

CÔTE D'IVOIRE:
“THE WAR IS NOT YET OVER”

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CÔTE D'IVOIRE: "THE WAR IS NOT YET OVER"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"The war is not yet over", an ICG mission to Côte d'Ivoire repeatedly heard in November 2003. There are ominous signs that the Côte d'Ivoire peace process initiated in January 2003 has broken down. If the country goes back to war, it could well take all West Africa with it, endangering even recent progress in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The UN Security Council needs to take a leading role in the peace process, initially by upgrading its current presence to a full peacekeeping mission. This could include subsuming some 1,400 West African troops under the umbrella of an expanded operation. The UN should also step up cooperation between its ongoing peace operation in Liberia and its Ivorian peace mission, MINUCI.

The immediate concern has been instability and war threats following the resignation from the government in September of ministers from former rebel groups, (now called the *Forces Nouvelles*). They acted to protest what they considered obstacles, created by President Laurent Gbagbo, to implementation of the January 2003 Linas-Marcoussis peace accords, notably his appointment of ministers to the defence and interior portfolios in the government of national reconciliation in contravention of agreed procedures and his unwillingness to delegate executive powers to the prime minister and government as stipulated by the accords. Gbagbo's response was to call his opponents "kids with pistols" and "houseboys turned rebels". Disarmament of former rebels and other unofficial groups failed to begin as promised on 1 October and is inconceivable in the current climate. A declaration by the chief of army staff on 15 November that "the war could begin again at any moment", in response to which the *Forces Nouvelles* declared a state of emergency in their zone, shows how close the peace process is to foundering.

Until recently, it appeared that some progress had been made. On 4 July 2003, the military protagonists said the war, which began on 19 September 2002, was over. The government reopened the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso on 10 September. The National Assembly adopted an amnesty law and trade relations were normalised with Burkina Faso and Mali. These steps were broadly in line with the Linas-Marcoussis peace accords, negotiated with French mediation. That agreement established a reconciliation government with wide executive powers, comprised of ministers from the main political parties and the insurgent groups, that is meant to lead the country to general elections in 2005. The accords outlined a nine-point program on disarmament, security sector reform, human rights violations and media incitement to xenophobia and violence, the organisation and supervision of elections, and measures to end divisive policies on national identification, citizenship, foreign nationals, land tenure and eligibility for the presidency.

The impasse over implementation, however, has set the stage for a new phase in a struggle that goes back a decade. There are worrying signs that, without new international initiatives, there could soon be serious new fighting. Since late October, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has increased its diplomatic interventions, but to no avail. Neither President Gbagbo nor the *Forces Nouvelles* appear willing to stop the escalation towards violence. The agreement signed in January 2003 has been a source of discontent among hardliners in Gbagbo's *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) ruling party, but also among rebel leaders, who distrust the president's commitment. In addition, the accords

have fuelled anti-French sentiment, not least because they were seen to have legitimated an armed rebellion. They were also problematic in that they appeared to many Ivorians to frustrate their aspirations to reduce the pervasive influence of the former colonial power, France.

Even before they began to fray so obviously, there were indications that the accords were not a perfect solution. Their slow, incomplete and sometimes flawed implementation created considerable frustration among the *Forces Nouvelles*. Indeed, Gbagbo and many in his party lost little time in creating numerous and sometimes violent obstacles to implementation. They calculated with some reason that strict implementation could well result in their electoral defeat in 2005. Gbagbo has sought to buy time, playing on the rebellion's internal divisions and hoping for its disintegration. And the *Forces Nouvelles* are indeed splintering, with political and military leaders increasingly losing control over local commanders, who are distinguishing themselves by growing indiscipline, warlordism and violence.

Supported by ultra-nationalist "patriotic youth" groups, some organised into urban militias, government security forces undertook a witch hunt against the major opposition party and those thought to support it. The president's party charged that opposition party, the RDR, with masterminding the coup and supporting the rebellion. The growth of urban tribal militias throughout government territory, with access to arms and voicing a violent discourse of "ethnic cleansing", is perhaps the most alarming development, and there is a spectre of massive urban violence. In the process of ultra-national radicalisation, the press has played a major role. Both sides have been guilty of massive human rights violations. International inquiries and judicial proceedings will be needed to help sort out and bring to book the most guilty, and so end a vicious three-year cycle of impunity.

The accords failed to address the conflict's regional aspect. The leaders of the main rebel group, the *Mouvement Patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI), planned the rebellion from exile in Burkina Faso, whose president, Blaise Compaoré, was aware of at least the outlines of their plans. Liberia's then president, Charles Taylor, was directly implicated in the creation of two rebel groups in the west of the country largely composed

of Liberians and Sierra Leoneans. A French peacekeeping force has played a leading role since late 2002. The situation in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire's western neighbour, which had a significant part in the recent war and is in the early stages of its own fragile peace process, will be important in determining whether Côte d'Ivoire regains stability; but by the same token, peace in Liberia has little chance unless Côte d'Ivoire is quiet.

Gbagbo in turn armed other Liberians, thus assisting the creation of a new anti-Taylor insurgency, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). Elements of a tribal militia he recruited, the *Forces de Libération du Grand Ouest* (FLGO), fought beside MODEL inside Liberia as Gbagbo gained tacit U.S. approval to pressure Taylor. Like Taylor, Gbagbo and Compaoré have broken the arms embargo on Liberia and fuelled regional instability, making their governments potential targets of sanctions if they continue to support rebellions.

Before the recent setbacks, a four-party military operation, composed of France, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), *Forces Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire* (FANCI, the government's official military) and the rebel *Forces Nouvelles*, had begun to end the violence in the west. Confidence between government and rebel forces seemed to be growing, with their cooperation suggesting a model for Ivorian politicians. However, given the direct involvement of Liberians in the conflict and the political interests backing armed groups, a systematic and regional disarmament program must accompany any localised "clean-up" operation. Simply pushing the Liberians and others back across a porous border will solve nothing.

The arrival of a Security Council Mission, MINUCI, on 27 June 2003 to assist the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General was an important sign of international commitment. However, MINUCI has only 34 officers, to be increased to 76 by year's end. France played a central role in brokering the Linas-Marcoussis accords and maintains 4,000 troops in-country but its high profile means many Ivorians see the accords as an attack on their sovereignty by the ex-colonial power. The FPI and its supporters are particularly suspicious, accusing Paris of siding with the rebellion. ECOWAS was unable to broker the end of the war but it has successfully deployed

a 1,400-strong force known as MICECI (ECOMICI in English) to police the ceasefire.

While there is still time, these three key players – the UN, France, and ECOWAS – need to coordinate a robust strategy that can prevent the guns from speaking again by saving at least the core of the Linas-Marcoussis accords and kickstarting a comeback for a country whose economic health, as much as its political situation, is a key to regional stability. France, however, needs to guard against being put in a position where it may be seen to collaborate with any future Gbagbo attempt to restore central authority by force.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the reconciliation government of Côte d'Ivoire:

1. Allow ministers who left the government in September 2003 to return; President Gbagbo should allow them full control over their portfolios.
2. Take immediate action to dismantle and disarm urban militias in Abidjan and other cities under its control, and take immediate action, including judicial inquiries and sanctions, against the leaders and financial and military supporters of those militias that do not cooperate.
3. Take immediate action, including judicial inquiries and sanctions, against those engaged in, instigating, threatening or supporting acts of violence against members of the reconciliation government, elected officials and members of political parties.
4. Revise legislation in accordance with the agreements reached at Linas-Marcoussis.

To the United Nations Mission to Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and the Monitoring Committee:

5. Address regionalisation of the conflict, especially in the west of Côte d'Ivoire, by insisting that:
 - (a) the Liberian militia, MODEL, and the FANCI cease all recruitment in Côte d'Ivoire, use of Nicla transit camp as a

base for Liberian fighters and use of Ivorian territory as a base for military-related activity inside Liberia; and

- (b) incorporation of FLGO and other local militias into MODEL cease and that they be immediately regrouped and disarmed.
6. Condemn Burkina Faso publicly for its support of armed groups in Côte d'Ivoire and warn Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire that they face sanctions if they continue to break the UN arms embargo on Liberia.
 7. Work with members of the International Contact Group on Liberia and ECOWAS to develop a comprehensive regional disarmament program that addresses the continued trafficking of small arms within the region, as stipulated in UN Security Council Resolution 1467.
 8. Recommend to the Security Council that the mandate of the Licorne (French) and ECOWAS (MICECI) forces stipulated under Resolutions 1464 and 1479 be formally and explicitly extended to involve their deployment throughout Ivorian territory with a view to undertaking, under MINUCI supervision, the demobilisation, disarmament, repatriation and reintegration stipulated in the annex to the Linas-Marcoussis peace accords of all unofficial forces present, including mercenaries, urban militias and other informal military groups, with the exception of FANCI, whose quartering and disposition of arms they should monitor.
 9. Revive the Linas-Marcoussis peace accords and address their implementation by insisting that:
 - (a) immediate, concrete measures be taken to disarm and dismantle militias in Abidjan and other cities in government-held territory and that their financial and military supporters be identified and sanctioned;
 - (b) those forces recruited by both sides since 19 September 2002, including those enrolled into FANCI by presidential decree, be demobilised and disarmed and that only those soldiers who were enrolled in FANCI before 19 September 2002 and have not committed breaches of international humanitarian law or human rights violations be considered for reintegration into FANCI; and

- (c) messages of hatred and xenophobia in state and private media cease immediately.
10. Recommend to the UN Secretary General and the Security Council that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights be asked to establish an in-country mission to complement the work of the existing MINUCI human rights office by investigating war crimes, violations of international humanitarian law and other grave abuses of human rights committed since 19 September 2002 and consulting with the International Criminal Court about the possibility that such evidence as is developed could be introduced to the tribunal for the possible preparation of indictments.

To the United Nations Security Council:

11. Advance the date of the planned report of the Secretary General on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire (now due on 10 January 2004), extend the mandate of MINUCI to a full peacekeeping mission, incorporating West African troops currently present and giving consideration to the need to identify troops from outside ECOWAS to supplement or partially replace those forces.

To French and ECOWAS forces:

12. Make more robust efforts to protect civilians still under the threat of violence in the west of Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere in the country, including by establishing safe passage for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, if possible by negotiation, but if not, by all means necessary, as stipulated in Security Council Resolution 1464.

To the European Union and other donors:

13. Following European Commission President Romano Prodi's recent visit to Cote d'Ivoire, turn pledges of support for the ECOWAS forces (MICECI) into real financial assistance so that the mission can continue past November 2003 and can take a more active part in supervising and implementing the peace accords, particularly in areas where the operation of French forces is politically sensitive.

Freetown/Brussels, 28 November 2003



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I. INTRODUCTION

On 19 September 2002, a group of around 700 soldiers attempted a coup d'état in Côte d'Ivoire, attacking simultaneously the cities of Abidjan, Bouaké and Korhogo. Having failed to take the commercial capital, Abidjan, they retreated to Bouaké. The failed coup soon degenerated into a war between loyalist government forces and breakaway army troops. After a week, the latter, calling themselves the *Mouvement Patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI), seized cities and towns in the northern and central regions. Rapid intervention by French troops based in Abidjan, ostensibly to evacuate French and U.S. citizens in Bouaké, blocked the rebels from moving south to Abidjan.

On 17 October 2002, a ceasefire was brokered by Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade and signed unilaterally by the MPCI. The ceasefire line ran east to west, dividing the country in half. France reinforced its 700-man force in Abidjan ("Opération Licorne") and agreed to supervise the ceasefire until troops from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) could take over. Following intense diplomatic activity by West African leaders and the French, peace talks were organised at Lomé beginning on 28 October, under the leadership of President Gnassingbé Eyadéma of Togo.

On 28 November 2002, two new insurgent groups – the *Mouvement Populaire du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO) and the *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (MJP) – appeared in the west, below the ceasefire line. Demanding revenge for the killing by government forces on 19 September of the leader of the military junta that had ruled Côte d'Ivoire from 1999 to 2000, General Robert Gueï, they expressed their determination to remove President Laurent Gbagbo.

Claiming not to be bound by the ceasefire, they continued to attack towns and villages in the west. Their objective appeared to be the port of San Pedro, vital for the export of cocoa and coffee, but French forces rapidly blocked their way.

Initially treated by the international press and diplomats, notably in France, as an internal affair, it has become increasingly clear that Côte d'Ivoire's troubles are part of a regional conflict that has been growing in complexity since the late 1980s. The involvement of Liberia and Burkina Faso is clear. The rebellion had its origins in the extreme frustration of Ivorian soldiers in exile in Burkina Faso and some members of the army, the *Forces Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire* (FANCI). Its leaders were many of the same young non-commissioned officers who led the coup against the government of Henri Konan Bédié in 1999. Their exile in Ouagadougou as government guests enabled them to launch the revolt and hold out during the long months of ceasefire and negotiations.

At the start of the crisis, Gbagbo activated his longstanding anti-Taylor connections among Liberians in Côte d'Ivoire, mainly from the Krahn ethnic group. Many Krahns had lived there since they fled Liberia following its first civil war (1989-1996). Some were also closely affiliated with the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) rebels, who had been fighting Taylor since 1999 from bases in Sierra Leone and Guinea. Divisions between the two main ethnic groups in the LURD – Mandingos and Krahns – prompted Krahn politicians and fighters with Gbagbo's assistance to form a breakaway group in March 2003 called MODEL, with the dual objective of removing Taylor and keeping LURD from power in Liberia.¹

¹ On the internal divisions in LURD that led to the creation of MODEL, see ICG Africa Report N°62, *Tackling*

Notwithstanding his denials, Gbagbo armed and recruited hundreds of Liberian fighters for MODEL, who helped him win back the west. Their incursions into Liberia were assisted in turn by FANCI and the local militias, the *Forces de Libération du Grand Ouest* (FLGO), recruited from Ivorian Guéré,² who are ethnic cousins to the Liberian Krahns. The border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, always porous, became effectively nonexistent, as Liberia's war spilled onto Ivorian territory, producing a humanitarian catastrophe and a spiral of inter-ethnic violence. "I fought at the same time on two sides of the border", an Ivorian who had fought for MODEL told ICG in November 2003.³

Ignoring the involvement of Burkina Faso and Liberia in the preparation and support of the rebellion would only hinder a lasting solution. It is misleading to portray the participation of Liberians and Sierra Leoneans as largely a matter of marauding armed bands, whose main interest has been looting, raping and killing.⁴ State powers with political interests and regional alliances and networks were at work.

The October 2002 negotiations at Lomé led to rapid agreement on the rebels' immediate demands.⁵ However, they stalled on the MPCCI's larger

political agenda. Two central MPCCI political figures were ex-student leader Guillaume Soro and businessman Louis Dacoury-Tabley. They insisted on President Gbagbo's removal, claiming they wanted a "new political order". Dacoury-Tabley was formerly a leading member of Gbagbo's own ruling *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) party, while Guillaume Soro had been close to the FPI in the early 1990's. The host to the talks, President Eyadéma of Togo, took the position that an armed rebellion could make military claims, but not political demands.⁶

Facing failure at Lomé and in other West African mediation initiatives,⁷ and ongoing conflict in the west, the French proposed peace talks in France, at Linas-Marcoussis, from 15 to 24 January 2003. Following intense negotiations among Ivorian political parties and rebel delegations, an agreement was reached and ratified by Gbagbo and other West African leaders in Paris (the Kléber Summit) on 25-26 January. The UN Secretary General appointed a Special Representative, Albert Tévoedjré, to head a Monitoring Committee mandated to supervise application of the accords, which created a transitional government (reconciliation government) that included political parties and insurgents and had wide-ranging executive powers to lead the country to elections in 2005. This power sharing arrangement, however, collapsed in September 2003, resulting in the present stand-off that threatens to fatally damage the Linas-Marcoussis peace process.

The peace accords involve measures to end the armed conflict, disarm belligerents and reestablish state authority throughout the country. They also attempt to address the political problems at the root of the crisis. An annex outlines a nine-point program to guarantee free and fair elections and end impunity and hate media, as well as do away with the official policy of exclusion that began under Henri Konan Bédié, after long-time President Houphouët-Boigny died in December 1993. That policy has been based on the notion of *ivoirité* (Ivorianness), which distinguishes between Ivorians

Liberia: The Eye of the Regional Storm, 30 April 2003, pp.3-5, 20-22.

² The Guéré, also called the Wê, are a minority ethnic group from the western region.

³ ICG interviews, Guiglo and Toulépleu, November 2003.

⁴ State and FPI press do not refer to Liberians fighting for Gbagbo, claiming rather that these "extra auxiliaries" are patriotic Guéré youth. Official statements and press releases from the French government and French news agencies, as well as the Report of the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 1458 (2003), S/2003/498, refer to the Liberians fighting for the FANCI either as "*supplétifs Libériens*" (Liberian back-up troops) or as "Lima" force, a name given to the Liberians by the French, Lima being the international radio code word for the letter L, as in Liberia. No mention is made of MODEL or LURD. Statements from the UN Monitoring Committee and the reconciliation government likewise refer to marauding bands of Liberians, without clarifying their support or links.

⁵ Many rebel leaders had been living in exile following their indictment by the military junta of 1999-2000 or the Gbagbo government. The majority of the soldiers were facing imminent demobilisation under the government's army reform program. The MPCCI military leaders demanded an amnesty for exiled soldiers and suspension of the demobilisation process, both of which were agreed to by the government delegation.

⁶ See Ivorian press reports throughout November 2002. ICG interviews with Ivorian journalists present at the Lomé talks, Abidjan, March 2003.

⁷ President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal organised a summit in Dakar in December 2002 to discuss the peace talks, but it was poorly attended and only served to divide ECOWAS leaders further.

of "authentic" native origin, and those whose heritage is "mixed", and at the same time accuses immigrants from northern bordering countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea) of trying to take over the economy. From this has developed an amalgam of northern immigrants, who make up some 26 per cent of the total Ivorian population, and those of northern Ivorian origin, who together are relegated to the position of second-class citizens. Its most striking target has been the leader of the main opposition party, the *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR), former Prime Minister (1990-1993) Alassane Dramane Ouattara, whom successive governments have accused of being Burkinabé and so excluded from running for elected office.

Leading FPI officials have claimed that Ouattara is the mastermind behind the rebellion,⁸ although ICG has found no evidence to support this. To address these and related problems, the accords outline procedures for naturalising immigrants present in the country before 1972, revision of rural land tenure laws, the conditions for presidential eligibility, elimination of the requirement for ECOWAS nationals to hold a resident's card, and modification of the national identification process.

Government portfolios were negotiated at the Kléber summit. In closed-door sessions with Guillaume Soro presided over by French president Jacques Chirac and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Gbagbo agreed to cede the defence and interior ministries to the MPCCI in exchange for the nomination as prime minister of Seydou Diarra, who held the post under Gueï's military junta.

Nevertheless, Gbagbo gave instructions on the same day to pro-FPI youth leaders to carry out violent anti-French demonstrations in protest,⁹ following which 8,000 French nationals left the country. In subsequent weeks, Gbagbo appeared to hesitate over the accords. The stalemate was resolved – temporarily, at least – by an ECOWAS-organised summit under Ghanaian President John Kufuor, on 7-8 March 2003. The MPCCI renounced its claims on defence and interior, and a fifteen-

member National Security Council was set up to identify ministers for these highly sensitive posts.

However, Gbagbo named the ministers only in September, eight months after the peace accords were signed, having refused the candidate proposed for defence by the National Security Council, retired General Ouassenan Koné. The president gave several reasons, most notably that General Ouassenan did not respect him. According to French diplomats, Gbagbo claims that Ouassenan's role in suppressing an uprising in Gbagbo's home area in 1970 makes him unacceptable to the FPI electorate.¹⁰ Gbagbo's unilateral appointment angered members of the reconciliation government from the *Forces Nouvelles*, who left the government in protest.

