out of this vicious cycle, it is necessary to understand the conflicts on both sides of the border as part and parcel of a common system of problems which can only be solved simultaneously.

6.2 Strategic No-Man's Land: The Central African Republic

The permeability of borders in the region described above also applies to the Central African Republic, in particular because the national security forces there are not even remotely able to control or protect the frontier. Both the SPLM and the north Ugandan *Lord's Resistance Army* (LRA) have found refuge in the extreme eastern part of the Central African Republic without the consent of the government in Bangui. The LRA is even present now with a small group in Vakaga province and is actively engaged in diamond exploitation there in order to finance its other activities. During the period of Patassé the Sudanese army attacked the SPLM in the southern Sudan from Central African territory and finally, in April 2006, the Chad FUC rebels marched from Darfur through the northeastern part of the country on their way to their coup attempt in Chad.

It is interesting to note that the conflict parties from neighbouring countries merely use the area for transit and as a refuge without, however, meddling in the internal affairs of the Central African Republic. One exception to this rule are the Chadian mercenaries, who – after their decisive role in Bozizé’s take-over – have stayed in the country and assumed an active role in the national rebel movements. In the border area in the northwest of the country, raids have moreover been carried out on Central African villages by Chadian groups, although these have been of a purely criminal nature. Finally, Chad’s President Deby continues to exercise considerable influence on his Central African colleague, who owes his rise to power to him. Bozizé has attempted, however, to limit Deby’s influence by courting the CEN-SAD, a rival for influence in the region and counterweight to the francophone regional organisation CEMAC.

Even if there are therefore numerous cross-border activities involving regional players, the conflicts in the Central African Republic have remained for the most part within national borders. Neither do Central African groups try to directly influence developments in neighbouring countries, nor do groups there get involved in the Central African Republic. The arms deliveries effected by the FUC rebels to the UDFR thus far remain an isolated by-product of the Sudanese-Chadian conflict system.

6.3 Collateral Damage: «Secondary Effects» of Regional and International Policy

In addition to the direct interests of the conflict parties and the neighbouring states, there are a whole host of factors which have an influence on the crisis in the tri-border region. Most of these involve more global strategic interests of regional and international actors, the local impact of which do not always contribute to facilitating a peaceful solution of the conflicts there. In view of their wider contexts, these factors cannot be addressed here in any detail. However, a few will be examined in at least a cursory fashion in order to illustrate the conflict’s complexity and the multiplicity of elements which have to be taken into account in developing a realistic approach to its solution.

The hegemonic aspirations of Libya and Egypt have already been discussed in the foregoing. Egypt regards the Sudan in particular as part of its hinterland even today, and securing the supply of water through the Nile is vital to the country’s economy. Cairo is therefore attempting to prevent the southern Sudan from splitting off and creating a new state on the Nile. Consistently enough, Cairo is also working for a peaceful solution to the Darfur conflict in order to demonstrate the possibility of a united, peaceful Sudan.⁴¹ Finally, Egypt and Libya are competing for regional influence. As a consequence, both countries are pursuing their own Darfur peace initiatives and – by offering the rebels different forums to choose from – are weakening the efforts of the AU and UN.

Libya’s interests were for a long time concentrated on Chad, where it has also pursued territorial claims, particularly under Gaddafi. This had met with resolute resistance from the former colonial power France, leading to a classic proxy war in Chad in the 1970s and 1980s. After Gaddafi had occupied the so-called Azouzou strip along the Chad-Libyan border in 1973, he began supporting the FROLINAT rebels stationed in this area at the end of the 1970s, and in particular Goukouni Oueddei, who did not have any objections to the Libyan occupation of Chadian territory. At the same time France supported the Malloum regime against the rebels. This pattern persisted, with Libya supporting Oueddei, regardless of whether he was a member of the government or the rebel forces at a given moment, and France supporting Oueddei’s rival Habré – also in the role of rebel as well as head of state. Libyan troops were even sent into Chad in 1983-4 and once again in 1986-7, prompting France in each instance to send in its own troops. In 1987 the French mission *Epervier* was able to force the withdrawal of Libyan troops and the conclusion of a Libyan-Chadian peace agreement. The *Epervier* mission has stationed around 1,200 soldiers in Chad down to the present and maintains two military bases there, in N’Djamena and in the east in Abéché.

Libya remained in the Azouzou strip until 1994, but then withdrew when the International Crimi-

⁴¹ Egypt’s current policy is still, however, primarily aimed at defending its own interests. Less reconciliatory strategies to this end have also been pursued in the past.

nal Court settled the border dispute by ruling in favour of Chad. Since then Gaddafi has been pursuing a less territorial strategy, but is still seeking to maximise his influence on neighbouring governments – as exhibited for instance by his support for Deby's take-over of power in 1990. His policy, which is often difficult to understand, has at least one constant element: his desire to be respected as one of the leading politicians in the region, if not in the whole of Africa. In the current situation this explains, on the one hand, his consistent rejection of any role for the international community, including the United Nations, and on the other hand his efforts to urge the conflict parties to find a solution at meetings in Libya. In the case of the Darfur conflict, Gaddafi's efforts have contributed considerably to the splintering of the rebel movement.

