

**Workshop organized by the Southern Africa Liaison Office (SALO)
"Consensus Building Dialogue: Central African Republic, Sudan/South Sudan"**

Wednesday 2nd September 2015
Venue: Burgers Park Hotel
424 Lilian Ngoyi St (Van der Walt Street) Pretoria

SESSION ONE:



"Building an Even More Secure Central African Republic"

By Simon P. Alain Handy

Former Special Advisor to the UN Special Representative
of the Secretary-General in CAR

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is not my first visit in the country and I am delighted to be here with you. Together, we can try to better understand world affairs in the twenty-first century while discussing the strategies at play in regard to the African continent. This morning I will submit that the Central African Republic's protracted crisis ought to be looked at in the broader context of the wider world and sub regional dynamics. It is my firm belief that people of the Central African Republic have been ensnared in a decade-long power struggle. Power always depends on context. Indeed, the history of the Central African Republic (CAR) is a chronicle of political instability and societal violence.

Allow me to contextualize. On the 8th of April 2008, I was invited to a Strategic Studies Seminar at the National Assembly in Paris, organized by the Ministry of Defense. The writ of the seminar was to devise a prospective analysis and a new power narrative that considered the shifts, innovations, bold technologies, and new relationships as well as main strategic markers of power in 2040. Three significant trends emerged:

First, the global information age of the twenty first century is witnessing the slow and gradual erosion of Western domination. The westernization of the world, a geopolitical transition which ushered in the western dominance in the XVth century will come to a close, paving the way to the affirmation of new major powers, however uncertain their paths. Today, South Africa, China, Brazil, India and others are increasing their share of

world power resources.

Second, the continued acceleration of globalization and the explosion of transnational flows, resulting in increased interdependence of states and requiring necessary adjustments. Africa as a whole will continue to gallop forward, amid myriad structural vulnerabilities, with the exception of a few francophone countries in central Africa being subjected to a continuous downgrading. Meanwhile, the stability of the international system will require the strengthening of its regulatory framework and increased international cooperation.

Lastly, the geopolitical transition period outlined above will be marked by a growing instability and volatility, a gradual rise in tension and an increase of conflicts, both through the risk of inter-state confrontation as well as the increase in asymmetric threats such as rebels and armed groups.

CAR epitomizes to perfection the preceding description. In reality, the fundamental parameters of the CAR crisis are static and have not much changed over the last half-century. The CAR has continued to grapple with a decaying political order. There is a lack of basic institutions, most notably a State. Until there is a single, central source of authority that exercises a legitimate monopoly of force in that country over its territory to keep the peace and enforce the law, there will be no citizen security or the conditions for individuals to flourish.

Despite the exponential growth of sub-Saharan African countries in the last few years, nothing of the sort had been noticeable in the CAR, where long-overdue structural reforms have failed to materialize. The lessons of experience have been poorly understood, barely articulated, and not systematized within the governing structures. The development of a modern state in CAR is the most pressing concern.

According to Francis Fukuyama, China was the first world civilization to establish a non-patrimonial, modern state, which it did some eighteen centuries before similar political units appeared in Europe. The CAR requires specific strategies for shifting political organization away from family and friend-based organizations to impersonal ones. To expand its reach into the country's hinterlands, the state will have to move beyond friends and family the way that they recruit officials. Again China did so by inventing the civil service examination as early as the third century B.C. This is feasible, since the inception on September 15, 2014 of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA). A formal presence has now been established in 40 localities where no state presence was visible before.

The CAR's credibility deficit on the international stage has always been linked to the perennial issue of its paucity of principled leadership. To maximize the chances for success, any upcoming CAR leadership must address, among

others, the challenges facing the mining sector and the country's natural resources mismanagement. That means transforming a resource curse into a resource blessing. This can be done by implementing: a) a regulatory system to manage the sustainable development of the country's wealth of natural resources ; b) a tax and royalty regime that ensures the revenues generated from the exploitation of minerals serve as an effective development catalyst and; c) a Mining Code and National Security force that reduces smuggling activities, building on the Kimberly framework and preventing conflict diamonds from further fanning tensions in the country and across its borders.

As of today, CAR's political process is on track as far as the transitional process (electoral calendar) is concerned, but this is taking place against a backdrop of continued societal breakdown and the unraveling security situation across the country.

But why should South Africa care?

1. To some extent, South Africa's leadership in the region remains wanting, but it is *wanted*.
2. A festering sore of instability at the heart of the continent is a losing strategy for Africa, and recipe for a catastrophe. Unsavory characters on the lookout for safe havens are rife in the region. This in turn can destabilize the wider sub region.
3. The cost of war is far more expensive than the financial resources needed to wage peace - that is why investing in humanitarian and development assistance as well as reconciling fractured communities are essential prerequisites for the transitional process ahead. South Africa's government and civic associations should support the international community and regional organizations in scaling up international security forces and support systems. The security umbrella is essential for the transitional authorities to undertake needed structural reforms and embark on an agenda of normalization.
4. Finally, MINUSCA is the UN's most ambitious mission. It faces great challenges and even greater responsibilities. The months ahead will be a test for the CAR's Transitional government. It will also be a test of the international community's responsiveness in stabilizing a country already too ravaged by war. Shouldn't South Africa play a role, when so much is at stake?