A comprehensive ceasefire was signed on 3 May 2003. Three weeks later a joint operation involving government and rebel forces, as well as French and ECOWAS peacekeepers (MICECI), was launched to pacify the west of the country, still experiencing extreme violence. While the rebels declared on 4 July that the military conflict was over, the political conflict has never ceased. FPI hardliners, notably Simone, Gbagbo's wife, and Mamadou Koulibaly, the president of the National Assembly, echoed by pro-FPI "patriotic" youth organisations, have seemed determined to delay full implementation of the accords. Gbagbo continues to buy large quantities of weapons, including fighter aircraft,¹¹ while members of the armed forces and the FPI are supporting the recruitment, training and arming of private urban militias. The deaths of two French peacekeepers in August 2003, the first in the crisis, demonstrated the continuing violence.

The road to reconciliation always seemed long and risky. It now looks as if the entire process may be on the rocks. A year of conflict has sharpened political differences, deepened ethnic, religious and communal divisions, and made violence commonplace. Both sides have contributed to the militarisation of the population, having recruited several thousand youth. Throughout government zones, members of the political opposition, particularly from the RDR, northerners and immigrants from Burkina Faso and Mali have been the victims of a determined campaign of violence, extortion, arrest and assassination from loyalist security forces and their civilian militias or

⁸ Mamadou Koulibaly, the National Assembly president, and Miaka Oureto, General Secretary of the FPI, and youth leaders Charles Blé Goudé, Eugène Djué and Konaté Naviqué have also all claimed that Ouattara is behind the rebellion, as have FPI media.

⁹ ICG interviews, Paris, February 2003.

¹⁰ ICG interviews, Abidjan, May 2003.

¹¹ See fns. 170-172 below.

informants. In MPCCI zones, security forces and civilians have been assassinated, state agents have fled, and tens of thousands of civilians have been displaced. Moreover, both key government constituencies and *Forces Nouvelles* are showing signs of splintering.

There has been extensive, major violence in the west against civilians by all sides, and humanitarian access remains difficult. At the end of July 2003, humanitarian workers placed the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) between 700,000 and 1,000,000.¹² According to figures from their government, some 250,000 people of Burkinabé origin have left, many of whom had lived in Côte d'Ivoire all their lives. In Abidjan, a veritable reign of terror lasted seven months, and only ended with the installation of the reconciliation government in May 2003. The new threat of armed pro-Gbagbo ethnic militias has kept fear alive, despite the lifting of the eight-month-long curfew in May. In the loyalist central southwest, tensions between indigenous populations and immigrants, particularly Burkinabé, have intensified. France has averted a wider war but finds itself with few friends and no clear strategy. In August 2003, France moved perceptibly closer to President Gbagbo, apparently calculating that he constitutes an immovable force in the run-up to presidential elections scheduled for 2005.

The physical north-south division of the country has cemented the growing political divide between populations that pre-dated the war. In the north, the MPCCI has substituted itself for the state, organising not only a parallel army, but also a parallel administration, media network and economic structure. The main reconciliation challenge will be not only to re-establish state authority and demobilise and reintegrate fighters, but also to overcome the political division between northerners and southerners, wherever they may currently be living. Ongoing violence in the west, manipulated by both sides, has produced deadly inter-ethnic conflict between local Guéré and Yacouba. Pro-FPI hate press has played a major role in sharpening political, ethnic and religious differences, as well as fuelling xenophobia towards northern immigrants.

The latter have paid an extremely high price in the war, and measures need to be taken to ensure that any fallout over the peace accords and the 2005 election campaign does not scapegoat them further.

But Côte d'Ivoire's crisis is still above all political. Any attempt to portray the conflict in primarily ethnic or religious terms is misleading, though those factors have increasingly been brought into play. What is at stake in the insurgents' demand for a "new political order" is not only a contest for state power, but also, and perhaps more importantly, the redefinition of Ivorian citizenship and sovereignty. Nearly half the Malians and Burkinabé, who make up most of Côte d'Ivoire's 26-per cent immigrant population, have been born in the country. There are also many Ivorians of mixed heritage, a fact that lends the Gbagbo government's accusation that the rebellion is a "foreign terrorist attack" a potentially ominous meaning.¹³ The question of who is a foreigner and who is an Ivorian is at the heart of the conflict. The debate, exacerbated both by economic crisis and the process of democratisation, turns on whether a return to Houphouët-Boigny's ideal of integration and openness is possible, or whether Ivorian citizenship should be defined much more narrowly.

President Gbagbo's insistence that the nation's sovereignty has been attacked, by the rebellion and the peace accords alike, must be taken seriously, since it reflects his reticence to bow to international pressure. His view is shared by a significant section of the population, for whom the peace accords represent the continuation of French domination. The Ivorian conflict also involves, therefore, the struggle for a fuller independence, expressed in particular through the mobilisation of young people who, on both sides of the conflict, have become major players, attempting to wrest the nation's political destiny from the hands of their elders and patrons.

Despite resistance to their presence, the international actors, in particular the UN and donors, need to do more to ensure a definitive end to the conflict. ECOWAS, having failed to broker the end of the war, needs greater financial support

¹² UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), IDP unit, 14 July 2003. Also see Médecins sans frontières, "Ça va un peu, maintenant": The Collapse of healthcare, malnutrition, violence and displacement in western Côte d'Ivoire", 10 July 2003, available at www.msf.org

¹³ In the days and weeks following the coup attempt, FPI press and state radio and television presented the attacks in these terms, even though Gbagbo himself never used them. The rhetoric may have been designed in part to push France to apply the existing bilateral defence accords.

for its role in constructing the peace. France, the only power both willing and able to intervene early in the crisis, will continue to be the central military and political broker but the suspicion and hostility it attracts limit its margin for manoeuvre.¹⁴ France needs the continued backing of the international community, in particular the U.S., through the Security Council. The French government, however, also needs to beware of attempts by President Gbagbo to manoeuvre it into cooperating with an effort to restore central authority by force over areas of the country currently held by the *Forces Nouvelles*.

Prime Minister Diarra presented his reconciliation government's program to the National Assembly on 30 May, following the peace accords to the letter, but leading FPI deputies immediately declared their hostility to those accords, claiming they privilege "foreigners", and demanding disarmament of the rebels before voting any laws.¹⁵ On 9 June, Mamadou Koulibaly, president of the National Assembly and Gbagbo's second in command, called for "civil disobedience" to prevent rebel ministers from carrying out their functions.

Gbagbo is determined to win the political battle and keep power at all costs. His strategy has generally appeared to be to win back international support by appearing to play the reconciliation game,¹⁶ letting the parties fight and encouraging FPI officials who take radical positions while himself remaining above the fray. The rebellion's leaders find themselves at a distinct disadvantage, which may prove dangerous when it comes to convincing their soldiers to hand over arms. With their eyes on the prize of the presidency in 2005, it is far from clear that the political parties will respect the process of national reconciliation or implement the accords.

¹⁴ Numerous FPI, youth and union leaders have on many occasions accused France of masterminding the rebellion. For example, Mamadou Koulibaly, president of the National Assembly, contributed a preface in June 2003 to a book entitled *La Guerre de la France contre la Côte d'Ivoire*.

¹⁵ "Le président de l'Assemblée Nationale fait de la résistance", Agence France-Presse, 11 June 2003.

¹⁶ In a televised speech to the nation in February 2003, Gbagbo claimed that he would accept the "bitter medicine" of the accords as long as they did not contradict the constitution.

II. THE FAILURE OF THE IVORIAN MODEL

The war was the latest and most dramatic in a series of crises born from an inability to acknowledge the failure of a system of governance which endured relatively unchanged from the colonial period to the late 1980s.

At the heart of the Ivorian model was the plantation economy. Under President Houphouët-Boigny, leader of Côte d'Ivoire at independence in 1960, the agricultural sector grew rapidly. Partnerships with foreign companies, particularly French ones, brought an influx of capital to the agricultural sector as well as privileged access to European markets and agreements on coffee and cocoa which guaranteed planters high prices for their exports. Houphouët's policy of inviting mass immigration of plantation workers from neighbouring countries provided planters with a steady labour supply, and Houphouët's famous statement, "the land belongs to those that cultivate it" justified the massive acquisition of land by populations foreign to the rich cocoa and coffee belt, be they Ivorians (Baoulé from the centre or Malinké or Senoufo from the north) or foreigners from Burkina Faso and Mali.

Stunning economic success led outside observers to refer to the "Ivorian miracle". Today, despite its difficulties, Côte d'Ivoire remains the world's leader in cocoa production, accounting for some 40 per cent of global output. It is also the world's third largest coffee producer, and a significant exporter of bananas, palm oil, pineapples and other products, making it the economic engine of the West African region.

Until his death in 1993, Houphouët kept virtually complete control over Côte d'Ivoire, and his political party, the PDCI-RDA, was, until 1990, the mainstay of a one-party system. Houphouët's power was underpinned by the extraction of significant rents from planters, which he redistributed to allies as patronage. Meanwhile, the grievances of the country's many ethnic groups were headed off by dividing government appointments among them.

Houphouët also kept a lid on xenophobia, even in the midst of the arrival of thousands of foreign plantation workers. Although his enthusiasm for the immigration of "strangers" sparked significant

resistance from native populations, notably the Bété and Kroumen in the southwest, Houphouët appeased these groups by offering them posts in the administration, the private sector, and the army, as well as educational advantages for their children.

The economic recession of the early 1980's and the liberalisation of global markets brought a dramatic drop in primary product prices.¹⁷ By the end of the 1980s, cocoa prices were at the same level in real terms as in 1945. Côte d'Ivoire was plunged into a financial crisis that was worsened by government corruption and mismanagement.

Faced with the state's inability to absorb the increasing numbers of educated youth, rising demand for social services by the middle class, and calls for pay increases by the civil service, the army and the educational sector, the government was forced to break its compact with the planters. In 1989-1990, prices paid to planters were cut in half, immediately resulting in mass protest. Feeling that things were slipping from his grasp, and faced with growing dissension in party ranks, Houphouët finally introduced multiparty politics.

Despite the first multiparty elections on 28 October 1990, the period until Houphouët's death in 1993 did not result in democratisation. The austerity program imposed by the World Bank and managed from the newly created post of prime minister by Alassane Dramane Ouattara, a northern Ivorian Muslim who had worked for the IMF, inspired violent protests in Abidjan in 1991. These were led by the socialist and increasingly nationalist FPI, headed by Laurent Gbagbo.¹⁸ Unemployed urban youth began to return to the rural areas already in the throes of a land shortage crisis, where they found that land they had hoped to claim was held by "foreigners". With no work and no land xenophobia grew.¹⁹

¹⁷ See Bruno Losch, "La Côte d'Ivoire en quête d'un nouveau projet national", and Bonnie Campbell "Réinvention du politique en Côte d'Ivoire", *Politique Africaine* N°78, June 2000.

¹⁸ On the contests of the early nineties, see Diego Bailly, *La Restauration du multipartisme en Côte d'Ivoire* (Paris, 1995); Paul N'Da, *Le drame démocratique africain sur scène en Côte d'Ivoire* (Paris, 1999).

¹⁹ See Ousmane Dembélé, "La construction économique et politique de la catégorie 'étranger' en Côte d'Ivoire", in C.Vidal and M. Le Pape eds., *Côte d'Ivoire: L'année terrible, 1999-2000* (Paris, 2002); and J.P Chauveau and

Upon Houphouët's death, Henri Konan Bédié, the speaker of parliament, outmanoeuvred Ouattara and assumed the presidency. To general surprise, Ouattara accepted this defeat gracefully, and in September 1994 took up the post of Deputy Managing Director at the IMF. However, the Ouattara-Bédié struggle continued.

In that same year, while still concerned about a potential challenge from Ouattara as a candidate for the newly-created *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR)²⁰ in the upcoming elections, and looking to appeal to nationalist elements in a population increasingly angry over the economic crisis, Bédié launched a policy of "ivoirité" (Ivorianness). This included the promulgation of a new electoral code, thus essentially creating two types of citizen: those of "pure" Ivorian origin, and those of "mixed heritage" (which supposedly disqualified Ouattara from running for president, as his father was alleged to be from Burkina Faso).²¹ A number of Muslim northerners subsequently lost their government positions, sowing the seeds of a north-south, Muslim-Christian divide, and many immigrants were forced to leave the country. With them went Houphouët's vision of an Ivorian "melting pot".

After five years under Bédié, Côte d'Ivoire appeared to be slipping inexorably towards violent authoritarianism and economic ruin. In a bloodless coup on 24 December 1999, a group of young non-commissioned officers took power, protesting against Bédié's refusal to pay them overdue wages,

Koffi Samuel Bobo, "La situation de guerre dans l'arène villageoise: un exemple dans le Centre Ouest Ivoirien", *Politique Africaine* N°89, March 2003.

²⁰ A split in the PDCI-RDA, led by Djény Kobina, gave rise to the birth of the RDR in 1994. Ouattara was not a member of this group. Indeed, in September of that year he had taken up his post at the IMF, but according to certain accounts, he helped finance the founding of the party. ICG interviews with Ivorian political party members, November 2002.

²¹ Ouattara's nationality has become an Ivorian obsession. He was born in 1942 in Dimbokro. His father was born, apparently, somewhere near the border, in what was later to become Burkina Faso, around 1888. His mother, whose family was from Odienné (in the north), was born in Dabou, (near Abidjan) in 1920. Two documents relating to his nationality have variations in the mother's name, which led to the refusal to deliver him a national identity card and Bédié issuing an arrest warrant against him in 1999 for fraud. The lengths to which Ouattara has gone to prove his nationality, and his detractors to deny it, are too extensive to reproduce here.

severely degraded material conditions in the army, and the corruption and authoritarianism of the government. General Robert Gueï was chosen to lead the junta.

The central political question became the new constitution and the electoral code. Drafts were put to a referendum. Attention was focused on the conditions of presidential eligibility, as the FPI campaigned for the requirement that a candidate must be "born in the Côte d'Ivoire to mother *and* father of Ivorian origin" rather than "to mother *or* father of Ivorian origin", which the RDR wanted. After extensive debate and negotiation, the "or" clause was retained, but a clause was added specifying that the candidate must "never have claimed another nationality". However, shortly before the referendum on the new constitution, General Gueï unilaterally changed the "or" clause to "and", to the satisfaction of the FPI. This change was considered to disqualify Ouattara, and led to protests by the RDR. In the last few months of his presidency, it became clear that Gueï was determined to hold onto power.

When the Supreme Court announced that most candidates would be excluded from running in the October 2000 presidential elections, including Ouattara and Bédié, the PDCI-RDA and the RDR called for a boycott, and only 37 per cent of the electorate voted. Gueï declared himself winner despite preliminary results favouring Gbagbo, and FPI supporters held massive protests; Gueï fled to exile in Benin, and Gbagbo was declared president. When Gbagbo refused Ouattara's request for a new election, several weeks of violence ensued.²² The targeting of populations thought to support the RDR, notably immigrants and northerners, reached unprecedented levels, reinforcing the air of impunity of the security forces that had begun

under the junta and widening the political and ethnic cleavages created by Bédié's *ivoirité*.

The issue of national identification became especially heated under Gbagbo. In Houphouët's time, many Ivorians had seen little need to become citizens formally, but with the enactment of a new rural land law in 1998 that made citizenship a condition of owning land, this changed. After the mid-1990's, and particularly after the fall of the military junta in 2000, holders of resident's cards and Ivorians with northern names were often the victims of systematic police harassment and humiliation. For northerners, establishing citizenship was extremely difficult, and was accompanied in many southern cities with suspicion from officials.

The FPI's program of national identification, announced in November 2001, was designed to address the question of "who is who" once and for all. But the government introduced an extremely onerous method of identification based on establishing the village of origin of each Ivorian, going back to "before the urban phenomenon".²³ The process was seen as open to interference by individuals close to the FPI, and the RDR worried that hundreds of thousands, if not millions, could be denied national identity cards. Moreover, the FPI proposed to make foreign resident's cards prohibitively expensive and to introduce work permits for non-Ivorians. In light of the propensity of police and gendarmes to destroy cards belonging to northern immigrants or those who refused to pay, it is not surprising that these policies exacerbated political and ethnic tensions. As one traditional hunter (*dozo*) put it, "I joined the rebellion because the Malinké have been here since the twelfth century, and soon they'll be giving us a foreign resident's card to be able to live here".²⁴

The Gbagbo government spent its first two years in a constant state of paranoia concerning a possible coup. During the night of 7-8 January 2001, attacks were perpetrated simultaneously in Korhogo and Abidjan by unidentified armed assailants on the gendarmerie and the television station. The government claimed they came from "the north", implying Burkina Faso was responsible, and in the

²² For background on the violence, and on a mass grave found in the Youpougon neighbourhood of Abidjan on 27 October 2000, see the joint report by Reporters sans frontières and Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme, "Côte d'Ivoire: Enquête sur le Charnier de Youpougon", 26 October 2000, available at www.fidh.org/afriq/rapport/2000pdf/fr/yopoucot.pdf; Amnesty International Country Report, Côte d'Ivoire 2001; Human Rights Watch report, "The New Racism: the Political Manipulation of Ethnicity", 28 August 2001; and especially, UN Security Council, "Rapport de la Commission d'Enquête Internationale pour la Côte d'Ivoire, Février-Mai, 2001", available at <http://www.un.org/french/hr/ivory.pdf>.

²³ Séri Wayoro, Director of Identification, in interview published in *Le Patriote* N°793, 21 March 2002.

²⁴ Unpublished paper by international journalist and ICG interview with international journalist, Abidjan, March 2003.

weeks that followed arrested hundreds of alleged RDR supporters.

A year later, in January 2002, Minister of Defence Moïse Lida Kouassi announced a reform of the armed forces. The same divisions that ran through society – political, ethnic, religious and generational – were also present in the army. Recruitment and promotion favoured Gbagbo's clients and political base; those thought to be too close to Gueï and Ouattara were demoted or removed. The army, gendarmerie and police had grown undisciplined, corrupt, divided, and disaffected.

III. REBELLION AND RESPONSE

Despite its subsequent creation of a political platform, developed over long months of negotiation, the MPCCI was a military operation designed from the outset to remove Gbagbo. Its preparation in Ouagadougou was long and meticulous, and by many accounts, almost successful. The planners and leaders of the coup were former soldiers, who had been associated with General Gueï's junta in 1999 but had subsequently lost influence and sought refuge in Burkina Faso. The support they needed was provided in part by President Blaise Compaoré. This enabled them not only to launch the attacks, but also to recruit, arm and organise during the stalemate imposed by the creation of a ceasefire line and negotiations.

Their failure to take Abidjan and the French intervention, which closed off access to that city on 25 September, forced the MPCCI to revise their strategy. On 15 October 2002, Staff Sergeant Tuo Fozilé revealed the existence of a political leadership, and Guillaume Soro, ex-leader of the student organisation FESCI, one-time FPI sympathiser and recent RDR collaborator,²⁵ declared himself the group's General Secretary. Few Ivorians took him seriously at the time; at age 31, it was thought he could only be a screen behind which RDR barons were hiding. However, time has shown that Soro, just like many other young political and military figures in MPCCI, is a force to be reckoned with.²⁶ Joined by ex-FPI heavy-weight, Louis Dacoury-Tabley,²⁷ on 6 November, they

²⁵ Guillaume Soro was the running mate of Henriette Diabaté, General Secretary of the RDR, in the legislative elections of December 2000. According to Diabaté's campaign organisers, Soro had originally refused to run on an RDR ticket, preferring to campaign as an independent. ICG interviews, Abidjan, November 2002.