France and Libya are vying for influence in the Central African Republic as well, if not as blatantly as in the case of Chad. However, Gaddafi's support for Patassé, the stationing of CEN-SAD peace-keeping troops and their subsequent replacement by a contingent of the francophone CEMAC, as well as most recently the competition between CEN-SAD and CEMAC over the role of mediator in the peace negotiations, clearly revealed these conflicting interests. Under President Sarkozy, however, a new rapprochement between France and Libya is apparent. Even if both sides continue to pursue their own objectives, there have been several examples of cooperation to date, even in sensitive areas, where their interests coincided. Deby for instance only consented to the military mission of EUFOR in the east of Chad after receiving the green light from Tripoli. Initially, Gaddafi had maintained his general rejection of any international mission in the region, only giving up this stance upon the request of France. In February 2008 France transported Libyan weapons and ammunition to the Chad government, hard pressed by rebels at the time, thus contributing to the stabilisation of the regime.⁴²

Another struggle over influence in the region can be witnessed between France, the USA and China, which have extended their global competition for natural resources to Africa as well. In the struggle

over new concessions for the exploitation of coveted resources, political objectives to solve the local conflicts often have to take back seat. In 2005, for example, there was scarcely any objection by the World Bank, dominated by the USA, when the Chad government broke an agreement on the use of oil revenue to finance new arms purchases instead of spending the money on social programmes. China rewarded the resumption of diplomatic relations and the simultaneous severance of relations with Taiwan in August 2006 with pledges of loans in the millions, receiving concessions in the oil sector in return. For its part France is trying to stave off its continuous loss of influence in the wider region through its troops stationed there – for instance, by allowing Deby to fend off rebel groups before the gates of (and in) N'Djamena in 2006 and 2008 through the provision of strategic aerial reconnaissance photographs.

Similar to the issue of access to natural resources, the so-called war on terror has also been assigned high priority in US foreign policy. It was in this context that the Chadian army, embroiled as it was in the civil war, received training and material aid from the USA in order to prepare it for the fight against Islamic extremists. The CIA also cited the aim of combating terrorism to justify its close collaboration with the Sudanese secret service, which in addition to sharing archive material on the period Osama bin Laden spent in the Sudan has apparently also supplied up to date information on countries such as Iraq or Somalia. The USA has thus entered into a dependent relationship which makes its official policy of threatening the Sudan with more severe sanctions appear less than credible.

Also deserving mention, finally, is Eritrea, as it plays a more than negligible role in the Darfur conflict. For many years now Asmara has had close ties with almost all the Sudanese rebel groups, providing them access to military training camps and allowing them to open political representations. Eritrea, which feels betrayed by the international community in its border conflict with Ethiopia and is also increasingly isolated in the region, is now using its contacts with the Darfur rebels to demonstrate its importance on the international stage. As a result, the further development of the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict poses a potential threat to efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement in Darfur.

⁴² See, for instance, the 12 February 2008 article by Jean-François Bayart (*Obscénité franco-tchadienne*) in *Le Monde*.

7 International Peace Efforts

7.1 Focus on Darfur

The crisis in the tri-border region of the Sudan, Chad and Central African Republic does not involve a series of unrelated problems, but rather a system of more or less closely interrelated conflicts. A lasting peace can only be achieved if these interrelationships are identified and addressed within the framework of a comprehensive strategy. Unfortunately this has not been the case to date. Instead, the international community has always picked out merely one aspect of the complex constellation of conflicts and attempted to deal with it separately from the other factors.

Serious efforts to bring about peace in the region began in 2001, when the regional organisation IGAD (*Intergovernmental Agency on Development*) – mainly with the support of the USA, Great Britain and Norway – assumed the role of mediator in the civil war between the northern and southern Sudan. The mediators decided at the time that only the two biggest parties to the conflict, which is to say the government and the SPLM, were to meet at the negotiating table. In doing so, they overlooked not only the fact that the two groups were by no means representative of their respective regions, but moreover that the north-south conflict was only one manifestation of a much larger centre-periphery conflict. A peace agreement concentrating on the south would not solve the problems prevailing in other peripheral areas of the country, however, and would instead make these problems stand out in even starker contrast. Ultimately it is scarcely surprising, then, that the success which appeared to be looming in the north-south talks reinforced already existing frustrations in other neglected areas (like for instance in Darfur, but also in the eastern Sudan and to a certain extent in Kordofan) and contributed to the outbreak or intensification of armed rebellions there. The mediators decided, however, against a widening of the negotiations, and concentrated on what appeared to be the almost attainable goal, namely achieving a north-south peace agreement, all the while ignoring that the government, which was apparently willing to make peace in the south, was at the same time guilty of the most heinous crimes against humanity in Darfur.

