



President Wade calls for a power-sharing gov't in Chad: A constructive conflict resolution approach

Binneh S. Minteh, Senegambia News Contributor, Senegambia News
Published 03/11/2008 - 12:38 a.m. GMT

The impoverished nation of Chad has in recent years been battered by various arm political groups struggling to overthrow the regime of President Idriss Deby. Most of these groups come close to knocking the corridors of power and therefore causing untold number of death and destruction. Since he came to power through the sword, the regime of President Deby has been faced with political uncertainty as a result of threats from such armed political groups. It was only last February when numerous armed groups infiltrated the Capital and fought a two day battle before bitten back by the Chadian Army that was widely alleged to have French Military Support.

With so many killed in the Chadian political struggle, the renewed threat of attacks by armed political factions raises the questions: What are the possible conflict resolution approaches to Chad's political minefields? Will a power sharing government provide answers to the looming conflict between Chadian political rivals?" The meeting of member states of the Organization of Islamic States in Dakar, Senegal, is one such venue where a solution to the political future of Chad is been tabled.

President Wade's call for a power sharing government as a possible solution to the Chadian political impasse must in doubt be underestimated. This is so because in a power sharing agreement, all actors in the political game are included and therefore no actor feels excluded or left out. In the case of Chad, a careful analysis of armed political actors will show that all these groups were either excluded or marginalized and or gradually fell apart with the incumbent for reasons best known to them. What is more stunning about Chad's politics is the President falling apart with even his closest family members; once high ranking government officials. For example one of the armed political groups that spear headed last months attack on the capital Njamena is led by President Deby's own cousin. Reports also indicate the desertion of senior military officers to the ranks of the armed opposition groups. The call for a power sharing deal must not be a miss opportunity. Even Sudan that is alleged to be supporting some Chadian armed political groups could become a toothless bulldozer once such a power sharing deal takes shape in Chad.

Amidst a regional humanitarian conundrum, Stability in Chad is crucial to regional peace and security. And with thousands of Sudanese already displaced in Chad, the United States, the European Union and the African union must reinforce both President Wades call for a power sharing government and President Sarkozy's call for an inclusion of all political actors in the Chadian political affairs.

Chad's vast oil mineral resources have also intensified the crisis to another level. The millions of dollars from Chad's oil wealth is another major driving force behind Chad's political crisis. The lack of transparency coupled with dominance and control of Chad's vast oil wealth by President Deby and his clique is also widely believed to be the inferno behind recent deadly actions of armed political groups. It should also be noted that with a production rate of about 200, 000 barrels a day (2004 estimate), few people outside the capital have access safe running water, to electricity, paved roads, and health clinics. While the government of Chad continue to use hundreds of millions of oil dollars in the name of fighting rebels armed by Sudan, public schools are reported to be nonexistent in other parts of the country. The African Union, the United States and France could

reported to be nonexistent in other parts of the country. The African Union, the United States and France could also make a huge difference by shaping policy towards Chad in ways that will ensure the positive and constructive use of the country's oil wealth.

It is therefore in the best interest of the United States and the European Union to support the call for a power sharing government that will include all political actors in Chad. The United States together with France that has already deployed troops to protect Refugees should also take the lead in reinforcing President Abdoullie Wade's call for a power sharing government as a Constructive Conflict Resolution approach to the impasse. There is no doubt that once all political actors in Chad are involved in a power sharing deal, an end to hostilities in Chad may set a precedent for the road map of containing the crisis in Darfur.

The author of this article is an editorial-editor, a staff writer and a graduate student at New York University. He could be reached at bsm235@nyu.edu