²⁶ Many Ivorian political analysts and journalists ICG spoke with claimed that after Marcoussis, Soro was using Ouattara, notably for his contacts in the diplomatic and foreign business community, rather than the other way around. Interviews, Abidjan, March 2003.

²⁷ Louis Dacoury-Tabley has a serious personal axe to grind with Gbagbo. As childhood friends, Gbagbo was accepted into the powerful Dacoury-Tabley family, which assisted him in his studies. As co-founder of the FPI, Dacoury-Tabley, an ex-police officer, was in charge of security issues for the party. The two friends fell out in 1999 over the party's policies. Gbagbo's refusal to attend Dacoury-Tabley's mother's funeral was the final straw. Dacoury-Tabley started a newspaper, *Le Front*, which

presented political claims that went beyond simply taking power.

The ceasefire and negotiation process were not only due to the French military and diplomatic interventions, but also the apparent inability or unwillingness of Gbagbo's official armed forces (FANCI) to recover conquered territory. The ceasefire enabled Gbagbo to replenish FANCI's arsenal as well as recruit and arm forces willing to fight his war, while undertaking terror and propaganda campaigns against his internal political enemies and mobilising in the process thousands of southern youths via youth and student organisations he controlled. Until the end of April 2003, and despite the peace accords, it appeared that Gbagbo was still determined to defeat the rebellion militarily. While he subsequently showed signs of being engaged in the process of national reconciliation, his civilian and paramilitary forces mobilised against the rebellion continue to take radical positions against the reconciliation government, the French, the rebellion and the political opposition. Recent statements by Gbagbo, in which he evokes the possibility of "finishing" with the *Forces Nouvelles*,²⁸ and the surprising declaration of his usually taciturn chief of army staff, General Mathias Doué, on 15 November that the war "may begin again at any moment",²⁹ support the theory that Gbagbo has never abandoned the idea of a military solution.

A. BLAISE COMPAORÉ: BIRTH AND SUSTENANCE OF THE REBELLION

If the French accused Bédié of playing with fire in the treatment of his army, the Gbagbo government appears to have deliberately lit the fuse of the

strongly criticised the Gbagbo government and revealed financial and political scandals. Dacoury-Tabley's brother, Benoît, was arrested by armed men on 8 November 2002 and found shot dead two days later.

²⁸ On November 7, in an address to the populations of Tiébissou (near Bouaké) Gbagbo claimed "In ten days, they [French forces] will be in Korhogo, Odienné. They will also liberate Bouaké and its surrounding areas. We are advancing, we are going to liberate you very soon. Because we have the upper hand." Quoted in *Le Jour*, 11/11/2003. The same article notes that the army (FANCI) have been put on alert.

²⁹ "La guerre peut "repartir à tout moment" en Côte d'Ivoire (chef d'état-major) », *Agence France Presse*, 15 November, 2003.

current explosion.³⁰ Before 19 September 2002, contingents facing demobilisation under the army reform program wrote on several occasions to the government, pleading to be retained or at least be given a demobilisation package. Defence Minister Lida Kouassi met with them and, according to sources, told them their only recourse was to "take to the streets".³¹ The government had undertaken to buy arms to replenish its arsenal in 2002. Most of the purchases had been placed in Bouaké, for fear of a coup in Abidjan. These were to provide a large part of the armament for the September uprising.

Unable to return home, thrown out of the army and accused or sentenced under the Gbagbo government for offenses under Gueï's rule, and tracked by Ivorian agents to their places of exile in Burkina Faso, the young NCOs who led the coup, with Staff Sergeant Ibrahim 'IB' Coulibaly at their head, had nothing to lose. Ivorian military intelligence was informed of their preparations some time in August 2002³² but there is evidence that it was worried well before about the activities not only of 'IB', but also Balla Keita. A Houphouët minister and the general secretary of Gueï's party, the UDPCI, Keita was in "voluntary" exile in Ouagadougou, having been attacked and left for dead by pro-FPI forces during the violence surrounding the October 2000 elections. In May 2002, the Ivorian minister of defence had infiltrated agents into Burkina Faso. Official Ivorian military correspondence and the testimony of those

³⁰ An article in the French daily *Libération* on 20 September 2002 alleged that the affair was in fact a false coup, set up by Minister of Defence Lida Kouassi to eliminate his rival in the FPI, Minister of the Interior Boga Doudou, as well as the opposition leaders. This article earned the international press a bad name, even though Western security officers claim that the murder of Boga Doudou was not necessarily the work of rebel forces. Lida Kouassi's role is not clear. He knew about the coup, and ICG learned that he booked seats on 17 September 2002 on an Air Ivoire flight for himself and his family to Accra for the early morning of 19 September. His house was attacked on the morning of 19 September and his wife was abducted. She was later released and took refuge at the French embassy with his children for several weeks. Some observers think that he had underestimated the extent of the rebellion and had hoped to use it to target the opposition, as in January 2001. ICG interviews, Abidjan, September 2002 and March 2003.

³¹ ICG interviews with diplomats, security officials and Ivorian security personnel, Abidjan, November 2002.

³² ICG interview with Western military intelligence officer, March 2003.

infiltrated into Ouagadougou indicate that they had been charged to spy on, if not eliminate, the ring leaders of the exile groups. An official guest of the Burkinabé presidency, Keita was murdered by unknown assailants in the Pa presidential guesthouse in Ouagadougou on 2 August 2002.³³

Many MPCCI commanders were originally members of the factions in the Ivorian armed forces known as the Cosa Nostra and the Camorra, or were with IB Coulibaly in the Presidential Guard (GP) under the Gueï junta. The great majority were in exile in Ouagadougou throughout 2001-2002. IB is the military mastermind despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that he was based in Ouagadougou, at least until his arrest in France in August 2003.³⁴ Staff-Sergeant Tuo Fozié, the commander of operations in Bouaké, was present at the peace talks in Marcoussis and became minister of youth and civic service in the reconciliation government. Chérif Ousmane, a member of the FIRPAC created by Gueï under the Ouattara government, was part of his presidential guard and is now Fozié's right-hand man, head of the Guépard company³⁵ in Bouaké and assistant commander of operations there. Issiaka Ouattara (alias Wattao) is a field commander who leads the Anaconda Company in Bouaké. Massamba Koné, commander of Korhogo, became minister of development and planning.

These exiled soldiers, with IB at their head, had been lodged by the Burkinabé government in Ouagadougou's Somgandé neighbourhood. According to various accounts, coup preparations began in early 2001, most probably after the arrests

that followed the failed coup of 7-8 January, and the subsequent trials *in absentia* of the deserters. Tracts reportedly circulated in Ouagadougou which announced the preparation of an armed movement.³⁶ Clearly well looked-after by their hosts throughout the earlier part of 2002, the deserters frequented the hot bars and night clubs of Ouagadougou, drove expensive cars, trained openly and made no secret of their plans to overturn the Gbagbo government.³⁷ Despite claims by the Ivorian government, preparations for the 19 September coup attempt did not involve the training of significant numbers of soldiers, however, but rather the discreet formation and training of the rebellion's military leaders in logistics, communication, and clandestine operations – all areas in which the Burkinabé army excels.³⁸

The MPCCI's political leader, Guillaume Soro, ex-head of the FESCI, ex-FPI, then an RDR sympathiser, was allegedly also involved in the planning. He was cited in Ivorian intelligence reports in May 2002, and was present in Ouagadougou during that year. Louis Dacoury-Tabley, formerly number two in the FPI and Gbagbo's right hand man and friend until they split in 1999, had developed close relations with Compaoré over the ten years during which the Burkina Faso president financed the FPI. He visited Ouagadougou before the coup.³⁹ He and Soro stayed with Blaise Compaoré's brother François during their regular visits.⁴⁰ Dacoury-Tabley's house in Abidjan was searched after the coup attempt and members of his family interrogated, long before he announced his intention to join the rebel movement on 6 November 2002. IB Coulibaly is also believed to be very close to Blaise Compaoré and Djibril Bassolé, Burkina Faso's

³³ The infiltration was admitted by Defence Minister Kouassi, following publication by the opposition press in August 2002 of a letter signed by him in May. Theories of who killed Keita place responsibility either with President Compaoré or the Ivorian agents. According to one account, Keita was involved in preparing the coup and insisted that Gueï return to power once it succeeded; the rebellion's leaders refused, and the disagreement led to his death, with Compaoré having him killed since he had threatened to take the information about the coup to the Ivorian authorities. Other accounts claim that the Ivorian agents had been told to kill Keita and others, including Coulibaly, once their government received reports on the planning. There is not enough evidence to confirm either scenario.

³⁴ ICG was informed that while IB on occasions left Ouagadougou and was seen in Korhogo, Bouaké and Danané, he remained largely based in Burkina Faso. ICG interviews, Abidjan, March 2003.

³⁵ One of the four leading MPCCI military units in Bouaké. See below.

³⁶R. Otayek and R. Banégas, « Le Burkina Faso dans la crise ivoirienne: effets d'aubaine et incertitudes politiques », *Politique Africaine*, N°89, March 2003, p. 80.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 74 and S. Smith "Côte d'Ivoire: le vrai visage de la rébellion", *Le Monde*, 11 October 2002.

³⁸ R. Otayek and R. Banégas op.cit. p. 80. ICG interviews with Western intelligence officers, March 2003.

³⁹ On one occasion, 28 August 2001, Dacoury-Tabley was prevented from taking an Air Burkina flight by the agents of the Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire (DST), and had his national identity card and ticket taken. Declaration N°13, 29 August 2001, Maître Ibrahima Doumbia, Vice-Président, Mouvement Ivoirien de Droits Humains.

⁴⁰ ICG interviews, March 2003. R. Otayek and R. Banégas, op. cit., p. 78.

minister of the interior, deferring to both before taking decisions.⁴¹

ICG has not found evidence that RDR leader Alassane Ouattara was involved in the coup's preparation. Nevertheless, pro-FPI press immediately accused him and Gueï of being behind the September 2002 uprising. Gueï, his wife, personal guard and other members of his household were killed on the morning of 19 September by gendarmes. Ouattara was rescued the same day by the French and Ivorian army from the German ambassador's residence where he had taken refuge. Gbagbo claimed on 25 October 2002 to an RDR delegation that he had "nothing against Ouattara". ICG was informed that the two men spoke regularly on the phone in the first weeks after the coup.⁴² However, Gbagbo claimed in March 2003 that he was convinced Ouattara had been the mastermind.⁴³ Ouattara and Soro have admitted to an ICG source that they met before the coup, and their accounts converge. It appears that Soro informed Ouattara of a coup plan and asked if he would become the head of the politico-military operation once it succeeded. Ouattara refused. Soro reportedly was disappointed and then treated Ouattara as a coward.⁴⁴ In October 2002 Soro said publicly and with scorn that Ouattara had nothing to do with the MPCJ and lacked the strength of his convictions. However if Ouattara was not involved in the coup preparation, he subsequently used the MPCJ's political demands for his own purposes, developing contacts with its leaders in order to further the RDR's agenda at the peace talks.⁴⁵

The full extent of the Burkinabé government's involvement in the coup preparations is not clear. It made no attempt to hide that it was hosting Ivorian deserters throughout 2001-2002. Indeed, Blaise Compaoré several times warned the Ivorian government about the danger, and offered to return the soldiers if they would be amnestied.⁴⁶ The Ivorian government did not take up this offer, and

relations continued to deteriorate. The Ivorians apparently claimed that Burkina Faso was harbouring 200 deserters, while the Burkinabé government acknowledged only fifteen. Sources who worked with Compaoré at that time have emphasised that he was aware of the preparations but kept as much distance from them as possible in order to avoid embarrassment.

Burkina Faso was also involved in arming the rebellion. The MPCJ has persistently denied any external assistance in the acquisition of its impressive arsenal, claiming to have seized arms stocked in Bouaké, Korhogo and "personal caches" belonging to the minister of defence, Lida Kouassi, as well as arms "hidden" by deserting soldiers in 2000.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, while seizure of a significant part of the Ivorian arsenal based outside of Abidjan is certain, the logistical help and provision of arms by Burkina Faso seems undeniable. Western intelligence services have proof that a portion of the arms used in the original attacks came from the Burkinabé Presidential Guard stocks. Subsequently, several witnesses attest to the arrival of large air transports during the night at Ouagadougou or in the south of Burkina. ICG was informed that during October 2002, part of the largest military base in Ouagadougou (Unity Base), through which local people had regularly transited, was closed, and unusual night-time movements of trucks were observed.⁴⁸ According to the same source, the arms were transported by truck to the border and brought into Ivorian territory across the Léraba River.

Senior Burkinabé officials have indicated to ICG that arms have subsequently been delivered directly by air to Bouaké.⁴⁹ ICG was informed that the Burkinabé minister of defence General Kouamé Lougué contacted an Eastern European country in the last months of 2002 to order land-to-air missiles. The country in question apparently refused the contract.⁵⁰ These missiles were presumably sought to counter the MI-24 helicopter

⁴¹ R. Otayek and R. Banegas op.cit. p. 78.

⁴² ICG interviews with Western diplomats, Abidjan, October 2002.

⁴³ "Gbagbo: Ouattara, Compaoré, Soro..." *Jeune Afrique l'Intelligent*, 30 March 2003.

⁴⁴ ICG interview with international journalist, Paris, April 2003.

⁴⁵ ICG interviews with Western diplomats, Abidjan and Paris, January and March 2003.

⁴⁶ R. Otayek and R. Banegas, op.cit. p.75 and S. Smith "Côte d'Ivoire: le vrai visage de la rébellion" op.cit.

⁴⁷ *Le Figaro*, "Les ambiguïtés de la position française", 15 October 2002 noted that some of the Soviet arms in MPCJ territory very likely came from a stock of 43 tons stolen in July 2000 from an army depot in Abidjan.

⁴⁸ ICG interviews with Western intelligence and military officials, Burkinabé journalists, Paris and Ouagadougou, December 2002 and April 2003.

⁴⁹ ICG interviews, Ouagadougou, Brussels and New York, November-December 2002 and March 2003.

⁵⁰ ICG interviews with senior Burkinabé officials, Ouagadougou and Brussels, November 2002.

gunships that Gbagbo received at the end of October 2002. Radio France Internationale reported on 10 December 2002 that the MPCCI appeared to possess RPG-7 anti-tank rockets as well as land-air and land-land missiles.⁵¹ *Le Monde* also reported that the MPCCI had obtained new artillery in late October 2002 for air defence.⁵² A 24 April 2003 UN Panel of Experts on Liberia Report noted that both light and heavy weapons captured from Ivorian rebels had had serial numbers removed, indicating that the source wanted to remain hidden.⁵³ While most of the arms of the rebels in the west apparently came via Monrovia, ICG research as well as the UN panel of Experts on Liberia Report and a Global Witness report of March 2003 indicate Ouagadougou was continuously breaking the arms embargo on Liberia.⁵⁴

The financing of the rebellion remains somewhat unclear. Significant advance funding was obviously necessary to organise the coup, and the rebellion had ready cash until the end of December 2002. Sources in Ouagadougou indicate the involvement of wealthy Dioula businessmen and transporters close to the RDR and/or political-financial networks close to the Burkinabé Presidency.⁵⁵ Gabon's President Omar Bongo has been reported as a contributor, as has Libya's Colonel Khadafi, but no concrete evidence "exists" as yet.⁵⁶ Many

close to Gbagbo accused French multinationals close to the French right, in particular the multinational group Bouygues, which has significant interests in Côte d'Ivoire, of helping to finance the rebellion, while others professed to see the hand of cocoa traders looking to make a killing.⁵⁷ ICG has established that some funds came from the spectacular hold-up of the BCEAO bank in Abidjan on 27 August 2002, when more than 2 billion FCFA (€3 million) were taken.

The Ivorian government has persistently claimed that Burkinabé soldiers and officers participated directly in the coup attempt. While some sources in Ouagadougou allege the presence of officers from the Presidential Guard in Bouaké, Western intelligence reports seem not to corroborate this. On the other hand, ICG has been informed of recruitment of young civilians from the region of Bobo Dioulasso, for sums ranging from 15,000 to 40,000 FCFA (U.S.\$27-40), plus bonuses for every town conquered. Several hundred traditional hunters (*dozos*) have joined the MPCCI from Burkina Faso, as well as several hundred from northern Côte d'Ivoire and at least 500 from Mali.⁵⁸

still active in mid-2003. Sources indicate that Compaoré made a secret visit to Tripoli accompanied by IB Coulibaly shortly after the coup's failure, and before an official visit in early November 2002 that was ostensibly to discuss a hotel and bank that the Libyan leader was financing in Ouagadougou. French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin visited Khadafi on 18 October 2002 to warn him against supporting the rebellion. Stephen Smith, "La politique de l'engagement de la France à l'épreuve de la Côte d'Ivoire", *Politique Africaine* N°89, March 2003. In February 2003, the World Bank discovered an inexplicable 14 billion FCFA (U.S.\$25 million) hole in the Burkinabé budget. Some World Bank officials appear to think that the money may have been used to finance the Ivorian rebellion but this has not been confirmed. ICG interview with Western diplomat, Abidjan, March 2003.

⁵⁷ The accusations against Bouygues have been repeated frequently in the FPI press. The possible involvement of cocoa traders was based on a document produced by Ivorian military intelligence, part of which was subsequently published on-line anonymously. Experts on the cocoa market do not take this seriously. ICG interviews with diplomats, researchers and experts in the cocoa sector, Abidjan, December 2002.

⁵⁸ ICG interview with diplomat resident in Burkina Faso, Abidjan, December 2002. See also Otayek and Banégas, op. cit., p. 79. The *dozos* are present in Burkina Faso, Mali and northern Côte d'Ivoire and have been increasingly used as armed guards for political personalities. Ouattara was guarded by them during the 2000 elections, and Gueï used them to control the roads during the time of the junta.

⁵¹ The MPCCI claims to have repaired at least one of the Alpha jets stationed in Bouaké but Western military experts are highly sceptical. Spare parts are rare, with stocks only in France and Germany. Certain diplomatic sources suggest that spare parts may have been obtained, along with unofficial technical assistance, from Germany.

⁵² "Le pouvoir et les rebelles ivoiriens discutent et s'arment", *Le Monde*, 1 November 2002.

⁵³ Report of the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 1458 (2003), concerning Liberia, (S/2003/498), paragraph 55, p. 16. April 2003. See also Global Witness, "The Usual Suspects: Liberia's Weapons and Mercenaries in Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. Why it's Still Possible, How it Works and How to break the Trend", London: March 2003.

⁵⁴ ICG interviews with Western military officers, Abidjan, March 2003. Global Witness report, op.cit.

⁵⁵ ICG interviews with researchers, Paris, April 2003.

⁵⁶ The Ivorian daily *Soir Info* published an interview with an alleged Burkinabé intelligence officer in early November 2002, who claimed that Khadafi had given U.S.\$2 million to the rebellion. See RFI online article "Kadhafi, pompier pyromane?", 6 November 2002, available at www.rfi.fr. A recent report by Global Witness suggests that a Tripoli-Ouagadougou-Monrovia axis was

It is also clear that Burkinabé mercenaries as well as other mercenaries from around the Mano River Union region (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone), eventually joined the rebellion in the west of Côte d'Ivoire.