With the signing of the CPA in January 2005, however, the attention of the international community shifted to Darfur. Especially in the USA, the atrocities committed by the Janjaweed and the Sudanese army in Darfur mobilised a broad coalition of civil society organisations which called upon their government to quickly find a solution to the crisis. In September 2004 the US foreign minister at the time, Colin Powell, adopted the jargon of the activists for the first time, referring to the crimes in Darfur as genocide. Shortly thereafter, the UN Security Council set up a commission of enquiry, whose report, issued in January 2005, only days after the signing of the CPA, confirmed the abominable violations of human rights in Darfur. In reaction to the report, the UN Security Council imposed a weapons embargo on Darfur and referred the crimes committed there to the International Criminal Court. While the CPA and the problems which quickly began to crop up in its implementation no longer received much attention, more than a dozen states participated as observers in the Abuja peace negotiations and attempted to influence the talks outside the official meetings. Although there was agreement that the provisions of the CPA should not be affected by a Darfur peace agreement in order not to jeopardise what had already been achieved, this piecemeal approach once again blinded actors to the larger conflict constellation. Due to Khartoum's preference for a military instead of a political solution, the conflict in Darfur had become intimately intertwined with the conflict in Chad, but the mediators in Abuja also turned a blind eye to this alarming development.

Following the failure of the Darfur Peace Agreement, the efforts of the international community turned to replacing the AMIS troops with a larger and more robust peace-keeping mission to at least provide security for the population – even in the absence of an agreement between the conflict parties. Due to Khartoum's vehement resistance, however, almost two whole years passed between the conception of the idea in the spring of 2006 and the official transfer of AMIS to the UNAMID mission replacing it in January 2008, during which time all other efforts to settle the conflict receded

into the background. In spite of the long preparatory period, a large part of the troops and material had still not arrived upon the start of UNAMID, and it must be feared that the Sudanese government will continue its policy of hampering the mission by placing bureaucratic impediments and red tape in its way. For this reason UNAMID is not expected to be fully deployed and ready for action before the end of 2008, and it is already apparent that considerable diplomatic energy will have to be expended over the course of the year to accomplish the AU-UN hybrid mission.

7.2 Chad as the «Simpler Darfur»

Following the lead of US-American civil society, new groups or umbrella organisations of existing groups advocating a political campaign to “save” Darfur have also formed in Europe. The aim of their work has not been, however, to establish contacts with civil society actors in the Sudan in order to work for a peaceful solution at the grassroots level. Instead, they have concentrated on public relations work in the north and targeted lobbying of their own governments to move these to take action. The success of these movements could be witnessed, for instance, in the French presidential election campaign, in which all the candidates pledged to help the people in Darfur. Immediately after the formation of the new government, the new Foreign Minister, Bernard Kouchner, proposed the establishment of a humanitarian corridor with military protection in Darfur, which could be staged from French military bases in Chad. Kouchner’s proposal was rebuffed by all sides, however. Humanitarian organisations rejected military protection for their work, as they feared it would compromise their neutrality. Potential troop-contributing countries on the other hand rightly feared, in view of the disastrous security situation in Darfur, that such a mission would suffer considerable losses without being able to contribute to the region’s pacification.

Kouchner reacted swiftly, withdrawing the proposal and then proposing an international presence in the east of Chad in order to help improve the humanitarian situation there. By the same token, he drew attention to the regional context for the first time, although one-sidedly portraying Chad

as an innocent victim of the Darfur crisis. France was pursuing two aims in its proposal: first of all it could create the impression that it was working in earnest on behalf of Darfur without, however, having to undergo the perils of a military engagement there – for instance within the framework of the planned UNAMID. Secondly, it offered a possibility to share the political responsibility as well as the financial costs of the French military commitment in Chad and the Central African Republic with the broader international community. France had already prepared this initiative at the level of the UN, for instance in August 2006 when it succeeded to include a reference to the tense security situation in Darfur’s western neighbours in Security Council Resolution 1706, which called for the creation of a UN peace-keeping mission in Darfur. Although a report subsequently submitted in December 2006 by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan confirmed the difficult situation in Chad and the Central African Republic, he unequivocally spoke out against the deployment of a UN mission. Annan justified his recommendation above all by citing the lack of a credible political process in the countries involved, without which a military mission would have no prospect of achieving a lasting improvement in the situation and could possibly even lead to the mission becoming a party to the conflict itself.

France did not allow itself to be swayed by the warning, however, and persevered in its aim under the new UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, later also taking a similar initiative within the framework of the common European foreign policy. At a visit he paid to Chad shortly after taking up office, Kouchner was finally able to convince President Deby of the need for a UN mission in eastern Chad, which Deby had to that point in time rejected. Deby’s consent had its price, however, which was in particular reflected by the mandate given to the mission named MINURCAT (*Mission des Nations Unies en République Centrafricaine et au Tchad*). For instance, the originally foreseen task of securing the frontier was dropped. Although this would have made a useful contribution to a reduction in weapons smuggling, it would have also curbed the movement of the Darfur rebels enjoying the support of the Chad government. Furthermore, instead of the usual UN peace-keeping operation, a European security component

was agreed upon. In view of the fact that French troops were already present in the region, most of the force would be made up of French soldiers, which for the Chad government meant privileged access to decision-makers.