For the first month or so of the conflict, international observers, diplomats and the foreign press emphasised the internal aspects. Western diplomats interviewed by ICG admitted the possibility of Burkina Faso's involvement but claimed that given the government's denunciation of Compaoré and the anti-Burkinabé backlash from its supporters, they were hesitant to say this publicly lest it increase the violence.⁵⁹ From the early hours of the failed coup, the Ivorian government and the sympathetic local press insisted on the foreign nature of the what it termed "terrorist attacks". The FPI daily *Notre Voie*⁶⁰ and Mamadou Koulibaly (president of the National Assembly) directly accused both Compaoré and Ouattara. Captured "assailants" of Burkinabé nationality were exhibited on television.⁶¹ In one early news broadcast, a report suggested that the country's problems could be resolved by expelling "only half a million" Burkinabé. In addresses to the nation after early October 2002, Gbagbo called on his countrymen not to attack foreigners. However, at meetings and rallies of the "young patriots", xenophobic anti-Burkinabé rhetoric has been and continues to be extremely virulent.⁶² The blurring of distinctions between rebels, foreigners, northerners, Muslims and the RDR disseminated by state and pro-FPI press is now embedded in the minds of many pro-FPI youth as well as the Ivorian security forces. In his declaration on 15 November

Credited with mystical powers, they inspire great fear on the part of southern army troops. Apart from combat, they "prepare" the fighters mystically, with gris-gris and special solutions to render them impervious to bullets. The psychological advantage these preparations accord should not be underestimated.

⁵⁹ ICG interview, Paris, December 2002.

⁶⁰ See *Notre Voie* "Blaise Compaoré, le déstabilisateur démasqué", 24 September 2002.

⁶¹ ICG was informed by an Ivorian journalist at the state-owned Radiodiffusion et Télévision Ivoirienne (RTI) that this was a press stunt, information corroborated by interviews with human rights organisations which claimed to have identified some of those exhibited. ICG interviews, Abidjan, September and March 2003.

⁶² ICG interviews with Ivorian youths, November 2002 – January 2003. ICG attended a patriotic rally on 2 November 2002 and a meeting of "young patriots" in Port Bouët, Abidjan, in March 2003.

2003, General Mathias Doué claimed that "outsiders" have "spread themselves dangerously throughout the occupied zones in a logic of occupation...following a phase of invasion".⁶³

Nonetheless, whatever propaganda advantage the Gbagbo government has sought to draw from blaming outsiders, it remains a fact that the Burkinabé government was involved with the planning, organisation, arming and financing of the MPCI. Indeed, Burkina Faso's president, though he has been much more careful since his implication in earlier wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone has become public knowledge, has a long record of involvement in West African destabilisation activities over the past decade.

Many observers fail to see Compaoré's interest in the Ivorian crisis, arguing that Burkina Faso's economy and its citizens in Côte d'Ivoire pay the highest price, but Western military sources note that the rebels very nearly seized power in Abidjan on 19 September 2002. Had they done so, their Burkinabé backers would have expected to be rewarded. However, Compaoré has cleverly used the present situation to his domestic benefit. The launching of a repatriation operation known as "Bayiri" (motherland) on 13 December 2002, and his declaration on 21 January 2003 that Gbagbo would end up in front of the International Criminal Court,⁶⁴ have cut the ground from under the feet of his opponents and given him new nationalist credentials.⁶⁵

Compaoré has a number of reasons to want to see Gbagbo removed from power, not least the Ivorian leader's treachery. From 1989 to 1999 Compaoré directly financed Gbagbo and the FPI, by Gbagbo's own admission.⁶⁶ The individual charged with maintaining contacts between the FPI and Compaoré and carrying briefcases of money to Compaoré was none other than Louis Dacoury-Tabley. No doubt Compaoré expected a different policy from his protégé towards the Burkinabé immigrants but relations between Ouagadougou and Abidjan since Gbagbo reached power have

⁶³ "Doué tape du poing: Aucun peuple ne peut supporter cette humiliation", *Fraternité Matin*, 17 November 2003.

⁶⁴ "Gbagbo finira comme Milosevic", interview with Blaise Compaoré in *Le Parisien*, 21 January 2003.

⁶⁵ See R. Otayek and R. Banégas, op. cit., pp. 71-87.

⁶⁶ "Gbagbo: 'Ouattara, Compaoré, Soro, Simone et moi'", interview with President Gbagbo in *Jeune Afrique l'Intelligent*, 30 March 2003.

never been good.⁶⁷ The accusation that Burkina Faso was behind the 7-8 January 2001 coup attempt poisoned relations, which sank to an all-time low in August 2002 following the murder of Balla Keita.

The increasing vulnerability of the Burkinabé community in Côte d'Ivoire over the past decade created a problem for Burkina Faso, including the need to reintegrate returning immigrants who were no longer sending home badly needed remittances. Even before the war, FPI policy was oriented towards expropriation of Burkinabé interests, especially land, and reversal of the historic flow of immigrants.

B. THE MPCCI: A POLITICO-MILITARY ORGANISATION

The MPCCI organised the initial attacks from Ouagadougou, in close coordination with Ivorian troops in country. Two senior officers made themselves known at the peace negotiations in Lomé: Colonel Michel Gueu and Colonel Soumaïla Bakoyoko.⁶⁸ Gueu, a Yacouba like General Gueï, was sidelined by both Bédié and Gbagbo but kept his post in the army when IB and others were purged or arrested in early 2000. He was replaced when Gbagbo took office, but later appointed second in command of the third military region, based in Bouaké. He claims to have been surprised by the rebellion and to have joined it only several days later. However, other accounts say he was in contact with the rebel leaders before the coup. He is well-known by the soldiers from Gueï's Presidential Guard, in particular Tuo Fozidé, was a key actor not only in the MPCCI, but also in the western rebel movements, MPIGO and MJP, and became minister of sports in the reconciliation government. Colonel Gueu has the reputation of being one of the most

moderate of the rebellion's leaders; indeed many now suspect him of being co-opted by Gbagbo, or at least unwilling to give up his ministerial portfolio with the retreat of the *Forces Nouvelles* from the reconciliation government.

MPCCI ranks swelled in the months after the attempted coup by the addition of soldiers who were purged from the army because they were thought to have been close to Gueï or the RDR, or simply of northern origin. The rebellion also recruited Liberian fighters who had previously worked for Charles Taylor, including some from his Anti-Terrorist Unit. Indeed, as discussed below, it was this that spurred Taylor into starting his own front inside Côte d'Ivoire.⁶⁹

The MPCCI still has many undeclared supporters in Abidjan, and while most of the soldiers sympathetic to the rebellion either joined it or went underground, Gbagbo has good reasons for seriously questioning the loyalty of the national armed forces, FANCI. During the 19 September attacks on Abidjan, neither of its two military bases was attacked. Instead the rebels concentrated on the camps and schools of the gendarmerie and police. Contacted by French military officers immediately following the outbreak of shooting, the army took several hours to respond. According to one French official, they were "waiting to see which way things would go, and intervened only when it appeared that the insurgents had lost the upper hand".⁷⁰

The MPCCI has also recruited among northern civilians.⁷¹ The total of recruits is difficult to ascertain. Some sources cite 3,000 to 5,000, with overall forces numbering between 7,000 and 10,000 including some 1,000 *dozo* fighters. Several humanitarian agencies noted that some recruits returned home after the new year to tend their crops. Others returned home because of boredom at the inactivity in the northern zone.⁷² The movement

⁶⁷ "Les relations tendues entre le Burkina et la Côte d'Ivoire", Agence France-Presse, 3 December, 2002.

⁶⁸ Both Gueu and Bakoyoko had been promoted under Gueï following the 1999 coup, Bakoyoko to commander of the 1st Battalion Génie, and Gueu from lieutenant to colonel, responsible for the Presidential Republican Guard. Gueu was commander of the Ba brigade of student officers in the Escadron Blindé de Reconnaissance of the Gendarmerie in the 1980s, where he was a colleague of Tuo Fozidé. Bakoyoko may not have been involved in the coup's preparation; in August he was chief instructor of a course organised by the International Committee of the Red Cross and overseen by Chief of Army Staff Colonel Mathias Doué on humanitarian law and the military.

⁶⁹ ICG interviews with former Taylor official, June-July 2003.

⁷⁰ ICG interview with Western military official, Abidjan, March 2003.

⁷¹ While the government claims that MPCCI has child soldiers, humanitarian officials interviewed by ICG said that, contrary to the situation in the west, they had seen very few children in arms. Rather, children participate indirectly, helping their "big brothers" at road blocks, fetching and carrying.

⁷² ICG interview with researcher, Paris, April 2003.

is not made up entirely of northerners. Many Baoulé soldiers have joined, as have some from western groups such as the Yacouba, and NCO's from other ethnic groups, all aggrieved by poor conditions in the army.

Led by ex-FANCI NCO's, the troops and new recruits were organised into companies and units with exotic names. Bouaké was initially controlled by four companies: "Guépard", led by Chérif Ousmane, "Anaconda", led by Wattao, "Cobra Force" and Casse. Another group, "Konaté", led by Shérif Konaté, broke away from Guépard, and disputes following the peace talks have on several occasions pitted Chérif Ousmane against Shérif Konaté and Wattao, both of whom have the support of IB Coulibaly.

A joint head of operations performed the functions of both military commander and territorial administrator for each principal city under MPCCI control. International and Ivorian humanitarian organisations and press were given access, and the MPCCI tried to provide a minimum of social services, such as health and education, with the help of the Red Cross and local volunteers.

The rebels reportedly had ready cash in new bills when they arrived in towns and cities.⁷³ Part of their generally favourable image in the first weeks came from the fact that they paid for purchases, reimbursed traders and shop-keepers for damage, and avoided looting. Summary executions of looters, both civilian and military, quickly put a stop to disorder, and many of those returning to Bouaké in November 2002 were amazed to find their houses and belongings intact. This behaviour was a marked departure from the total indiscipline of the same soldiers under the Gueï government and presumably a deliberate effort to correct the terrible reputation its leaders had earned at that time. In the face of the Gbagbo government's extremism, the rebellion won the international communication war in its first weeks hands down.

According to humanitarian workers, the situation remained relatively orderly until the end of December 2002, when the MPCCI apparently began to experience financial difficulties.⁷⁴ Though the situation was still far better than in the western part of the country, looting and racketeering then became systematic and widespread. Many of Bouaké's businesses and wealthier residential quarters, as well as those in other towns and villages under MPCCI control, have been picked clean since the beginning of 2003. The MPCCI also sought revenue through the administration of its territories and trade, notably in cocoa and cotton. While some cocoa was sent south, with the MPCCI paying lower prices to producers and then reselling at a profit, large quantities were exported via Guinea.

In the west, significant amounts were stolen by Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters, but the MJP leaders in Man paid for the cocoa they were to export. "Taxes" were imposed on transporters, and numerous business deals were undertaken following contacts made during and shortly after the peace talks. Press accounts at the end of May 2003 also referred to contracts signed between the MPCCI and cotton exporters.⁷⁵

Humanitarian workers said that compared with the situation in the west, MPCCI zones remained remarkably well-organised under the circumstances, with relatively little violence against civilians. A notable exception was the massacre of at least 40 unarmed gendarmes and 30 of their adult children in Bouaké between 6 and 8 October 2002.⁷⁶ Ivorian press reports confirmed by diplomats claimed that 30 female traditional dancers from Sakassou near Bouaké were killed, as well as ten members of a state administrator's family in Mankono. Humanitarian workers, diplomats and a report by the UN High Commission for Human Rights noted that the MPCCI killed many state security officers and soldiers stationed in their territories, often in summary executions.⁷⁷ Summary executions have

⁷³ This money probably included proceeds from the August 2002 hold-up of the BCEAO bank in Abidjan. ICG was informed by an insider that two top Taylor aides, Mohammed Salamé, his ambassador at-large in Abidjan, and General Melvin Sobandi, his minister of post and telecommunications, travelled to Bouaké on 17 September 2002 to deliver money. ICG interview, March 2003.

⁷⁴ ICG interviews with humanitarian workers, and Bouaké inhabitants, Abidjan, March 2003.

⁷⁵ See article in *Le Temps*, "Ces entreprises cotonnières qui subventionnent le MPCCI", 31 May 2003.

⁷⁶ These killings were extensively reported by Amnesty International. See Amnesty International, "Côte d'Ivoire: A succession of unpunished crimes", op.cit.

⁷⁷ See "La rébellion aux abois : palabres, assassinats, vols, vols, coups de poing", *Notre Voie*, 27 May 2003. Apparently, the MPCCI commander responsible for the

also been used increasingly to deal with indiscipline.⁷⁸

Political leaders Guillaume Soro and Louis Dacoury-Tabley, assisted by civilian sympathisers who organised an internal media network, a U.S.-based website (www.supportmpci.com) and political structures in Europe, Mali, and Burkina Faso, tried to give the MPCCI a predominantly political face, downplay the violence of the uprising, and deny human rights violations, destruction of property and troop indiscipline. Since the peace accords, and the assumption of ministerial posts by Soro, Gueu and Fozié, a split has developed between those willing to negotiate peace with Gbagbo and those determined to finish him.

Over the past six months this split has become more palpable, culminating in August in the arrest in Paris of IB Coulibaly, accused of plotting a coup against Gbagbo and recruiting mercenaries. Although IB was subsequently released, but kept under surveillance in France, ICG has learned that he was "betrayed" to the French authorities by Guillaume Soro, not least because Soro feared IB was planning to have him assassinated. Local commanders faithful to IB have thus pitted themselves against Soro's men, with conflict coming to a head during the attack on a branch of the Banque Central des Etats d'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO) in Bouaké, in which 16 billion FCFA [\$28 million] were stolen, and heavy shooting between opposed factions led Soro and Colonel Bakayoko, the *Forces Nouvelles* military commander, to call on French troops for assistance.⁷⁹ The current situation is such that Chérif Ousmane, formally commander of southern operations and strong man of Bouaké, only controls in reality a small sector of this city. Following the

bank hold-up, and with the help of the French, local commanders in Bouaké undertook to disarm their own men, increasingly undisciplined and angry with their leaders, whom they accuse of "getting rich" at their expense. Throughout the territory occupied by the *Forces Nouvelles*, troop indiscipline has been growing, coupled with the factionalisation and criminalisation of local commanders. A similar attack against a BCEAO branch in Man on 25 October likewise led to an intervention by the French on the request of Soro and Bakayoko.

C. PRESIDENT GBAGBO'S RESPONSE

The immediate response to the rebellion was both military and political. With President Gbagbo still on an official visit to Rome in September 2002, Minister of Defence Lida Kouassi and the FPI press began a witch hunt against enemies in the political opposition that came to include anybody who spoke up against the FPI government and its handling of the crisis or was thought to have possible links with the rebellion.⁸⁰ Within days, security forces began a campaign of mass destruction of shanty towns that included racketeering, violence and the displacement of thousands of the city's poorest people, some 70 per cent of whom were non-nationals. Hundreds were arrested after denunciation, and the police conducted regular raids and round-ups in poor neighbourhoods thought to be sympathetic to the opposition or the rebellion. Mosques were raided, Muslim leaders arrested, and several imams assassinated. Numerous night-time killings and disappearances attributed to death squads close to the presidency have targeted opposition members or family members of rebel leaders.⁸¹ State media and private

Sakassou killings, Bakary Coulibaly, and his men were killed by the MPCCI hierarchy. See the UN High Commission on Human Rights Report of 24 January 2003, following the 2-29 December 2002 fact-finding mission led by Bertrand Ramcharan, the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights.

⁷⁸ Reports from Vavoua recount the summary execution by MPCCI leader Zacharias Koné of five of his men involved in a gang rape. "En colère, Koné Zackarias exécute 5 rebelles", *Soir Info*, 24 June 2003.

⁷⁹ According to Western diplomats, the attack on the bank was in fact orchestrated by Soro and his group, rather than being the work of uncontrolled elements, as they claimed. ICG interviews, November 2003.

⁸⁰ ICG analysts have personal knowledge of several cases in which citizens were arrested and accused of threatening state security for casual remarks to neighbours or colleagues. One such person spent two weeks in prison before being released for lack of evidence because she told a colleague, who reported her on one of the special phone lines for denunciations of suspected rebels, that "soldiers should be up fighting in Bouaké rather than stealing from honest citizens in Abidjan".

⁸¹ ICG understands that what have been termed generically the actions of "death squads" represent a collection of activities that were not necessarily centrally coordinated. A UNHRC special report on 24 January drew links between a certain number of killings and members of the Presidential Guard, notably Simone Gbagbo's personal guard leader,

newspapers close to the FPI have violently attacked the rebellion, the RDR, France and all others considered to support the rebellion. The press has been used to name supposed accomplices of the insurgency, many of whom have been subsequently arrested or assassinated.

Gbagbo received his main support from students and youth movements. While the first organised public demonstration, on 2 October 2002, involved all political parties and ethnic groups, a coalition of youth groups (JFPI, FESCI, COJEP, Sorbonne), the *Alliance des Jeunes Patriotes pour le sursaut national* under Charles Blé Goudé,⁸² quickly came to monopolise these events. Its speeches and press conferences have been markedly xenophobic, war-mongering and intolerant. Bankrolled by Gbagbo and joined by other pro-FPI groups, it not only controlled the street, threatening individuals and organisations who failed to show their "patriotism", but it also participated in more sinister activities. The even more radical Eugène Djué, FESCI leader in 1994-1995, organised the *Union pour la libération totale de la Côte d'Ivoire* (UPLTCI) and has been directly involved in creating urban ethnic militias. According to Western security services and Ivorian police, the "patriotic" leaders have been implicated in drawing up "black lists" and even occasionally participating in arrests and shootings.⁸³

Captaine Anselme Seka Yapo, and Presidential Guard member Patrice Bahi. Diplomatic sources confirm their participation in at least three assassinations. Different pro-government armed groups with personal or political accounts to settle have been involved in many other cases. ICG analysts personally witnessed a killing in the Deux Plateaux neighbourhood in October 2002 shortly after midnight, and subsequently witnessed on two occasions naked bodies, hands tied, in the early morning on the roadside in Deux Plateaux. See *Le Monde*, "Côte d'Ivoire: enquête sur les escadrons de la mort", 8 February 2003.

⁸² Charles Blé Goudé, FESCI president from 1998-2001 and loyal Gbagbo supporter, has a long and chequered history of political violence. Under his leadership, FESCI used increasingly violent methods, including machete attacks against students and professors associated with the political opposition. Blé Goudé claims to have been studying for a Master's degree in strategic studies at Manchester University, for which he had received a presidential grant, when the September coup attempt attack came. ICG has received written confirmation from Manchester University that Blé Goudé has never been enrolled in a degree program.

⁸³ ICG interviews with Western diplomats and Ivorian police officers, confirmed in interviews with Ivorian human rights groups, Abidjan, January to March 2003.

It was these groups that attacked French buildings, businesses and private homes from 26 to 29 January 2003 and again in October 2003.

The "patriotic youth" have been integrated more or less officially into the FANCI. Unsure of his army's loyalty and capabilities, especially after its failure to retake Bouaké on 7 October 2002, Gbagbo set out to create and arm new fighting forces. On 14 October 2002, he fired Defence Minister Kouassi, and took on the defence portfolio himself, naming a relative, Bertin Kadet, as deputy minister. While many reservists were not called up, Gbagbo recruited 3,000 youth into the army in December 2002, announcing the mobilisation by presidential decree on 9 December. A further 1,000 were recruited in early 2003. According to press reports, the recruits are almost exclusively southerners. Ivorian police sources informed ICG that recruitment was undertaken in concert with "patriotic leaders".⁸⁴ At the same time, informal recruitment of youth, primarily from the Guéré ethnic group in Abidjan to participate in the *Forces de Libération du Grand Ouest* (FLGO) began in early 2003. "Patriotic" leaders, in particular Eugène Djué and Charles Groghuet, also an ex-FESCI leader, assisted by local politicians, gendarmes and military, have been directly implicated in the formation of urban tribal militias in Abidjan and other cities in the south.