The proposal for a European military mission met with little enthusiasm on the part of France's European partners. The fact that the mission, limited to a maximum of 12 months, was finally approved after all, was not least (according to a statement by a Brussels diplomat) due to the fact that France's European partners wanted to avoid a foreign policy embarrassment. The tough negotiations over troop contributions, which led to several delays in the EUFOR mission and even made it necessary to request contingents from candidates for EU membership, clearly reflects the lack of conviction with which the EU has adopted the French project.

7.3 Distant Bystanders: German Foreign Policy

The tri-border region is not assigned any special priority in German foreign policy. The German embassy in the Central African Republic was temporarily closed in 1997 due to the turmoil in the country and ultimately closed completely for budgetary reasons. Only a small liaison office run by the embassy in Cameroon is being maintained at present. In the area of development cooperation, the GTZ was for many years involved in several infrastructural projects in the northwest, but in the meantime a single project to protect a national park is ongoing. No additional funds have been apportioned for development cooperation, which means that the GTZ will probably leave the country entirely in the near future. With the exception of humanitarian organisations, there are no other German institutions working in the Central African Republic.

While Germany has an embassy in Chad, it does not have sufficient staff resources to conduct a detailed analysis of the complex political situation there. Although Germany is the only EU country besides France represented in Chad, it is not playing any active role either in Chad or in Brussels in current European efforts to promote a political dialogue. The GTZ has been active in Chad since 1976 and is currently concentrating on two

projects involving decentralised rural development in the east and southwest of the country. It is being supported there by the German Development Service (DED) and the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), with the former organising training programmes for local service providers and intermediary organisations, and the latter providing funds for local projects. The DED is furthermore active in the promotion of civil society organisations, in particular in the media sector. In the non-governmental sector, Misereor and World Vision are carrying out small-scale development projects. The church organisation EIRENE is furthermore supporting a project of Chadian partner organisations mediating the conflict between farmers and livestock breeders. In addition, the working group "Chad/Cameroon Petroleum Project" of German non-governmental organisations works together with Chadian partners to promote the sustainable exploitation of oil reserves and a fair participation of the population in the areas where the oil fields are located.

Of the three countries, the Sudan receives the greatest attention from Germany. The embassy in Khartoum has recently been assigned an additional staff member in order to be able to more closely follow developments in the southern Sudan. The Federal government has furthermore appointed a lawyer to act as expert on the *Assessment and Evaluation Commission* (AEC), which has been set up to monitor the CPA, and a diplomat based in the southern Sudanese city of Juba to act as political advisor to the EU Special Representative for Sudan. Furthermore, with around 35 officers, the German Army has provided the largest national contingent of military observers for the peace-keeping mission UNMIS (*United Nations Mission in Sudan*), which is stationed in the southern Sudan. Germany also supported the AU mission in Darfur through direct financial assistance, airlifting AMIS soldiers and dispatching several police trainers, who are to continue to work for UNAMID as well. At the beginning of the Darfur crisis, the coalition government at the time (social democrats and the green party) also played an important role on the international stage. In particular, it used its seat on the UN Security Council at the time to put the Darfur question on the agenda. The report on Darfur crimes, which later led to the involvement of the International Criminal Court, was commis-

sioned largely at Germany's urging. This policy has met with little understanding in Khartoum, and German-Sudanese relations deteriorated considerably, with members of the German government for some time being denied entry into the Sudan. Following a cautious normalisation of relations under the guidance of new governments both in Berlin and in Khartoum, Germany has for the most part abandoned any active Sudan policy and is limiting its actions to moral and financial support for multinational initiatives.

Development cooperation with the Sudan was suspended at the beginning of the 1990s in reaction to the violent takeover of power by the NCP in Khartoum. The resumption of development cooperation with the central government is tied to the implementation of the CPA, a peaceful solution to the Darfur conflict and a general improvement in the human rights situation in the Sudan. The German government has resumed cooperation with the government of the Southern Sudan, however, as a symbolic gesture following the peace agreement there. In addition to making a financial contribution to an international donor fund, experts from the GTZ and the KfW are advising the government on water issues and a pilot project to improve governance is being set up. Despite the suspension of German government assistance, the DED managed to continue its work in the Sudan, whereby the current focus is on the reintegration of refugees in the southern Sudan. Humanitarian aid organisations, both church-affiliated and non-confessional, are concentrating their activities in Darfur and in the south. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation is the only German political foundation with an office in Khartoum, offering – along with seminars on political education – a certain latitude for critical exchange and discussion of the future development of the country.

8 Scenarios for the Near Future

In the tri-border region of the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic, the bewildering number of actors alone makes a prediction of future developments a difficult endeavour, which is not rendered any easier by the numerous regional and international interlinkages. In the following, a description of the positions of the most important actors is to serve as the point of departure for venturing such a prediction, and is followed by an analysis of the opportunities and risks which these portend.

The top priority for the NCP regime in Khartoum will be to maintain its own power. With respect to the south, the NCP will attempt, with all the means at its disposal, to prevent the country's division. A host of strategies are conceivable to accomplish this goal: the continuation of cooperation with the SPLM, but also a new coalition with the northern opposition parties. With regard to Darfur, on the other hand, the NCP clearly favours a military solution and will accordingly continue to work for the overthrow of Chad's President Deby, who is supporting the Darfur rebels.

The SPLM will remain weakened by internal rifts and in-fighting. At the national level it will concentrate on securing its participation in the government in Khartoum and along with this a reliable share of oil revenue. The continuation of the coalition with the NCP will probably be the preferred strategy as long as the regime in Khartoum can credibly assure the SPLM that it will adhere to the implementation of the key elements of the CPA – delays and minor adjustments notwithstanding.

The Darfur rebels are keenly aware of the strategic importance of the support they receive from Chad and will continue to aid President Deby. To be prepared for his overthrow, however, they will attempt to expand their alliances with other opposition groups within the Sudan. In the wake of the almost successful coup attempt of February 2008, Deby, on the other side of the border, will above all concentrate on securing his continued rule.

The Central African Republic is at present only marginally affected by the conflicts in the neighbouring countries. President Bozizé will for this reason be able to concentrate completely on bol-

stering his power over his internal rivals. By the same token he will attempt to make as few concessions as possible, but at the same time face tremendous pressure both from his own population as well as international donors.

8.1 Risks

A whole host of risks arise from the strategies outlined in the foregoing – risks which could cause the crises in the tri-border region to persist, if not even lead to their further escalation. The crucial factor for the further development in Chad will be whether Idriss Deby is able to hang on to power or whether he will be deposed after all in the face of the pressure from the insurgency. In the former scenario, more resolute military action against the rebels operating in the eastern part of the country as well as the proxy war with the Sudanese government can be expected, if only in order to tie down the combatants on all sides in Darfur and eastern Chad and prevent further advances on N'Djamena. However, aside from scattered skirmishes a direct military confrontation with the Sudan is less likely due to the major difference in the strengths of the two armies. Internal problems such as for instance the ethnic conflicts in the southeast of Chad will continue to be of little importance to the government, which means that no improvement in the security situation of the population is to be expected. Deby will increasingly perceive the civil opposition as a threat and react by curtailing political freedoms and stepping up repression against journalists and political activists. The first arrests of opposition leaders already took place following the coup attempt in February, even though there are no ties between the rebels and the political parties. The political dialogue which has just begun is thus in jeopardy of becoming a meaningless farce completely void of any consequences whatsoever.

If a renewed coup attempt against Deby is successful, however, the coalition of rebel forces consisting of the RFC, UFDD and UFDD-F, which only came together for military reasons, can be expected to rapidly fall apart. The ensuing

struggle between these and additional groups (such as for example the FUC) over who is to accede to the office of president will be carried out by military means and will in all probability heavily affect the densely populated capital. The Sudan will support at least one of the rebel groups directly in order to install a friendly regime in N'Djamena with its help. Competing regional powers such as Libya may possibly intervene and support other groups to prevent this. In any case, the power struggle will tie up the financial and material resources of all of the groups involved in the foreseeable future, which is likely to result in a significant decrease in Chad's support for the Darfur rebel groups. The Sudanese government will see this as an opportunity to finally solve the conflict in Darfur by military means and start a new offensive against the Darfur rebels. As has been the case thus far, the civilian population would once again be directly targeted in attacks, so a continuously growing number of refugees and forcefully displaced persons and a considerable deterioration in the humanitarian situation can be expected.

The decisive factor for further developments in the Sudan will be the continuation of the Government of National Unity. Even in the event of an escalation in the fighting in Darfur, it is entirely conceivable that the SPLM will continue to hang on to its membership in the government in Khartoum. This would be the case, for example, if elections were to take place in the foreseeable future and the NCP and SPLM entered into a coalition as the "guardians of the CPA". For both sides this would hold out the advantage of cementing their respective power positions in the north and south of the country and allow them to reject the demands of other political forces by arguing that the peace agreement has to be implemented. In spite of successful elections, no real progress in the democratisation of the country would have been achieved. Progress in the establishment of state structures and an improvement in the living conditions of people in the southern Sudan would also be minimal, as the leadership of the SPLM will devote its energies to the internal power struggle between the factions supporting Salva Kiir, Riak Machar and the widow of John Garang, Rebecca de Mabior.

Distrust of the NCP, however, remains considerable within the SPLM (as well as in the south

as a whole), and a break with the current coalition is being discussed as a realistic option. In the event that no progress is made in the implementation of the CPA – and in particular if no democratic elections or a referendum on a division of the country are held – a unilateral declaration of independence by the southern Sudan would be conceivable. This step would not be accepted by the NCP, however, and would inevitably cause the civil war to break out again between the north and the south. Both the SPLM and the NCP have invested considerable sums in the modernisation of their armed forces since the signing of the CPA, which means that, just as before the conclusion of the peace pact, no side will have a clear military superiority and the fighting will once again drag on for years. It is therefore likely that before breaking with the NCP, the SPLM will attempt to conclude alliances with other opposition groups willing to take up arms. The most recent efforts to bring about closer contacts with the Darfur rebels can definitely be interpreted as the first step in the direction of such a "coalition of the marginalised". Such cooperation would, however, not serve to consolidate the secession of the southern Sudan, but rather seek to topple the NCP by military means.