The officially recruited youth were largely used as "canon fodder" in the western war zone, and diplomatic sources told ICG that Gbagbo was not very happy with their performance.⁸⁵ Needing real fighters to help FANCI take on MCPI, Gbagbo hired foreign mercenaries, including French, South Africans and Eastern Europeans, to attack, notably south of Vavoua on 27 November 2002 and at Man on 1 December.⁸⁶ He could also count on 500 Angolans already in the country, who were soon reinforced, and who helped FANCI win back Daloa on 16 October 2002. Both Angolan President Dos

⁸⁴ ICG interview with senior police officer, Abidjan, January 2003.

⁸⁵ ICG interviews with Western diplomats, Abidjan, March 2003.

⁸⁶ Between 150 and 200 anglophone mercenaries, both black and white, led the attacks south of Vavoua, followed by a FANCI contingent, on the day French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin visited Abidjan. "Reprise des combats en Côte d'Ivoire malgré les efforts diplomatiques de la France", Agence France-Presse, 28 November 2002.

Santos and Gbagbo have denied the involvement of Angolan forces in the conflict, but the presence of Angolan troops was persistently pointed out to ICG by Western diplomats and security officers.⁸⁷ Israelis and Angolans continue to handle presidential security.⁸⁸ A contract signed between the Ivorian government and a British private security company, Northbridge Services, involving both arms and men, created international concern, and UK authorities publicly warned the company against sending mercenaries on 1 April 2003.

The most dangerous alliance, whose effects are still being felt, was made by Gbagbo and the armed Liberian anti-Taylor Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, LURD, and its later offshoot, MODEL. Having stepped up his longstanding contacts with Krahn anti-Taylor forces before the western rebellion broke out on 28 November 2002, Gbagbo not only gave Taylor a motive to support the rebellion, but together with the MPCCI, opened the door for Liberia's war to move onto Ivorian territory.

IV. THE WILD, WILD WEST

Apart from enabling both sides to arm and recruit, the ceasefire and negotiation process after October 2002 also saw the opening of a new front in the west. Two additional organisations, MPIGO and the MJP, appeared with the direct assistance of Liberia's then president, Charles Taylor, thus further regionalising the conflict.

Taylor and Burkina Faso's Compaoré had been close allies in many previous coups, wars and destabilisation campaigns, from the murder of Burkina Faso's President Thomas Sankara in 1987, through the creation of war zones in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s, to attacks on Guinea at the start of the present decade. For these reasons, many observers wondered whether MPCCI, MPIGO and the MJP might not all represent another chapter in this relationship. However, although there were elements of cooperation between the three anti-government movements, MPIGO in particular was intended as a strategic buffer force to protect Taylor against what he considered to be a threat from the creation of an MPCCI-held zone in northern Côte d'Ivoire.

MPIGO was from the outset organised by some of Taylor's most senior commanders, including Kuku Dennis, Adolphus Dolo and the late Jack the Rebel.⁸⁹ Ivorians in MPIGO included many of the late General Gueï's men, while the majority were Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters. MPIGO's official leader, Felix Doh (real name: N'dri N'guessan), had been in exile in Liberia since Gueï was ousted from office in Côte d'Ivoire in 2000. The Sierra Leonean warlord Sam Bockarie and his forces actively assisted MPIGO until just after the killing of Felix Doh in late April 2003.

Although the relationship between Charles Taylor and Blaise Compaoré has ebbed and flowed, the presence of troops loyal to Charles Taylor in the west of Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates the continued collaboration between Taylor and Compaoré in regional destabilisation. From the December 1999 coup onwards, Taylor and Compaoré gradually

⁸⁷ ICG interviews, Abidjan, March 2003. The MPCCI accused Angolans of placing anti-personnel mines in three localities. ICG received confirmation from Western security sources that mines had been placed around Gbagbo's village, Mama. An article in *Jeune Afrique l'Intelligent*, December 2002, cited some 500 mercenaries: Angolan, Israeli, around 30 Bulgarians holding Angolan passports (pilots and technicians for the MI-24 helicopters), black South Africans with Special Forces training, and approximately 60 French, five of whom were injured in the battle for Man. See also "L'enfer ivoirien: paradis des mercenaires", *Le Figaro*, 16 December 2002.

⁸⁸ ICG interviews with Western diplomats and security officers, Abidjan, March and May 2003.

⁸⁹ Jack the Rebel, also known as "General Mission" and whose real name was George Douana, allegedly died in late March 2003 during fighting in Ganta, Nimba County. ICG Africa Report N°62, *Tackling Liberia: The Eye Of The Regional Storm*, 30 April 2003, p. 8.

developed divergent interests in Côte d'Ivoire. Taylor became an ally of General Gueï, leader of the Ivorian military junta in 1999-2000; their relations dated back to the early 1990s, when Gueï, as a senior army officer, had supported Taylor's war effort from rear bases inside Côte d'Ivoire. Taylor continued to help Gueï when the latter, after losing power in 2000, retreated to his fiefdom close to the western border with Liberia. Gueï, himself a Yacouba, recruited fighters from that group's ethnic cousins, the Gio of Liberia, who formed the main element in Taylor's own armed forces. Gueï's private force in Gouéssesso near Man included many Liberians, and Ivorian soldiers who trained in Liberia in 2000-2001.⁹⁰ Compaoré, on the other hand, was increasingly identified in Ivorian politics with Alassane Ouattara.

The early days of the rebellion developed into a strategic threat for Taylor⁹¹ after MPCCI declared a unilateral ceasefire on 17 October 2002 following the seizure by government troops of Daloa, in the heart of cocoa country, with help from Angolan fighters.⁹² First, he lost his closest Ivorian ally when General Gueï was murdered on 19 September 2002. Secondly, he received information that the MPCCI was recruiting Liberian combat veterans from refugee camps in Ghana, including some whom he considered as enemies. After the MPCCI had taken the northern Ivorian town of Ouangolodougou, the rebel movement had a direct supply route from Burkina Faso. Taylor learned of a meeting in early November 2002 between MPCCI leaders, including IB Coulibaly and his brother Ishmael; a close military aide to President Compaoré; a dissident from Guinea; Sam Bockarie from the Sierra Leonean RUF; and at least one former fighter from Taylor's own forces. This group hatched a plan to launch a three-pronged attack on Danane, San Pedro and Abidjan in December 2002, and to use the territory they secured to re-start wars in Sierra Leone and Guinea. Alarmed not least by the

number of Liberian opponents that MPCCI had under arms, Taylor established the MPIGO to protect him from MPCCI intrusion.

Thirdly, Taylor was threatened by President Gbagbo's own recruitment of Liberian exiles in the form of the Krahn 'wing' of LURD, which later hived off into a new movement, MODEL. These anti-Taylor forces had bases in Abidjan and numerous supporters in the FPI. The need to find new sources of revenue and especially to block Gbagbo from access to rents from cocoa provides another explanation for the opening of a new front in the west. Whether Robert Gueï had a hand in the original coup is unknown, but his men in the west were not prepared to accept his murder. While further investigation is needed into the exact circumstances that gave birth to MPIGO and MJP, it has become clear that to varying degrees, MPCCI, Compaoré, and especially Taylor were all party to the creation of these new rebel groups.

The western front fundamentally changed the nature of the war. Until the arrival of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters, relatively few civilians had been victims of violence in the rebel zones. By December 2002, the number of civilian victims of the "death squads" in Abidjan and loyalist security forces in Daloa was reportedly higher than those of civilians killed by the MPCCI.⁹³ Uncontrolled by their respective Ivorian allies, Liberians and Sierra Leonean fighters, together with marauding bands of looters, spread death and destruction among the local Guéré, Yacouba and Dioula populations.

Beyond the indiscriminate violence perpetrated by these fighters, the political manipulation of local populations has led to a growing inter-ethnic conflict. Caught in the cross-fire and accused by both sides, Liberian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire have become the tragic victims. Gbagbo's forces in particular have deliberately targeted civilian populations thought to sympathise with the rebellion. Gbagbo and FANCI spokesmen have persistently denied the obvious use of helicopters and of Liberian fighters, and exactions committed against the Yacouba and Dioula populations, despite abundant evidence to the contrary. Although the ceasefire was signed on 3 May 2003, in late June 2003 the western refugee transit camp

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 15-18.

⁹¹ ICG interviews with former close aide of Charles Taylor, June-August 2003.

⁹² MPCCI accused Gbagbo of using Angolan mercenaries to help liberate Daloa, and of planting land mines. Some 500 Angolans were already present on Ivorian soil before 19 September 2002, officially as trainers in a military co-operation program. Their presence at Daloa has been confirmed by Western intelligence officers. Figures cited by officials indicate 2,000 Angolans on rotation, 122 of whom were part of the Presidential Guard. ICG interviews, Abidjan, March 2003.

⁹³ ICG interviews with Ivorian and international human rights organisations and Western diplomats, Abidjan, December 2002, March 2003.

in Niela was still the base for many of the 2,000 LURD-MODEL forces remaining in Côte d'Ivoire, and recruitment was ongoing in November 2003. An ICG mission to Liberia in October 2003 discovered considerable evidence of Ivorian weapons and nationals fighting with LURD-MODEL forces in the east of Liberia, after having taken part in the major anti-Taylor offensive launched by opposition groups in mid-2003.

A. CHARLES TAYLOR IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE'S WESTERN WAR ZONE

ICG has analysed in detail Charles Taylor's involvement in the creation of MPIGO and MJP, as well as Gbagbo's support for and use of anti-Taylor forces.⁹⁴ Global Witness⁹⁵ also clearly identified the role played by Taylor, linking him and Compaoré together in plans to destabilise Sierra Leone, including meetings with the ex-RUF leader, Sam Bockarie, in 2002. The emergence of MPIGO and MJP can only be explained in reference to the situation on the ground in the middle of October 2002. While it is likely that Taylor had been contemplating a major operation in Côte d'Ivoire for some time, there is no evidence that he was actively involved in organising forces for combat there before October 2002. He appears to have given some assistance to his long-standing ally Compaoré, but if the coup had succeeded there would have been fewer grounds for him to become actively involved.

In the first weeks after the failed attacks in Abidjan, the MPCCI rapidly took towns across the north, very often with only a handful of men. Having spread itself thinly and been blocked by the French, the rebels had little choice but to enter rapidly into the negotiating phase, demanded by French and African leaders. From the outset more amenable than Gbagbo to ending the fighting, the MPCCI signed a ceasefire unilaterally on 17 October 2002, just after government troops recovered Daloa. The creation of the ceasefire line supervised by the French, and the MPCCI leadership's firm conviction that Gbagbo had no intention of ceding anything in negotiations, meant that the situation appeared to be turning to their disadvantage. If they could not find a stronger argument to force Gbagbo to the

table, the president was likely to use money from the cocoa crop to buy all the arms he wanted. The appearance of MPIGO and MJP to the west of the line patrolled by French soldiers⁹⁶ was intended to cut into the cocoa belt and taking the vital port of San Pedro.

The MPCCI counted on the weakness of FANCI, its indiscipline, lack of motivation and low morale. However, it clearly could not open a new front from where it was and with the number of men at its disposal. The death of Gueï, killed by gendarmes close to Gbagbo on the morning of the coup, provided fertile ground upon which to grow a new rebellion. Taylor had further reasons to become actively involved in late October 2002: access to San Pedro for exporting wood and getting his hands on Ivorian cocoa; providing an Operation Pay Yourself for ex-RUF fighters as well as his own men, who were increasingly poorly paid and restive; ensuring a safe haven in the event that LURD incursions put him in difficulty at home; taking territory which he had always claimed belonged to "Greater Liberia", and most importantly, responding to Gbagbo's increased support for the LURD Krahn branch, which had bases in Abidjan and numerous supporters in the FPI. Gbagbo's support of these forces also no doubt motivated the MPCCI leaders to open a second front.

The connection between the MPCCI and the MJP in Man was evident from the outset. Vehicles and equipment stamped with the MPCCI logo were identified by those present in Man following the MJP attacks on 28 November 2002. From the next month on, MPCCI laissez-passer were recognised on MJP territory and vice-versa. MPCCI leaders were identified by observers in Man starting in December. Many observers consider the MJP simply the western extension of the MPCCI. Indeed, its ostensible leader, Déli Gaspard, has hardly been seen. A number of Liberians and Sierra Leoneans as well as *dozo* fighters have been present in MJP forces. Both the original attacks on Danané and Man were led by Liberian commanders.⁹⁷

MPIGO was designed to appear as an operation led by Gueï's men, although with a majority of

⁹⁴ ICG Africa Report, *Tackling Liberia*, op. cit.

⁹⁵ Global Witness, "The Usual Suspects", op. cit.

⁹⁶ At the time, the French were not patrolling that part of the country, since the last MPCCI town before the west was Vavoua. They had only 700 men for the whole line, and concentrated them on the roads to Abidjan.

⁹⁷ See ICG Africa Report, *Tackling Liberia*, op. cit.

Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters. MPIGO's leader, Felix Doh, had developed contacts with Sam Bockarie while in exile in Liberia.⁹⁸ The ethnic composition of its force was largely Yacouba, with their ethnic cousins, Liberian collaborators belonging to the Gio group. Sam Bockarie and his forces actively assisted the MPIGO until just after the death of Felix Doh in late April 2003.

From December 2002 until April 2003, towns, villages and rural camps in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire were regularly attacked by a range of groups. These included Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters led by Taylor's commanders in the guise of MPIGO; the MJP group, also with significant numbers of Liberians and Sierra Leoneans but closer to the MPCCI; as well as independent marauding bands of looters. The French stopped them to the east but were frequently attacked in turn.⁹⁹ Though the rebels were determined to take San Pedro before the peace talks opened, they were pushed back by the French, who had secured access roads to the port. A ceasefire was signed on 13 January 2003 in Lomé between FANCI and the two groups, to allow negotiations to begin, but fighting continued throughout the talks and during the months that followed. By this time, Taylor appears to have been co-ordinating activities with the former allies who had become a threat to him in the guise of the MPCCI.¹⁰⁰

The havoc wreaked by the Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters, and the incapacity of the Ivorian rebel leaders to control them, was in marked contrast with the situation in the northern areas under MPCCI control. The concern of MPCCI political leaders that the rapes, pillage and killings would undo three months of careful image-building was expressed early on in the common declaration

the three rebel groups made on 23 December 2002 following a meeting in Bouaké to discuss the "possibility of an alliance". That "alliance" was publicly consecrated at the Marcoussis peace talks as the "*Forces Nouvelles*". MPCCI politicians had already realised that the legitimacy they sought was seriously jeopardised by their Liberian associates, and the alliance was only worthwhile if it would enable them to gain more ground.

A ceasefire line had never been established in the west. The French held strategic positions on the main axes but the inability of the western groups to advance was due not only to French control, but also to the use by Gbagbo of anti-Taylor forces, beginning with the attack on Bloléquin on 6 December 2002. Indeed, a significant proportion of the fighting in the west has been between Liberians, all with appalling records of atrocities and violence against civilians.

B. PRESIDENT GBAGBO'S LIBERIAN ALLIES

The most dangerous and intractable problem in the conflict that is still latent in the west is Gbagbo's support for Liberian anti-Taylor forces as well as local Guéré militias (the best known of the latter being the *Forces de Libération du Grand Ouest*, FLGO).¹⁰¹ The Liberians fighting for Gbagbo are not simply extras, working for money or pillaging rights. They now straddle the Ivorian-Liberian border and have their own agenda in the still unsettled situation in their native country. Some are reported to be deeply disillusioned with Gbagbo, having fought for him but receiving no compensation.

There is a long history between Gbagbo and the fighters and political personalities associated with the Liberian rebels.¹⁰² The Liberians have received support from the Gbagbo government since 2000, particularly the Krahn branch, which split from the predominantly Mandingo LURD based in Guinea and has emerged as MODEL. Many of these

⁹⁸ See BBC report "Murky death of Ivory Coast rebel", 29 April 2003.

⁹⁹ MJP attacked them in Man, where they had held the airport following the evacuation of French citizens, in order to enable the FANCI to take the town. MPIGO attacked the French at Duékoué on many occasions. Felix Doh appeared to have little or no control over "his" troops, and apologised to the French for the "misunderstanding".

¹⁰⁰ ICG interviews with Western security officer, Abidjan, March 2003. Taylor's interest is indicated by a Monrovia meeting on 19 February 2003, attended by Sam Bockarie, two generals from Taylor's elite Anti-Terrorist Unit (including "General Eagle"), Michel Gueu from the MPCCI, Felix Doh (MPIGO), and Déli Gaspard (MJP), to discuss strategy for the west.

¹⁰¹ According to Ivorian press reports, there are at least two other groups, the *Alliance patriotique Wê* (AP-Wê) and *l'Union fraternelle pour la libération du Grand Ouest* (UFLGO). See *Le Patriote* "Les milices: une dangereuse réalité", 10 July 2003.

¹⁰² For details, see ICG Report, *Tackling Liberia*, op. cit., pp. 20-24.

Liberians were previously associated with the former Liberian president, Samuel Doe, and many were part of the militia known as ULIMO-J (United Liberation Movement for Liberia).¹⁰³ Those from the Krahn ethnic group are ethnic "cousins" to the Ivorian Guéré (or Wê) people. Many Ivorian Guérés claim that Samuel Doe was in fact Ivorian, and connections between the two groups are longstanding, especially since the Liberian war caused tens of thousands to seek refuge in western Côte d'Ivoire in the early 1990s. Many Guéré support the FPI, whereas the Yacouba are more faithful to the late General Gueï and his party, the UDPCI. The Ivorian Yacouba and the Liberian Gio thus formed a bloc within MPIGO, fighting against a Guéré-Krahn alliance, in what has become an increasingly inter-ethnic conflict across national borders.

The Ivorian government continues to deny ties to the Liberians, despite the evidence made public when the French captured 112 Liberians following their attack on Bangolo on 7 March 2003 and the publication on 24 April 2003 of a UN Security Council Panel of Experts on Liberia report. However, the links between the FANCI and the Liberians, who shared a base at Guiglo until mid-March, as well the involvement of high level businessmen, military and politicians of Guéré origin in the recruitment, training and arming of Liberians, are no longer in doubt. This alliance has involved the collaboration of Ivorian forces with LURD-MODEL inside Liberia itself. The town of Zwedru in eastern Liberia was taken on 28 March 2003 by mixed forces – FANCI, FLGO and LURD-MODEL.¹⁰⁴ Eye-witnesses also report that large number of Ivorians participated in fighting when Liberia's second city, Buchanan, was captured from Taylor's forces in July-August 2003. Well-placed Liberian sources have confirmed the on-going presence of Ivorians within MODEL, telling ICG that Gbagbo has more control over MODEL than is generally thought, and claiming that all Gbagbo had to do was to snap his fingers, and MODEL would return to the Côte d'Ivoire.

¹⁰³ ULIMO-J was one of the main warring factions fighting against Taylor in the first Liberian war. The anti-Taylor fighters in Côte d'Ivoire sometimes call themselves "sons of Doe".

¹⁰⁴ ICG interviews with humanitarian workers, international journalists and Liberian refugees, May 2003.

The central LURD-MODEL figures in the collaboration are Edward Slanger, cousin to the late president's relatives Chayee and Jackson Doe, and Eric Dagbeson, a police inspector under Doe.¹⁰⁵ In March 2002, ICG was informed by senior commanders in Conakry that LURD had 300 to 500 fighters awaiting orders in the west of Côte d'Ivoire. This initial group was augmented following the coup attempt through recruitment in Abidjan, the Nicla transit camp south of Guiglo, and in the Bumjubura refugee camp 30 kilometres west of Accra in Ghana. One of the initial Ivorian recruiters is a municipal employee in Guiglo, whom ICG sources affirm has helped arm Liberians in Nicla transit camp and throughout the area.¹⁰⁶

Recruitment in transit camps in Abidjan has been undertaken by both Liberians and Ivorians. Among the latter are a Guéré network, including Pol Dokui, Radio Côte d'Ivoire assistant director of programming; Paul Richard, an FPI financier who is in the mayor's office in Toulépleu and has logging and business interests in Monrovia and Toe Town (Grand Gedeh County) in Liberia; and Eloi Oulaï, director of Radio Côte d'Ivoire. They are also involved in recruiting Guéré youths to fight alongside FANCI in the west.

Recruitment of Liberians in Ghana was undertaken in early January 2003 largely by Liberian LURD leaders, notably Slanger. Between 175 and 500 refugees were offered U.S.\$250 and taken to a base for training before Ghanaian President John Kufuor told Gbagbo to stop. Recruitment in the Nicla transit camp by FANCI has been ongoing since late December 2002 despite the ceasefire and peace agreement. FANCI and LURD-MODEL forces on Ivorian soil also forcibly enrolled some Guéré youths and Liberian refugees.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Both Chayee and Jackson Doe are also in LURD. Chayee Doe is vice chairman of administration. Jackson Doe played a significant role in the appointment of senior LURD commanders. Eric Dagbeson was killed on 10 December 2002 in the attempt to take Bloléquin from MPIGO. ICG report "Tackling Liberia" pp. 21-22 and 23.

¹⁰⁶ ICG interviews with military officials, Guiglo and Duékoué, MODEL fighters, Guiglo, November 2003. Still actively assisting Liberians in Nicla camp, this official is feared in the area and known for his hatred of the French.

¹⁰⁷ ICG interviews with humanitarian workers, May 2003, who said that FANCI recruiters often threatened violence in the Nicla camp. Humanitarian workers have publicly deplored the militarisation of the camp. See IRIN news

The total number of Liberians fighting for FANCI was cited in March 2003 as between 1,500 and 2,500. French military officials placed the number at around 3,000 at the beginning of the pacification operation in late May, of which some 1,000 had left Côte d'Ivoire for LURD-MODEL bases in Liberia.¹⁰⁸ In August 2003, Liberian MODEL fighters were still in Toulépleu, many still fully armed and engaged with FANCI and Gbagbo's militias. During a mission to western Côte d'Ivoire in November, ICG observed that Toulépleu and Nicla camps were still full of Liberian fighters, and that many Liberians continued to roam the area at night, despite the French presence. As one Ivorian MODEL fighter put it "Toulépleu is Liberia".

The collaboration between the FANCI and MODEL extends well beyond recruitment. Meetings have been held since early January 2003 between Slinger and other MODEL commanders and Guéré politicians and military in or close to the FPI. Slinger has a home in Abidjan, and together with Paul Richard and other FPI members has organised contacts with the party and military officials, and met with Gbagbo in April. Special shipments of arms for the Liberian and Guéré recruits were organised by Colonel Mathias Doué, Army Chief of Staff, Colonel Denis Bombet and the director of the Abidjan port, Marcel Gossio, likewise all Guérés.¹⁰⁹ The commander of MODEL forces, General Amos Chayee, has been seen at the Guiglo FANCI base by humanitarian workers and was still based in Bloléquin in early June.¹¹⁰ While Liberian units have their own commanders, their military operations, logistical supply and arms have been jointly co-ordinated by FANCI. The main liaison officer is FANCI Sergeant Oulaï, younger brother to Eloi Oulaï. His name was cited to ICG in connection with the attack on Bangolo on 7 March 2003, in which over 60 civilians were massacred in their homes by Liberian fighters.¹¹¹ Sergeant Oulaï

brief "Army continues giving guns to Liberians", 12 May, 2003.

¹⁰⁸ ICG interviews, Abidjan, May, 2003. The UN Panel of Experts on Liberia Report, op. cit., para. 66, p. 18, noted that ex-RUF fighters from Sierra Leone were also fighting for Gbagbo.

¹⁰⁹ ICG interviews with security and intelligence officers, Abidjan March-May, 2003.

¹¹⁰ Chayee was chief of staff of ULIMO-J during Liberia's first war and fled Liberia in 1998.

¹¹¹ The Liberians were led by the Liberian General Philip Paleahi, "deputy chief of staff" for the joint Liberian/FANCI operations. Subsequently, 112 were

reports directly to Denis Bombet, who in turn reports to Mathias Doué about arms, logistical support and instructions.¹¹² When Liberian politicians were manoeuvring for places in Liberia's transitional government in September 2003, President Gbagbo is reported to have insisted that MODEL leader Thomas Nimley receive the foreign affairs portfolio.¹¹³

ICG has also learned from reliable diplomatic sources that arms of former Soviet origin have been received in the port of San Pedro with American financing.¹¹⁴ While the U.S. State Department denies any official links to such support, other Western diplomats, security officers and humanitarian officials allege that these are not simply private initiatives and argue that such support would be consistent with what they consider to be U.S. support for LURD via Guinea and Washington's desire to finish with Taylor without becoming directly involved in Liberia.¹¹⁵ However, as one western official pointed out, while U.S. support for LURD-MODEL is an increasingly open secret, the U.S. will have difficulty controlling MODEL, since to do that, they will need to control Gbagbo.¹¹⁶

The entire triangle between Danané and Bloléquin and over to the Bangolo area was under the effective "control" of various Liberian forces from January through April 2003. Until the latter part of April, the border towns of Bin-Houyé and Zouan-Hounien were held by MPIGO, although the

intercepted by the French near Duékoué. The Gbagbo government's refusal to acknowledge the troops captured by the French or injured and treated in military hospitals in Abidjan (as is regularly done with MODEL fighters wounded in Liberia) infuriated the Liberians, who insisted that they had been fighting under FANCI instructions. ICG interviews, Abidjan, March-May, 2003.

¹¹² ICG interviews, Abidjan, Accra, March and June, 2003.

¹¹³ Confidential Liberian source, November 2003.

¹¹⁴ ICG interviews with Western diplomats and military officers, May, 2003. Sources indicated that UN officials were equally aware of such support and concerned about it.

¹¹⁵ ICG interviews with Western diplomats and security officials, May 2003. FANCI officers based in San Pedro repeated these allegations. ICG interviews, May 2003. Concerning possible U.S. connections with LURD through Guinea, see ICG Africa Report No. 71, *Liberia: Security Challenges*, 3 November 2003.

¹¹⁶ ICG interview, Abidjan, November, 2003.

commanders were Liberians.¹¹⁷ Toulépleu, taken from the rebels by MODEL on 16 January, was still in Liberian hands in late June, a month after the pacification operation began, and Bloléquin, taken from MPIGO on 10 January 2003, was held by Liberians until early April, when FANCI took over. The MODEL headquarters and its military commanders moved to Bloléquin on 17 March to coordinate attacks on River Gee, Nimba County and Zwedru in eastern Liberia. At the beginning of April, they transferred to Toulépleu, and throughout that month intense fighting occurred for the control of towns and villages on the Toulépleu-Danané road. Villages in the area of Bin-Houyé were burned by MODEL, and between 7 and 16 April, the Gbagbo government's MI-24 helicopters provided coordinated aid to the offensive with strikes against Bin-Houyé, Danané, Zouan-Hounien, Mahapleu, and the market in Vavoua.¹¹⁸

C. THE END OF THE LIBERIAN ALLIANCES?

Following signature of the implementing accords for the Marcoussis peace agreement in Accra on 8 March 2003, the *Forces Nouvelles* had every interest in turning to politics. However, violent dissension broke out, with some commanders refusing what they considered a capitulation. The split apparently pit the negotiators – Soro, Gueu, Fozié and Ousmane – against IB Coulibaly and his military allies, notably Wattao and Konaté in Bouaké, and commanders in Korhogo, Séguéla and Vavoua. The ongoing conflicts in the west, with successes for Gbagbo's Liberians and ethnic reprisals by Liberians and Guéré recruits in FLGO against Yacouba and Dioula civilians, meant that violence escalated throughout April, including the above mentioned FANCI-Liberian and government

helicopter attacks. Additionally, the MJP, MPIGO and MPCCI attacked both French and ECOWAS peacekeepers.¹¹⁹

Intense international pressure and repeated interventions by the peacekeepers finally convinced Gbagbo to ground his helicopters. A Gbagbo-Taylor meeting organised by ECOWAS on 26 April in Togo on Taylor's request reached agreement to secure the border, and a complete ceasefire was signed on 3 May, immediately preceded by a violent scramble by both sides to retain as much territory as possible before it went into effect. The idea was to prepare the ground for French and ECOWAS forces, and part of the deal was that each side get rid of its Liberian fighters.

In late January 2003, Tuo Fozié ordered the expulsion from Man of the worst of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters, who were roaming between Danané, Bangolo and the border, pillaging, raping, burning villages and killing civilians, most of whom were Guéré. Following a meeting in Korhogo on 6 February, in the presence of IB Coulibaly, the MPCCI's Ousmane Coulibaly was placed in charge of the "clean-up". Reinforcements were sent from Bouaké, notably MPCCI's Delta Force unit. The plan was to push the Liberians into the border area near Toulépleu, which had been retaken by combined FANCI-Liberian forces on 16 January. Some Liberians remained in Man, however, and when the decision came at the end of April to complete the clean-up, Ousmane Coulibaly managed to disarm and intern them without too much difficulty.

In Danané, the real clean-up took place in late April, following problems between MPIGO, MPCCI and Sam Bockarie. MPCCI had accused Felix Doh of selling positions to the enemy (Liberian commanders holding the border towns). Chérif Ousmane was dispatched from Bouaké with his Guépard unit and together with Liberians and Sam Bockarie's men, sought to recapture Zouan-Hounien. During the fighting, Sierra Leonean elements apparently killed a number of his men. An altercation broke out, with Bockarie claiming that it

¹¹⁷ One commander, "T-mark", drove around in a 4x4 vehicle with an amputated arm dangling from it as decoration.

¹¹⁸ The deliberate bombardment by an MI-24 helicopter of a Catholic Mission for children suffering from Buruli ulcers in Zouan-Hounien on 14 April 2003, resulting in three dead and fifteen wounded, as well as the bombardment of the market in Vavoua, in MPCCI territory, killing several civilians, created an uproar in the international community, and resulted in the UN Security Council request on 15 April that the government definitively ground its helicopters. On 19 April, the French Commander of Operation Licorne, General Beth publicly qualified the helicopter attacks as "absolutely scandalous and disastrous".

¹¹⁹ On 1 and 2 April 2003, the French positions in Duékoué were attacked, and on 3 April, an MPCCI contingent attacked the Benin contingent just south of Vavoua. On 4 April, near Dibobli, 100 MJP attacked the French, who were saved by helicopter evacuation. ICG interviews with Western military officials, April, 2003.

was "his" territory. The following day, there was intense fighting in Danané between Ivorian soldiers and Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters, with the advantage finally turning in favour of Ousmane. Those who did not flee over the border were summarily executed.

Felix Doh was killed on 28 April, purportedly ambushed by Bockarie. Other accounts say that Doh was killed by the MPCJ, after having been arrested, and it was made to seem as if he had fallen in battle.¹²⁰ The subsequent killing of Bockarie by Taylor's forces in late April or early May seemed to lend credence to the end of the reign of terror by the rebellion's mercenaries.¹²¹ The western zone held by the *Forces Nouvelles* reportedly is now free of Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters, although small bands of mercenaries of diverse origins may still be in the area. Recent reports, as yet unconfirmed, suggest that new contact has been made between *Forces Nouvelles* leaders and one of Taylor's top commanders to train and provide more Liberians for the *Forces Nouvelles*. It seems highly likely that the *Forces Nouvelles* have not been sitting by as Gbagbo continues to arm and support MODEL. However, Taylor's men will not be able to enter Man or Danané with their arms, and since Taylor's departure, their position has been weakened.

If the MPCJ has attempted to get rid of its most troublesome allies, FANCI may have more difficulty or less interest in doing the same. ICG sources confirmed the suspicion that the deployment of the French-ECOWAS operation to clean up the west received a green light from Gbagbo in May 2003 because MODEL had retaken the Liberian port of Harper a week earlier, making it less reliant on a rear base in Côte d'Ivoire. Gbagbo denied that George Dweh, a MODEL political leader, had visited Abidjan on 13 May.¹²² The visit's objective was to develop a policy toward the pacification operation. A number of meetings took place in May in Abidjan to prepare a major push into Liberia to coincide with the 4 June

Liberian peace talks in Ghana.¹²³ Supplies from Côte d'Ivoire, including arms, were also stepped up. This may explain why when the French arrived outside of Toulépleu on 26 May, FANCI and Liberian forces refused to allow them access to the town, or to secure the village of Yeleu, north-east of Zouan-Hounien, a strategic intersection giving access to Liberia. Western military officials note that MODEL's success in Liberia, and Gbagbo's control over it, has put him in a position of relative strength, putting not only the *Forces Nouvelles*, but also Blaise Compaoré, onto the defensive. The concern that in the event of new hostilities, MODEL could move north is a real possibility. Gbagbo has little or no interest in abandoning his protégés at this stage of the game.

The question of what to do about the Guéré militias is just as difficult. Used as "cannon fodder" in battles in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, they have also been involved in reprisals against "pro-rebel" populations. According to ICG sources, in late May and June 2003, meetings were held in Abidjan to discuss their integration into MODEL. Many had already left for Zwedru in readiness for the major offensive planned to coincide with the Liberian peace talks in Accra that was to give MODEL control of a swathe of eastern Liberia.

D. THE GROWING CYCLE OF INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE

The situation in the west has created a humanitarian crisis of alarming proportions. Access to conflict areas is still difficult and dangerous, despite the 3 May ceasefire and the French-ECOWAS pacification campaign. Apart from military conflicts, the area has seen escalating inter-ethnic violence against and among civilians. With little or no access to humanitarian aid or food, often living in the bush or trekking hundreds of miles to escape fighting, the populations on both sides have suffered enormously.

Liberians and Sierra Leoneans fighting for MFIGO and MJP as well as MODEL fighters have been guilty of countless acts of indiscriminate violence,

¹²⁰ See "Côte d'Ivoire: Les rebelles chassent leurs alliés libériens et sierra léonais", *Le Monde* 5 May 2003.

¹²¹ Bockarie's death was officially announced by the government of Liberia on 5 May 2003.

¹²² See government Communiqué, in *Fraternité Matin*, 15 May 2003.

¹²³ The start of the Liberian peace talks was overshadowed by the announcement on 4 June 2003 of President Taylor's indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

killings and pillaging throughout the west. The Ivorian government has portrayed the Guérés as the main victims, and indeed many have been killed by Liberians fighting for rebel forces. However, civilian Guérés, Baoulés, Burkinabés and Yacoubas tell journalists and humanitarian workers that the Liberians are all the same, often killing, mutilating and raping villagers "for fun".¹²⁴ Liberian refugees have often been victims of retaliation from local populations and are in a desperate situation.¹²⁵

Since the MJP lost Man to FANCI on 1 December 2002 and took it back four days later, there has been a cycle of deliberate, ethnically targeted violence. While Man was in FANCI hands, "mopping up" operations involved the killings not only of remaining rebels, but also of sympathisers, particularly those of northern or Burkinabé origin pointed out to FANCI soldiers by local youths. Local witnesses claimed that FANCI and the Anti-Riot Brigade (*Brigade Anti-Emeute*, BAE), sent in to "clean up" the city, were worse than the rebels, accusing people indiscriminately of association with the rebellion and killing them in cold blood.¹²⁶ This echoed on a greater scale what occurred in Daloa when FANCI recaptured the town on 16 October 2002, and with the help of local "informants" killed dozens of civilians of northern origin, including several Malians and an imam. When the MJP won Man back, they took their revenge on the local informants.

Since late December 2002, attacks around Bangolo, Guiglo, Toulépleu, and Bloléquin have resulted in the deaths of numerous civilians and a mass exodus of indigenous populations. The Gbagbo government and Guéré politicians have called the exactions "genocide" and have used the attacks to legitimate the local Guéré militias, trained and armed by FANCI. The FLGO are recruited through local elected Guéré officials, mostly mayors, many of whom are based in Abidjan and supported by the presidency. The recruits are handed on to FANCI for training and formation into fighting groups. While assisting FANCI and MODEL, they also

participate in raids against "enemy" populations.¹²⁷ Humanitarian workers told ICG of a February attack on Yacouba in the area of Bangolo. Emerging from the bush after several days, the population vowed revenge. According to several ICG sources, the MJP leadership in late February 2003 claimed that if Gbagbo was going to use Guéré militias to kill Yacoubas and Dioulas, it would organise attacks on Guéré and Bété villages in reprisal.¹²⁸ Guéré militias continue to make violent raids on Yacouba, Burkinabé and Malian populations. At the same time, despite the fact that they are fighting for the same "side", these groups also attempt to protect their populations from raids by the Liberians, who, they say, "kill for fun".¹²⁹

As a humanitarian worker pointed out, Burkinabé and even Yacouba civilians have been double victims – attacked by Liberians from both sides, they are also targets for Guéré and FANCI vengeance. Reports throughout April claimed that violence against Burkinabés and Malians in the government-held area stretching from the coast along the eastern side of the Sassandra river, north to Issia and over to Duékoué and Guiglo has become so systematic, widespread and excessive as to appear deliberate policy. Local militias and village self-defence committees are involved, as well as gendarmes, and police. Humanitarian workers claim that even village elders have been used to draw Burkinabés back to their plantations, where they are killed by local youths.¹³⁰ Burkinabés trying to flee both rebel and government forces find

¹²⁴ ICG interviews with international and Ivorian journalists and humanitarian workers, Abidjan and Danané, March-May, 2003.

¹²⁵ Amnesty International report, 24 June, 2003.

¹²⁶ "Man: la vie reprend après les pillages", special report, *Fraternité Matin*, 3 June 2003.

¹²⁷ Following a march on the French embassy which was gassed, the Guéré began publicly organising their reaction. A public meeting was held on 31 May 2003 in Guiglo, at which local elected officials announced the organisation of the *Union des Patriotes pour la Résistance du Grand Ouest*, whose members' statements leave little doubt about their unwillingness to allow their fighters to be disarmed. M. Mao Glofiéi Denis (third assistant to the mayor, president of the traditional chiefs' organisation, Moyen Cavally) reportedly claimed, "We're ready. France created the MJP and the MPIGO to exterminate the Wê (Guéré). And they were surprised by our reaction. We're ready to cut down the enemy", *Soir Info*, 3 June 2003.

¹²⁸ FANCI accused MJP of perpetrating a massacre of civilians in the area of Dah in early April 2003. ICG learned that the MICECI troops sent to investigate were prevented access by MJP for four days, perhaps to allow time to remove traces, since the forces found Dah empty when they finally entered. ICG interview, April 2003.

¹²⁹ ICG interviews, Guiglo, November 2003.

¹³⁰ ICG interviews with humanitarian workers, Abidjan, Guiglo, Paris, May 2003.

themselves victims of rackets, beatings and killings by gendarmes at road-blocks and in towns. A foreign journalist told ICG that the exodus of Burkinabés by bus for Ouagadougou reached a dramatically higher level in March and April.¹³¹ Apparently it has begun to alarm donors, who see the disastrous consequences it will have on cocoa and coffee harvests for 2004.