Steps aimed at creating a broader military coalition can also be witnessed among the Darfur rebels. Not only have contacts with anti-government Arab militias been opened over the last year – close ties have also developed with groups in Kordofan who are ready to join in the fray. Moreover, there are still contacts with the Eastern Front, which as a result of the delays in the implementation of the peace agreement concluded with the NCP in 2006 is beginning to have second thoughts about its worth. Should a national network of armed opposition groups indeed come about, a war on several fronts can be expected, but no quick victory for any side. The NCP will resort to now-familiar methods and mobilise, along with the regular army, local militias to combat the rebels – and the population. The result would be a lengthy, low-intensity conflict with sporadic outbreaks of violence, whose focal point would shift back and forth between the regions without any side having prospects for a lasting victory.

Against the background of this bewildering array of actors with its potential for rapidly shifting

alliances, it must be feared that the international military missions stationed in the region will continue to have to operate without the full support of the conflict parties and as a consequence will be unable to achieve their objectives. As the attacks on the AMIS and, most recently, on EUFOR have shown, the missions run the risk of themselves being drawn into the conflicts. If this leads to a curtailment of activities in order to protect a mission's own personnel, a long-term loss in the trust and confidence of the population in the UN and the international community as a whole is to be feared, which would in turn have a negative impact on the efforts to find a political solution to the crises.

While the conflicts in Darfur and Chad remain closely intertwined, the situation in the Central African Republic remains largely independent of developments in neighbouring countries. It is conceivable though that Chad rebels will once again march through the northeastern part of the country and provide sporadic support for the rebels there. In view of the extremely weak state structures, the government in Bangui does not pose any threat to the neighbouring countries, which means that from their perspective at present there is no reason to destabilise the government of the Central African Republic. Within the country, however, there is a risk that the government will increasingly adopt a harder line. President Bozizé took advantage of the resignation of the government in January 2008 to further boost the number of his closest collaborators in the government. Thus, it must be feared that he will not be willing to make any serious concessions to the opposition and the inclusive dialogue may fail. The FOMUC, which continues to be stationed in the country, and possibly France as well, will continue to prop up Bozizé's power and, in the extreme case, also take action against the rebels if they appear to be threatening the regime. No foreign support is to be expected to crush the rebellion permanently, however, nor will the FACA be a position to achieve this in the foreseeable future. If no agreement is achieved within the framework of the political dialogue, there is a risk that the conflict will solidify into a permanent military crisis, which would constitute an unparalleled development in the history of the Republic.

8.2 Opportunities

On the other hand, the situation in the Central African Republic also offers numerous opportunities for a positive development. One important advantage in finding a solution to current problems is the relatively limited interrelationship between the conflicts here and those in the Sudan and Chad, which means that an improvement in the situation in the Central African Republic is possible largely independently of events in the neighbouring countries. The inclusive dialogue proclaimed at the beginning of 2008 involving the political and military opposition as well as civil society presents a significant opportunity to agree on a common strategy for the future development of the country. The weakness of Bozizé, who cannot solve the military or social problems of the country without external aid, can possibly have a positive influence on the process. As experience with the Patassé regime shows, Bozizé will not be able to ignore the protest of civil servants over outstanding salaries in the long run without jeopardising his own political survival. In view of the disastrous situation of government finances, he is highly dependent on international financial aid. Moreover, he continues to require the presence of FOMUC to provide military security for his regime as well as long-term external aid in turning the FACA into an efficient and effective army. These weak points could serve as useful levers to move Bozizé to make concessions within the framework of the inclusive dialogue. However, long-term international monitoring will be a crucial factor for the successful implementation of any commitments made.

In Chad as well, the political dialogue which has already commenced is basically reason for hope, even if only the government and opposition parties are involved here. However, as a first step trust and confidence in the seriousness of the dialogue, which have been severely shaken by the arrest of several oppositional leaders in the wake of the coup attempt in February, will have to be restored. Also encouraging are the efforts of active civil society groups to promote a national reconciliation process. Inclusion of civil society in the political dialogue could help expand its current focus from administrative questions concerning the preparations for elections to an urgently needed

discussion of a common vision for the country's future.

In the Sudan the CPA continues to offer a framework for peaceful change. With the return of the SPLM to the Government of National Unity both coalition partners have once again underscored that they want to implement all of the provisions of the accord. Even if a solution to border disputes, and in particular the Abyei problem, is not yet in sight, there is movement in other important areas. The drafting of new election laws has commenced and, after several delays, the census to prepare for the elections is slated to begin in April 2008. Both processes involve the entire population of the country and for this reason offer an outstanding opportunity to initiate a broader debate over the elections and the implementation of the CPA as a whole. Such a discussion could for its part also provide a new impetus for a democratic future after the end of the transitional period agreed upon in the CPA.

In principle, the increasing interest of the SPLM in the Darfur conflict, which opens the possibility for a greater influence on the Darfur policy of the government in Khartoum, is also encouraging. Themselves former rebels, the representatives of the SPLM have special access to the Darfur rebels and can more easily relate to their position. Negotiations on the return of the SPLM to the government have also shown that the SPLM has the means to apply pressure to the NCP and can be successful if it does so. It remains questionable, however, whether the SPLM is willing to use its limited room for manoeuvre in the government to solve the Darfur crisis instead of pursuing its own aims.

Even if developments take a positive turn, however, a rapid solution within a few months' time cannot be expected for any of the conflicts. The basis for a stable, peaceful solution is a reduction of the profound distrust between the actors – especially in the Sudan and Chad. The rapprochement of rebel groups in Darfur presents a particularly demanding challenge here, a process which will certainly take longer than their fragmentation. Although experience from the four-year negotiation phase leading to the CPA shows that trust and confidence-building measures can indeed build bridges between bitter enemies, it also un-

derscores the fact that much patience is needed for this to succeed. Moreover, it clearly illustrates that the signing of a peace agreement by no means signifies the end of a conflict, but rather that the newly emerging relations are subject to considerable stress and strain in the ensuing implementation phase. Such threats to the peace process can come from spoilers within the parties, for whom the agreement means a loss of power and influence, as well as from external factors such as the impact of regional conflicts and global political or economic developments.⁴³ There are two crucial factors to effectively confront these risks: a serious commitment to peace by all conflict parties and a lasting engagement by the international community far beyond the conclusion of a peace agreement.

⁴³ In addition to the conflicts addressed in this study, there are a whole host of regional hot spots which could also have an impact on developments in the three countries: the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the LRA problem in northern Uganda, the further development of the political crisis in Kenya and a possible continuation of the unrest in Cameroon.

9 Options for Action

The attempts by the international community to contribute to a solution to the crises in the region have not been very successful, particularly since the outbreak of the rebellion in Darfur. The no doubt serious will of politicians as well as the public pressure to “do something” to end the conflict in view of the humanitarian suffering have all too often led to hasty measures being taken without any prior, realistic analysis of their probable efficacy. The development of future strategies must therefore also be based on a critical assessment of measures taken in the past. The analysis provided in the preceding chapters indicates three main shortcomings of the international efforts: First of all, the isolated view on individual hot spots, secondly the lack of cooperation between the numerous actors involved and, finally, the primacy of military solutions.

Accordingly, the first step along the route to a more promising strategy would be to acknowledge the interrelations between the various conflicts and to carefully analyse these linkages. On this basis, an overall strategy for the region needs to be developed which simultaneously addresses the various hot spots – the implementation of the CPA, the search for a peaceful solution to the Darfur conflict, the consideration of other marginalised regions and groups in the Sudan and, finally, an analysis of the structural problems afflicting the political system in Chad. There are two barriers to this approach in the actual practice of most diplomatic services. First of all, there is a need to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the conflicts, which requires working conditions allowing sufficient time to thoroughly study the complex historical and regional factors in addition to everyday political affairs. In most cases this would, however, require additional staff to be assigned to the country file. Secondly, it is important to ensure continuity within the respective working units. The regular rotation of diplomats and special envoys has in the past repeatedly led to the loss of valuable experience – resulting for example in cases where the well-known stalling tactics of regional actors were not recognised as such by the representatives of the international community. One model with which to overcome these problems of

the diplomatic services would be to assign permanent regional experts to act as advisors for the rotating decision-makers. In particular, high-ranking contacts such as, for instance, special envoys, should perform their work on a longer-term basis whenever possible, as personal trust and confidence only comes about slowly, but are absolutely essential to overcome sensitive problems.

One of the advantages of a comprehensive strategy for the conflicts in the region is that it ensures that the groups involved in the various localised conflicts do not receive contradictory messages from the international community, but rather clear and unambiguous ones. The prerequisite for this to happen, however, is that the numerous actors in the international arena agree on a common approach. Instead, however, efforts by governments and international organisations have thus far been influenced by particularistic interests and personal vanity as well as domestic political pressure creating the need to demonstrate rapid action. These factors have not only diverted attention from the objective of achieving peace in the region, they have also created a veritable cacophony of mediation offers that provide the parties to the conflict with an avenue for avoiding the international community’s potential pressure. What follows from all this is a clear need for a realignment of international efforts for a peaceful solution of the conflicts in the tri-border area. In this context it is of great importance to truly engage all the actors in a common structure and not, for instance, to equate the international community with the Western world. China, Libya, the African Union and League of Arab States may be difficult partners for the West at times, but no lasting solution to the problems in the region is conceivable without them. Rendering a group with a different set of foreign policy objectives capable of taking concerted action is a challenge in and of itself. Along with the complexity of the conflicts which are to be managed, another fact has become evident which is difficult to accept but impossible to deny: there will be no speedy solution to the crises. In particular the governments of the western democracies must therefore face up to the reality that the search for a lasting peace requires a pro-

cess of many small steps and a lot of patience, while taking action merely for the sake of public consumption may even prolong or exacerbate the conflict. To implement such a common strategy, it is urgently necessary for the existing architecture of international peace efforts to be revised. In addition to the many individual initiatives, there are a whole host of coordination forums whose membership overlaps at times, but are never the same. The aim should be to create a single coordinating group bringing together all the main actors under a clear leadership structure. This could develop out of the existing dual AU/UN leadership for instance, but it would have to hold a high level of moral authority in order to be able to bring about a rapid, binding decision in the event of disputes. The coordination group should assign clearly delineated tasks to individual countries and organisations, in accordance with their respective strengths (e.g. maintaining contact with a certain group) and within the framework of a common strategy. This would also allow actors with different types of resources to be integrated in the overall process. The successful structure supporting the peace negotiations between NCP and SPLM, while it cannot serve as a blueprint, could provide some helpful inspiration here. The mediators had then been supported both by a small circle of very committed countries with comprehensive assignments and a larger group of countries with more specialised sub-tasks.

Such an approach would also facilitate a political approach to resolving the conflicts in the region. Experience with AMIS and UNAMID has shown that a peace mission deployed against the will of the conflict parties will not only fail to accomplish its objectives – it will instead become embroiled in the conflict itself. In the case of Chad, one can even argue that the very announcement of the EUFOR mission motivated rebel groups to launch a new coup attempt before the full deployment of the mission and thus ultimately contributed to an escalation of the crisis. The mandates of both Darfur missions as well as MINURCAT do not include any political components that, besides mitigating the symptoms, could contribute to the solution of the crisis' root causes. As lasting peace in the region is only possible through a political solution, this objective should once again be brought to the fore. For Sudan this could mean, for example,

a greater emphasis on the political components of the UN mission stationed in the South and assigned with the task of monitoring and implementing the CPA. At the same time, greater advantage should be taken of the possibilities of the AEC, a monitoring commission agreed upon in the CPA. Here in particular, the active engagement of the agreement's international witnesses, which is to say the members of the IGAD as well as the USA, Great Britain and Norway, is needed. With respect to Darfur, expectations directed at UNAMID should be adjusted to reflect the mission's possibilities. The mission will neither be able to impose a true commitment to peace on the conflict parties, nor will it be able to guarantee any reliable protection of the population. On the other hand, an improved documentation of human rights violations and infringements against the ceasefire agreement, which is nominally still in effect, can step up the pressure on the parties to the conflict. In parallel, reviving the work of the ceasefire commission could moreover help curb the violence and serve as a confidence-building measure between the conflict parties.

In view of the most recent coup attempt in Chad, the mandates of MINURCAT and EUFOR should be carefully reviewed. Both mandates are restricted to the military conflict concentrated in the east and completely ignore the country's fundamental political crisis. French support for Deby in his fight against rebel groups, both in the east in November 2007 and during the coup attempt staged in February 2008, have convinced the rebels that the French-dominated EUFOR is by no means neutral, but rather meant to stabilise the existing regime. EUFOR thus became a party to the conflict from the very outset and may have to dedicate more attention to its own security needs than to its actual mission. The EU's reputation as a neutral mediator is at stake, and it should quickly put a halt to its uncritical implementation of French objectives. An initial step in this direction would be to broaden the basis of information for far-reaching political decisions, for instance through the increased and permanent despatch of diplomats from the EU and its members countries. The German government, which besides France is the only EU country with an embassy in the country, could make an important contribution by rapidly sending additional personnel – or by making its

existing infrastructure available to other countries. The EU should moreover improve coordination between its existing initiatives, which have so far been running parallel to one another. Even though the mandate of the EU Special Envoy for Sudan has been expanded to include assistance for EUFOR, no provision has been made for his involvement in the political dialogue between the government and political opposition, which has received significant support by the EU Commission. In the current atmosphere of increased political repression, the protection of this dialogue and its participants is of utmost importance and should thus be an integral part of the MINURCAT mandate.

In the Central African Republic, the international community should also concentrate on the opportunities offered by the inclusive dialogue, which has already been initiated. Although President Bozizé is not all that willing to open his government, he runs the danger of losing power if international support is withheld. This considerable potential to apply pressure can only be taken advantage of, however, if the international community closes ranks and ties not only development cooperation, but also in particular cooperation in the security sector, which is crucial to the survival of the regime, to progress in the dialogue and the implementation of its recommendations.

With respect to all three countries it is important to grasp the autocratic to dictatorial nature of the regimes as one of the fundamental causes of conflict. Efforts to obtain a political solution must thus not be limited to agreeing on the division of power between different armed actors, as this would leave structural problems unsolved and make a new outbreak of violence a matter of time. As the histories of Chad and the Sudan show, merely involving oppositional forces in the government does not suffice, if the political system continues to fail to take different interests into account in the decision-making process. Not only must institutional questions be taken into consideration in negotiations and any agreement produced – these questions must also be devoted special attention during the implementation phase. The tasks of the international community at this stage should therefore also be to strengthen important national control mechanisms, and in particular the parliaments. It is also indispensable within the

framework of a political solution to a conflict to support and involve a country's truly democratic forces in the process. As the regimes themselves have no interest whatsoever in a democratisation of their societies, the region's political opposition and civil society are subject to considerable constraints including torture and political assassination. External support, however, can offer some protection and thus open space for critical debate. At the heart of such a debate could be the search for a positive vision of a common future – a vision which is lacking in all three countries.

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