On 16 May 2003, Guéré political leaders claimed that Guéré civilians had been massacred while trying to leave the Bangolo area for Duékoué. Allegedly between 4 and 8 May, "Burkinabé rebels" attacked and killed 223 men, women and children. It is quite possible that groups of Burkinabé mercenaries have taken the place of the Liberians, for loot, but also for vengeance, thus continuing the cycle. The reconciliation government announced on 17 May that it would investigate civilian massacres but it was careful not to attribute blame, fearing yet another escalation. Accounts collected in mid-July noted that the Guéré militias, while being incorporated into MODEL, were also involved in raids against Yacouba villages between Zouan-Hounien and Bin-Houyé.¹³² In private, members of the prime minister's office say that the escalation of inter-ethnic violence in the west has been fanned by ultranationalist agitators in Abidjan.¹³³ Western diplomats have persistently reported that the president's wife, Simone Gbagbo, is the principal *agent provocateur* in manipulation of the Guéré.¹³⁴ The pro-government press is also to blame as are rebel commanders in the west. If the cycle is not ended, the risks are high for yet another escalation, despite French-ECOWAS peacekeeping efforts. Should the ethnic conflict in the west not be controlled quickly, there is every chance that it may spread, notably to Abidjan where pro-Gbagbo militias armed by those close to the presidency and trained by security forces are only too keen to fight "the sons of immigrants".

V. INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION

France has been the central political and military mediator in the Ivorian crisis. Its intervention will continue to be crucial to resolution of the conflict. However, it has been handicapped from the outset, accused by both sides of complicity and partiality. Not wanting to be alone in the cross-fire, Paris encouraged ECOWAS to create a contact group on 29 September 2002, broker the 17 October ceasefire, organise the first round of peace talks in Lomé, and prepare a military operation to supervise the ceasefire line.

ECOWAS leaders largely failed in this. Divided by internal rivalries and petty quarrels and with no funds to support a peacekeeping force, they left France with little option but to take both the military and political roles more directly in hand. From an original contingent of 700, the French Licorne operation had 4,000 troops by July 2003. Having been mandated to control the ceasefire line until the ECOWAS force (MICECI) could be deployed, the French were essentially alone for five months. The first 172 MICECI soldiers arrived only on 18 January 2003, followed by 1,100 on 6 March. These forces, under General Khalil Fall (Senegal), officially took over the ceasefire line in late April. Since the Marcoussis accords and the violent anti-French demonstrations orchestrated by the presidency that followed, the French have redoubled efforts to act under the cover of multilateral organisations, notably the UN Security Council and the Monitoring Committee led by UN Special Representative Albert Tévoédjré, as well as ECOWAS.

Especially following the Marcoussis accords, which were perceived by some as a victory for the rebellion, Gbagbo's supporters and the FPI redoubled their claims that the French are complicit with the rebellion, going so far as stating that the coup was financed and masterminded by France to protect its economic interests. Many in the south are equally prepared to believe that French troops are in league with the rebels. In the pro-FPI press, French troops have been accused of complicity in civilian killings. Anti-French feeling, encouraged by President Gbagbo unofficially but also most skillfully used by him to force the French government into supporting him, is rife; the murder of French journalist Jean Hélène on 21 October 2003 was a symptom of a deep xenophobia. Yet

¹³¹ ICG interview, Accra, May 2003.

¹³² ICG interviews, Paris, July, 2003.

¹³³ ICG interviews, Abidjan, May 2003.

¹³⁴ ICG interviews, Abidjan, May 2003.

Gbagbo persistently encourages an Ivorian-French dialogue. This strategy of implicating the French in every aspect of the conflict then making them the scapegoat has characterised his relations with France from the outset. In many respects, his mobilisation of the street has been highly successful in manipulating Paris.

While MPCFI fighters generally have good relations with French soldiers, relations between French diplomats and the MPCFI political leadership are tense. On several occasions since October 2002, the MPCFI organised anti-French demonstrations, using the same anti-colonial language as Gbagbo. Over the past three months, the *Forces Nouvelles* have increasingly denounced France's "complicity" with Gbagbo, and have asked for the recall of the French ambassador, considered by them to be Gbagbo's "puppet". The Monitoring Committee has also come under MPCFI fire, not without reason, for its lack of clout.

France is now paying the price of its ambivalent, if not contradictory, policy from the outset of the crisis. It is also reaping the fruits of a marked complacency concerning not only the grave structural problems, political and economic, that have plagued its ex-colony for at least ten years, but also the earlier alliance between Taylor and Compaoré. Indulgence towards these "renegade" leaders, particularly Compaoré, has contributed to France's current difficulty in the Ivorian quagmire. While the French concession to the U.S. in finally voting for UN timber sanctions against Taylor on 6 May 2003 can be interpreted as related to the fall-out of the war in Iraq, more likely it was aimed at punishing Taylor for his intervention in Côte d'Ivoire. The dropping of Taylor, combined with private threats, has recently dampened Compaoré's ardour for continued involvement in the Ivorian conflict, but this change in France's position may be too little, too late.

While France can be praised for containing a conflict where no one else could or would, the freezing of the situation has inadvertently assisted in its extension and aggravation. Furthermore, as one analyst observed, France's brokering of the peace talks and the naming of the Ivorian government on French soil contained an "inevitable contradiction" – amounting to the reconstitution of a protectorate to resolve a conflict whose origins lie in the failure and

the rejection of the "first protectorate", that between Houphouët and France.¹³⁵ However Paris seems determined to be the motor behind ECOWAS and UN initiatives and assist in rebuilding the country. The operation which began in May 2003 to control the fighting the west is a direct engagement to end the killings. France, however, is not prepared to go against both Gbagbo and the U.S. by insisting that the partnership between FANCI and MODEL cease, nor undertake to disarm MODEL and FLGO fighters.

A. FRENCH AMBIVALENCE

The complacency of French policy in the face of the political crises which have marked Côte d'Ivoire since Houphouët's death has been noted by observers.¹³⁶ In contrast to the politico-financial networks known as the *Françafrique*, which had their heyday with Houphouët and Jacques Foccart, the French presidential counsellor in the 1960's, the languid approach to the dangers incarnated successively by Bédié, Gueï and Gbagbo reflects the progressive disengagement of France and French interests in Africa.¹³⁷ The return of the French right to power does not necessarily imply a return to the *Françafrique*, even though old alliances, notably between President Jacques Chirac and Compaoré as well as Omar Bongo of Gabon, still carry some weight. France's intervention in Côte d'Ivoire can indeed be seen as a departure from the recent doctrine of neither interference nor indifference that left Bédié high and dry following the December 1999 coup, but it is an engagement whose ultimate purpose is not clear.

France actively supported Gbagbo in his first difficult years, pressuring a sceptical European Union to end its aid suspension. The government's satisfactory economic performance did win it a certain international legitimacy, although domestic concessions, including the Forum for National Reconciliation, were only lip-service to donors,

¹³⁵ J.-F. Bayart, "Un contre sens inévitable", *Le Figaro*, 28 January, 2003.

¹³⁶ See S. Smith "La France dans la crise ivoirienne: ni ingérence, ni indifférence, mais indolence post-coloniale", in C. Vidal and M. Le Pape, eds., *Côte d'Ivoire, L'année terrible* (Paris, 2002.), pp. 311-324 and S. Smith "La politique d'engagement de la France à l'épreuve de la Côte d'Ivoire", *Politique Africaine*, N°89, March, 2003, pp. 112-126; J.-F. Bayart, *Le Figaro*, op. cit.

¹³⁷ S. Smith, « La France dans la crise ivoirienne », op. cit.

who were willing not to look too closely. Like much of ECOWAS, the French have been infuriated by Gbagbo's duplicity during the crisis.¹³⁸ Numerous broken promises and the anti-French positions and demonstrations orchestrated by the presidency have been hard to swallow, given that Paris saved Gbagbo and his government. Simone Gbagbo, Mamadou Koulibaly, and various other FPI elected officials continue to reproach France bitterly for having refused to apply the defence accords that link the two countries, but they were invoked for limited purposes shortly after the failed coup and again in mid-December 2002 in the west. In March-April 2003, Gbagbo held out hope they might be again applied in the west, but the announcement by Licorne commander General Beth that any plan to secure that region must involve all parties to the conflict, and the subsequent joint operation, made it clear that France would not go in alone.

The French refusal to act unilaterally was motivated initially by the judgment that the crisis was internal, not, as the government claimed, an "external terrorist attack". This angered Gbagbo, who asked if he had less legitimacy than presidents such as Gnassingbé Eyadéma of Togo or Compaoré, whom France tolerates or even actively supports. The French response, however, reflects a general policy of refusing to fight a war in Africa unilaterally regardless of the situation or the government in question. It is extremely likely a socialist government would also have refused to apply the accords. Those accords do not in any case imply automatic activation in the event of a foreign attack.¹³⁹

Gbagbo's constant charges should be seen as part of a strategy to limit France's margin of manoeuvre against the government's excesses. While they were not willing to fight Gbagbo's war for him, the French moved almost immediately to block the advance of the rebellion on Abidjan. Military sources assured ICG that had the French "opened

the passage" at any point during the first four months or so, Abidjan would have fallen almost immediately.¹⁴⁰ This was precisely the MPCFI reproach. Furthermore, the French did partially apply the accords with respect to logistical support.¹⁴¹ On at least one occasion before they received a clear mandate to hold the ceasefire line, the French did more. Shortly after the repatriation of foreign nationals from Bouaké in late September 2002, the MPCFI attempted to move on Yamoussoukro. The French fired from helicopters on a convoy of around a dozen trucks, destroying nine.¹⁴²

Controlling the ceasefire implied the possible use of force against violators. However, according to French military officials, they had instructions to apply force only against the rebels, no doubt in part because the ceasefire had been signed unilaterally.¹⁴³ A bilateral ceasefire was not in force until 3 May 2003. However, the use of force rarely proved to be necessary. Containment has been largely due to the constant negotiation between local French and MPCFI military leaders, giving birth to what Gbagbo and his supporters see as a "suspicious" complicity.

The second grievance that Gbagbo's supporters have is France's refusal to "hand over Ouattara" at the start of the crisis – they they kept him in the

¹⁴⁰ ICG interviews with military officers, Abidjan, January 2003.

¹⁴¹ As one French officer told ICG concerning the FANCI attempt to retake Bouaké, the failure of which was subsequently attributed to the French, "it's hardly our fault if they have no coordination, no strategy and no will to fight. We gave them the material, but they don't know what to do with it!" This appreciation of FANCI, shared by many in the Gbagbo government, does not say much for 40 years of close military cooperation and development programs. ICG interview with French officer, December 2002.

¹⁴² ICG interviews with Western diplomats, Abidjan, October 2003.

¹⁴³ ICG interview with French military, Abidjan, March 2003. A first attempt by an ECOWAS mission to achieve a ceasefire on 6 October 2002 failed. Gbagbo promised to sign, then changed his mind at the last minute, making the ECOWAS delegates wait two days before leaving in disgust, with one delegate commenting that Gbagbo "had messed us about". *Agence France- Presse*, 10 October 2002. Gbagbo had in mind the attempt to retake Bouaké, launched on 6-7 October. Its failure, and the taking of Daloa led him to agree to a ceasefire, even though he never signed it.

¹³⁸ ICG interviews with Western and West African diplomats, Abidjan, November 2002-March 2003.

¹³⁹ Some observers maintain that Gbagbo's criticism of French "neo-colonialism" and non-respect of Ivorian sovereignty clashes with his insistence on French military aid. However, he considers that the very terms of the accords, enabling France to decide unilaterally when to intervene, are a form of neo-colonialism.

ambassador's residence for over two months after rescuing him. Gbagbo did not appear to mind Ouattara's prolonged stay; indeed it served his purpose, while his hawks tacitly encouraged the pressure from the street, including the violent protest against the French military base on 22 October 2002 by "young patriots" demanding Ouattara's head.

Finally, critics argue that the French want to get rid of Gbagbo because he is a "new type" of African leader, not prepared to bow to their interests and privileges in the country.¹⁴⁴ This criticism puts France together with Burkina Faso as the most avid of the nations that allegedly seek to control Côte d'Ivoire's wealth and potential. The view is demagogic, but nevertheless demonstrates the extent to which the conflict is perceived as a struggle for independence. However important French direct private investment may be, Côte d'Ivoire is not the Congo, and the French lost their monopoly on its "black gold", cocoa, to American multinationals in the early 1990s. No doubt the French government would very much like to see the major concessions continue in French hands, and clearly may have been worried about Gbagbo's independence. However if it had really wanted Gbagbo removed, its troops would have sat in Abidjan and done nothing during late 2002.

During December 2002, French policy seemed to swing toward Gbagbo, at which point even the most virulent ultra-nationalist papers began singing its praises. The government attack on Vavoua on 27 November, led by foreign mercenaries, which the French let through without comment, and their lack of reaction upon the discovery of a mass grave shortly after at nearby Monoko-Zohi, which seemed to echo the silence at the massacre of northerners by government forces when Daloa was taken back on 16 October 2002, resulted in violent anti-French demonstrations in MPCCI zones. Guillaume Soro called the French a "conquering force of occupation", warning them to stay out of a war that was not their own.

Government violation of the ceasefire by helicopter attacks in late December 2002 in which 24 civilians were killed, and the fighting in the west increasingly alarmed the international community.

Failed peace talks in Lomé, coupled with the disastrous meeting in Bamako between Compaoré and Gbagbo and the failure of the Dakar summit on 18 December, testified to the inability of ECOWAS to broker an end to the conflict. This prompted the French foreign minister's visit on 5 January.¹⁴⁵ The idea of peace talks in Paris had been proposed by the foreign ministry in early December 2002 but, according to officials close to the French presidency, was meant to prod ECOWAS into further action. Following the minister's visit, however, negotiations in Paris seemed like the last chance to avert full-scale civil war.

B. THE LINAS-MARCOUSSIS PEACE TALKS

If French policy before the peace talks could be considered ambivalent, the decisions taken at Marcoussis, and particularly at the Kléber summit of African heads of state, in both form and substance, placed France in a situation of total contradiction. As an expert on African politics put it, the accords address the problems posed by the conflict, notably the definition of citizenship and rights of access to land, both fundamental to national sovereignty, by:

the shameful reconstitution of a protectorate which ought to be multilateral..., but which will not escape the pernicious bilateral relationship, due to the failure of other Western countries to engage. The return in strength of France will clash directly with the aspiration of many Ivorians to a second independence.¹⁴⁶

To be fair, as the same commentator noted, the "desperate optimism" of French diplomacy deserves to be saluted. Its intervention prevented a dramatic escalation of violence. Organised in less than ten days, the talks faced the daunting task of reaching a compromise between diametrically opposed positions: between Gbagbo, who refused to deviate from "constitutional and institutional legality", and the rebel coalition demanding his resignation. The French determined that only a direct handling of the agenda would bring results,

¹⁴⁴ See Simone Gbagbo interview, "La France nous a lâchés, Israël peut nous aider", *Jeune Afrique l'Intelligent*, 11 May 2003.

¹⁴⁵ Gbagbo made the tactical error of allowing a "spontaneous" demonstration of patriots, just outside the presidential residence, that blocked the minister for over half an hour in the sun.

¹⁴⁶ J.-F. Bayart, *Le Figaro*, op. cit.

even if this shocked participants anxious to preserve of national sovereignty.

Participation was restricted to political parties and rebellion delegations. The major parties, RDR, FPI, PDCI-RDA and UDPCI, each had five delegates, the smaller parties, *Mouvement des Forces de l'Avenir* (MFA) close to the RDR, the socialist PIT, and the *Union Démocratique et Citoyenne* (UDCY), each had one; the MPCCI had five, and the MJP and MPIGO two each. As the talks, chaired by French jurist Pierre Mazeaud, proceeded, a compromise was hammered out on the central issues: revision of the conditions of eligibility for the presidency and rural land laws, suppression of residents' cards, the naturalisation of immigrants born in the country before 1972, and above all the naming of an interim prime minister with full executive powers and a government of national reconciliation to rule until general elections in 2005.

The Marcoussis accords thus not only made the rebel forces participants on an equal footing with the political parties, but disavowed Gbagbo's political program since coming to power. They also implied rejection of the FPI by its erstwhile ally, the PDCI-RDA. National Assembly President and FPI delegate Mamadou Koulibaly left in the middle of the talks, claiming that Mazeaud had orchestrated "a constitutional coup d'état", succeeding where the armed rebellion had failed. His dramatic exit was partly for show, as ICG was informed by Western diplomats that Koulibaly was in fact called back by Gbagbo to organise the riposte by "young patriots".¹⁴⁷ Apart from the FPI, all other signatories continue to call for complete implementation of the accords. Koulibaly's position, however, was and is shared by other hardline Gbagbo supporters. Simone Gbagbo, addressing Guéré women on 7 April 2003, called the reconciliation government an "abomination" and the rebels' participation in it an "iniquity", and continues to execrate the French.¹⁴⁸

The summit in Paris on the weekend of 25-26 January 2003 at which the accords were confirmed, also served to determine the composition of the reconciliation government. However, the way in

which decisions were taken not only removed all legitimacy from the French intervention in the eyes of the Ivorian government, but also alienated a large section of the Ivorian population and even many of the French expatriates. The post of prime minister and the key ministries of defence and interior were negotiated behind closed doors between the MPCCI spokesman, Soro, and Gbagbo, assisted by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and Presidents Bongo of Gabon and Chirac of France. A deal was made in which Gbagbo was to name Seydou Diarra as prime minister in exchange for the MPCCI receiving the two ministries.

Contrary to what he subsequently claimed, Gbagbo agreed, clearly realising that he could activate the "young patriots" and present their anger as the "people's" refusal of French pressure. Indeed, it was not only the "young patriots" who were shocked by the procedure; FANCI and large sections of the southern population were also up in arms. Chirac's response that the rebellion had superior military force seemed only to underline the consecration of armed rebellion. The high-handed treatment of Gbagbo by the French foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin, no doubt contributed to his desire for vengeance.¹⁴⁹ It was not long in coming. As soon as they received their instructions, the groups of youth in Abidjan, put on alert that morning from Paris, went into the street, wrecked French official buildings, schools, businesses and some private residences, put up barricades and attacked white motorists.¹⁵⁰ French diplomats and military in Abidjan were totally unprepared and stood by helplessly. Other Western diplomats interviewed by ICG, while admitting that Gbagbo posed a serious problem to a political resolution, expressed surprise that France had conceded so much to what was after all an armed rebellion.¹⁵¹

French policy swung once again in favour of Gbagbo during the month of August. This may be the result of a recognition that Gbagbo has the

¹⁴⁷ ICG interviews, Paris, February 2003.

¹⁴⁸ "La réconciliation à l'ivoirienne menacée par le regain de tensions dans l'ouest", Agence France-Presse, 9 April, 2003. See also Simone Gbagbo interview, op.cit.

¹⁴⁹ ICG interviews, Abidjan, March 2003.

¹⁵⁰ The "patriots" had been given strict instructions not to physically injure French citizens. One has to wonder, given that the French were aware in advance of the "demonstrations", if they deliberately let them happen, thus pushing the international community to react in their favour and further discrediting Gbagbo.

¹⁵¹ ICG interviews with Western diplomats, Abidjan, January, 2003.

upper hand and that he is probably there to stay. A sort of *realpolitik* appears to be governing this new acceptance of Gbagbo, coupled with the recognition that the rebel forces are imploding; the good relations developed with local *Forces Nouvelles* commanders by French officers have begun to deteriorate, and many "moderates" and key Soro supporters have sought refuge in Burkina Faso and Mali.¹⁵²

The French appear to think that they can control Gbagbo by putting pressure on him. Diplomatic sources suggest that France may have concluded that Gbagbo may ultimately be the solution to regional stability, capable of rolling back the forces of destabilisation associated with Taylor and Compaoré. If so, this is a somewhat naïve and dangerous attitude. Gbagbo is a consummate politician who has demonstrated his ability to treat the French government and French citizens in almost any way he wants with impunity. Declarations in early November 2003 that the French would help him "liberate" the country in the following two weeks implied that Paris had decided at last to apply the defence accords. Given that France has neither mandate nor intention to do so, such statements must be seen as brinkmanship. The French run a very high risk of being caught in the middle, attacked by both sides, should the fighting resume. The impression all protagonists have is that France is not in a position of strength and is improvising. As one French officer put it when questioned by ICG on his government's policy in November 2003, "you don't understand French policy in Côte d'Ivoire? I can tell you, you're not the only ones!"

C. MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENT – THE MONITORING COMMITTEE AND MINUCI

Gbagbo's resistance to the French has been, and likely will continue to be, in direct proportion to his perception of their intention to reduce his power. The greater the international support for the peace accords, the narrower his margin of manoeuvre. Following the post-Kleber fiasco, France again

pressed for greater international support. UN Security Council Resolution 1464 (4 February 2003) was welcome legitimisation of French mediation, backing "Opération Licorne" and MICECI with a Chapter Seven mandate.¹⁵³

The UN Secretary General named Albert Tévoedjré as his special representative to head a Monitoring Committee composed of ten members, including the French and American Ambassadors, to follow implementation of the accords.¹⁵⁴ However, the committee reacted cautiously when Gbagbo appeared to have refused the accords and the French were reluctant to have a public confrontation. More than 8,000 French citizens had left the country following the protests, and Paris was horrified at the prospect of being obliged to repatriate the remaining 16,000. On the weekend of 7-8 March 2003, the parties at Marcoussis were finally re-united in Accra, under the leadership of the ECOWAS chairman, Ghanaian President John Kufuor, to find a solution to the problems of nominating ministers in the new government. The rebellion renounced its claims at Accra to the defence and interior ministries, and a National Security Council was established, with fifteen members, including all the parties to the peace accords, which was to name ministers "by consensus". Kufuor has played a central role since assuming the leadership of ECOWAS in March, and the Accra compromise is largely thanks to his activism. The French were conspicuously absent in Accra, but active behind the scenes through their ambassador.

The French have been doing everything possible to act in concert with or under the umbrella of the Monitoring Committee and ECOWAS but are hampered at least in part by the continued hesitancy of the Monitoring Committee. Gbagbo's hardliners and press continue to represent France as the puppet-master behind Seydou Diarra, the Monitoring Committee and even the Security Council. Yet Gbagbo himself regularly seeks one-on-one meetings with the French ambassador, attempting to use him as mediator or messenger between himself and the military leaders of the

¹⁵² Commanders loyal both to IB and to Soro have left the country; notably IB's faithful commander Wattao, who left for Burkina with his share of the proceeds of the hold-up of the BCEAO bank, and Ousmane Coulibaly, previously joint-commander in Man, who left with trucks full of good for Mali.

¹⁵³ S/RES/1464 (2003), 4 February 2003.

¹⁵⁴ The Monitoring Committee has representatives from the African Union, the International Organisation of Francophone countries, the G8, the IMF, the World Bank, the European Union, ECOWAS, Operation Licorne and MICECI.

Forces Nouvelles and political parties. U.S. support for French positions, hard to come by post-Iraq War, will be crucial. When the State Department condemned Gbagbo's use of helicopters in April 2003, the FPI press warned the U.S. ambassador "not to go along with the French plot"; the Security Council threw its weight in the balance, and the helicopters were grounded.

Diplomats tell ICG that the Monitoring Committee lacks cohesion and decisiveness. Its mandate is not sufficiently clear; apart from reporting to the Secretary General and the Security Council, it appears to have little clout with which to ensure application of the accords. Tévoedjré has been accused by some diplomats of being afraid to offend Gbagbo. Overly concerned to appear neutral, the committee is reduced more or less to an observer role.¹⁵⁵ The main obstacles to implementation of the accords continue to be Gbagbo and his party; the committee will have to pressure Gbagbo. Continued support by the French and the Americans inside the committee and for MICECI will be essential.

Security Council Resolution 1479 established a UN Mission to Côte d'Ivoire – MINUCI – to assist and monitor application of the accords, especially disarmament and the end of the conflict in the west. It includes ideas developed by the Secretary General¹⁵⁶ such as the creation of a small staff to assist Tévoedjré and liaison officers for humanitarian and human rights issues, and provides for a military component, whose initial form was a military liaison group of 26 officers, to be increased to 78 once security conditions permit and significant progress has been made by the parties. A second phase, involving deployment of military observers, had been proposed by the Secretary General but not included in Resolution 1479. MINUCI works closely with France and MICECI on elaborating and possibly supervising a disarmament, demobilisation and reinsertion/reintegration program for former fighters. There is now a clear need to review this mandate with a view to turning MINUCI into a real peacekeeping force.

As of July 2003, MICECI consisted of 1,260 men, subsequently increased to some 1,400. ECOWAS, even with French help, finds it very difficult to fund such a force, which should now be financed by the UN. The other central problem ECOWAS has is Gbagbo. Apart from Burkina Faso, whose direct participation is clearly ruled out, the FPI has also accused Mali of backing the rebellion, and numerous Malians have been victims of violence or killings. While relations between Guinea's President Conté and Gbagbo have been good, perhaps because both support anti-Taylor forces, numerous Guineans have also been victimised in Côte d'Ivoire by loyalist forces. Immigrants from Senegal, Nigeria, and Niger have likewise left the country. President Wade of Senegal has been accused by FPI hardliners of being part of the "international plot" against Côte d'Ivoire, and in the western operations Senegalese General Khalil Fall, the MICECI commander, requested that the contingent not include his countrymen.¹⁵⁷ Ivorians rejected Nigerians, recalling difficulties with the Nigerian-led ECOWAS interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s. The very idea of an ECOWAS force at the beginning of the crisis shocked Ivorians. Hence, the real scope for including large numbers of West African troops in an expanded UN force is limited due to the strong feelings aroused throughout West Africa by the Ivorian conflict. An expanded UN force may wish to seek troops from further afield, including other parts of Africa.

Yet, whatever differences its leaders have with Gbagbo, ECOWAS has every interest in seeing a crisis that is crippling the region's economy end as soon as possible. ECOWAS has a chance to prove itself in Côte d'Ivoire. So far, its force is functioning well, largely due to French logistical support. In the west, MICECI numbers are small but it is perceived as more neutral than the French by Gbagbo. If the French can continue to take a secondary role, at least publicly, while helping with logistics, and funds can be found to bring more soldiers in, the ECOWAS intervention can succeed.

D. PACIFYING THE WEST

The Chapter Seven mandate accorded to French and ECOWAS forces under Resolution 1464

¹⁵⁵ ICG interviews with diplomats, Abidjan and Paris, March and May, 2003.

¹⁵⁶ Report of the Secretary General on Côte d'Ivoire, S/2003/374 pursuant to the UN Security Council Resolution 1464 of February 4, 2003, 26 March 2003.

¹⁵⁷ ICG interviews, Abidjan, May, 2003.

authorises them "to take the necessary steps to guarantee the security and freedom of movement of their personnel and to ensure, without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Government of National Reconciliation, the protection of civilians immediately threatened with physical violence in their zones of occupation".¹⁵⁸ However, apart from defending their troops against rebel attacks, this mandate has not been used to protect civilians in the western combat zone. Civilians have been massacred in villages only a few kilometres from the French outpost at Duékoué; the French can and should do more to protect civilians and refugees.

The joint operation to pacify the west was started by the French, MICECI, FANCI and the *Forces Nouvelles* on 23 May 2003. This operation extended the ceasefire line to the border town of Toulépleu, just south of Danané, with the aim of creating a demilitarised "zone of confidence" patrolled by French and ECOWAS forces, 60 kilometres long and 40 wide. On 25 June, a French spokesman claimed that the zone was "95 per cent secure".¹⁵⁹ The operation may have created a "secure zone" but there are good reasons to fear that it will only displace the problem posed by Liberian fighters and not help with the security of civilians outside the "secure zone". Humanitarian sources told ICG in mid-July that Guéré militias were still perpetrating violence in Yacouba villages and that numerous MODEL fighters remained on Ivorian territory.

According to sources interviewed by ICG at the French foreign and defence ministries, MODEL forces in Côte d'Ivoire "will be invited to lay down their arms by their FANCI partners".¹⁶⁰ The military operation is extremely costly, especially as the French are bearing the brunt of the MICECI costs. Leaving FANCI to deal with its Liberian allies may also be a decision that complements the tacit U.S. backing of Gbagbo's help for MODEL. However, the French and the Americans need to work together on what is an interconnected conflict. Regional disarmament is needed.

The odds of FANCI being willing or able to convince their allies to lay down their arms are less

than slight. On its third day of deployment, on 26 May 2003, the joint operation met its first obstacle in Toulépleu, where Liberians prevented French access. In a briefing to the Monitoring Committee, Lieutenant-Colonel Christian Annette, commander of the French Legionaries in the operation, declared that hundreds of FANCI and many Liberians had blocked them, adding that "some of them still think that they're going to be able to attack Danané, [70 km. north] and the FANCI hierarchy don't control them".¹⁶¹ In response, a FANCI spokesman, Aka N'goran, claimed that it was "the population" that prevented access, and the Liberians had already left.¹⁶² According to humanitarian workers however, in mid-July, a month and a half after the beginning of the pacification operation, many Liberians were still based in Toulépleu.¹⁶³ During ICG's mission to the west in November 2003, it became clear that Liberian fighters were still present in Niela camp, the only place in the "secure zone" to which the French do not have access, and that towns like Guiglo are not safe at night because of Liberian fighters. Toulépleu is still an important MODEL base. Violence by Guéré militias is ongoing.

The joint operation in the west and its preparation of DR throughout the summer via the French mediation had begun to break the ice between the FANCI hierarchy and the MPCCI military leaders, notably Michel Gueu, Tuo Fozié, and Colonel Soumaïla Bakayoko, named "chief of army staff" for the *Forces Nouvelles* in place of Michel Gueu on 8 June 2003.¹⁶⁴ President Eyadéma had invited these leaders to Kara during Gbagbo's meeting with Taylor on 26 April, and according to diplomats, the meeting between Gbagbo and the military went well.¹⁶⁵ Gbagbo clearly has the impression that he can reach an arrangement with these military leaders; the real thorns in his side appear to be Soro and especially Dacoury-Tabley, as well as those commanders faithful to IB. However, these are the most moderate of the rebellion's military. There is not yet unanimity

¹⁵⁸ Security Council Resolution 1464, February 4 2003, S/RES/1464(2003), article 9.

¹⁵⁹ "La zone de confiance respectée à 95% (militaires français)", Agence France-Presse, 25 June 2003.

¹⁶⁰ ICG interviews, Paris, June 2003.

¹⁶¹ "Les forces françaises et ouest-africaines empêchées d'accéder à Toulépleu (ouest)", Agence France-Presse, 26 May 2003.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ ICG interviews, July 2003.

¹⁶⁴ "Restructuration des Forces Nouvelles: le Colonel Soumaïla Bakayoko devient chef de l'état major," *Fraternité Matin*, 12 June 2003.

¹⁶⁵ ICG interviews, Paris, May 2003.

among commanders about the peace accords and the reconciliation government. Moreover, by November, there were alarming indications that military authority among the *Forces Nouvelles* was disintegrating, with the growth of warlordism. The struggle for power between Soro and IB has badly weakened the *Forces Nouvelles*, and pushed Soro to take an increasingly hardline position, in order to regain legitimacy in the eyes of the troops.

The FANCI are as divided as ever. The leaders of the rebellion continue to be informed of Gbagbo's military plans and armament via inside contacts. Since the December 1999 coup, the military hierarchy has suffered from lack of authority over the troops. At the same time, senior officers have been suspected of pursuing their own agendas. In January 2002, Army Chief of Staff General Mathias Doué was presented by press close to Gbagbo as being behind a plot to oust the president, and many felt that the night-time attack by gendarmes on his house on 30 May 2003 was a warning from FPI hawks. Others saw the hand of General Ouassenan Koné, an ex-gendarme, whose nomination to be minister of defence Doué opposed.

In March, the gendarmerie was close to mutiny at the minister's unwillingness to pay war bonuses. In ICG interviews with FANCI officers and soldiers based in the west in November 2003, dissatisfaction with Gbagbo's handling of the crisis was palpable, not least because the majority of soldiers and gendarmes have failed to receive their "war bonuses".¹⁶⁶ Western military officials are worried about growing tensions in the army: it appears possible that, pushed by the radical ex-Minister of Defence (also a relative of Gbagbo), Bertin Kadet, a section of the army may unilaterally start up hostilities.¹⁶⁷ The FANCI are split into those radicals who feel that Gbagbo has made too many concessions and the only way out is to

"finish" with him and go to war, and those who want to be rid of Gbagbo because they feel that his resistance to the peace accords has brought the country to the brink of war again. They don't want to "die for nothing". These are all signs that the armed forces are not solidly behind Gbagbo and may be less or more opposed to the peace accords than the president who commands them.

MINUCI, the French and MICECI need to develop a strategy for disengagement, disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation of foreign fighters. The task will be delicate enough in the north, where many young fighters can be expected to resist giving up what is a better deal than they are likely to get under any reintegration program. But it is likely to pose as many problems in the loyalist zones. The FPI and its supporters are insisting that rebel forces be disarmed before they take any further decisions about the accords.

Mamadou Koulibaly said the National Assembly would vote no new laws until this was done. Gbagbo has brought some 6,000 youths into his armed forces, 4,000 of whom have already been officially taken into FANCI. If the urban militias in Abidjan and other southern towns are included, the numbers reach at least 12,000. Incorporation of the young recruits, north and south, into the army must be avoided at all costs. The Monitoring Committee and MINUCI will need to take a stronger stand against the political obstacles posed by Gbagbo and ultimatums of his party and supporters. The stability of the country depends on getting this process right.

¹⁶⁶ The new Defense Minister, René Amani has requested an inquiry into the whereabouts of the 50 billion FCFA of extra-budgetary funds given to support the war effort. (30 billion for "war bonuses" and 20 billion for troop support). His initial impression of the state of the army in late September was one of dismay.

¹⁶⁷ ICG interviews, Abidjan, November 2003. According to this account, ex-defense minister Bertin Kadet has been instrumental in radicalising not only the troops but also the populations of the centre west, intervening directly in appointments, promotions, and giving direct orders to troops, by-passing the Chief of Army Staff.

VI. THE POLITICS OF PATRIOTISM AND RECONCILIATION

On 4 July 2003, FANCI and the *Forces Nouvelles* surprised the politicians by announcing the official end of the war, handing over a symbolic weapon and a document signed by both camps declaring their engagement in implementing the peace accords. On 17 July, the political signatories of Marcoussis, with the exception of the FPI, met in Bouaké to denounce what they termed obstacles created by the President and the FPI and the inadequacy of measures taken by Gbagbo to implement the peace accords. Notably, the parties demanded the delegation of full executive powers to Seydou Diarra as stipulated by the accords. Gbagbo had originally nominated Diarra for six months renewable, rather than until the 2005 elections as stipulated by the accords. On the same occasion, FANCI and the *Forces Nouvelles* created a joint army headquarters, an implicit warning to those who still wanted to derail the reconciliation process.

In the two months between the signing of a new ceasefire on 3 May and the agreement between FANCI and the *Forces Nouvelles*, Gbagbo took some steps designed to show his willingness to play the reconciliation game, even if they were far from adequate. Taking even Prime Minister Diarra and the reconciliation government by surprise, his declaration on 1 May that "the war is over", lifting the curfew and declaring MPCCI territory no longer war zones, and above all his agreement to a four-party operation in the west, seemed to be steps in the right direction. Actions of the reconciliation government to normalise the situation and force hardliners such as Mamadou Koulibaly and Simone Gbagbo to align themselves with the accords have gone in the same direction and must be seen as having Gbagbo's consent.¹⁶⁸ However, these must be seen as minor concessions in a game in which Gbagbo holds most of the cards. The withdrawal from the government of former rebel ministers in protest against Gbagbo's unilateral choice of defence and interior ministers as well as against his

refusal to allow other ministers a free hand in running their portfolios, bodes ill for the peace process.

Until September 2003, the government was still incomplete. The "consensual" candidate chosen by all the parties apart from the FPI to take the defence portfolio, retired General Ouassenan Koné, the PDCI-RDA parliamentary group leader, was refused by Gbagbo, who feared he could not control him. On 13 September, Gbagbo made his own nominations: René Amani (Defence) and Martin Bléou (Interior).

Actual implementation of the accords has hardly begun. The need to focus on internal political problems carries dangers, including of new violence. The political parties' interest in the 2005 elections and the government's task of advancing reconciliation do not necessarily coincide. What the parties do over the next months will depend on what they consider to be a winning electoral strategy. The real political battle will not be over the issues raised in the accords, but over electoral calculations that could easily give rise to internal power struggles, alliances and defections. In a statement on 4 August 2003, UN Secretary General Annan said there were disturbing signs that both sides were rearming. There were also many signs of tension between Gbagbo and his prime minister. The withdrawal of ministers from the government in September suggests that, unless an early political initiative can repair the damage, the peace process may be fatally damaged.

A. THE PEACE ACCORDS

Underlying the failure of the formal aspects of the peace accords has been a prolonged refusal to take the measures essential to restoring trust among Ivoirians. The accords are not a panacea for resolving Côte d'Ivoire's problems. Re-establishment of state authority, disarming and demobilising fighters, securing borders and reorganising the security sector are challenging enough but the object of a growing consensus. However, the accords also involve highly political decisions. They should be considered the framework within which a debate can be conducted concerning a new social contract among Ivoirians and between Ivoirians and immigrants. The accords set the tone, implying rejection of narrowly nationalist positions and offering a structure for determining procedures and reaching compromises. The danger now is that, with the accords in tatters,

¹⁶⁸ The government actions include the reopening of the border with Burkina Faso, the negotiation of an economic corridor and the reopening of the border with Mali, the removal of MPCCI road-blocks within Bouaké, the holding of the Ministers' Council in Bouaké on 22 May 2003, inter-ministerial talks to elaborate legislation, decrees and programs required by the accords, and preparation of a law offering amnesty to soldiers for attacks on state security.

the momentum of violence will resume. And yet the heart of the Ivorian problem concerns how Ivorians of different origin, as well as foreigners living on Ivorian territory, are to live together.

Among the most politicised propositions in the accords are the suspension and revision of the current national identity operation, the reorganisation and re-composition of the Independent Electoral Commission, constitutional changes concerning conditions of eligibility to the presidency, the cancellation of residents' cards and decisions on naturalisation of immigrants, amendment of the rural land laws, and inquiries into human rights abuses. Despite signing the accords, Gbagbo and the forces and organisations supporting him clearly remain opposed to the majority of these measures. They have followed a policy of deliberate obstruction, taking the form of cycles of provocation followed by appeasement when the international community steps up the pressure. While Gbagbo may claim he is willing to sign new legislation on nationality, constitutional revision and rural land ownership, he knows that these texts will more than likely fail to pass with the required two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. Playing for time, aware that the *Forces Nouvelles* have no intention of disarming without the assurance that the major aspects of the accords will be implemented, he can now place the future of the accords in the hands of the "people" (even though the RDR is not represented in the National Assembly), thus washing his hands of resulting stalemate.

Apart from the perception of many FPI supporters that the accords are an assault on Ivorian sovereignty and privilege foreigners, they are limited by the fact that they propose legalistic solutions that may not always reflect the nuances of the underlying political problems. Peace agreements may not be able to do more, but the danger lies in how the sketched framework may find its actual expression in the political debate, and the extent to which the political class will be willing and able to define a new social contract that recognises the ties historically linking the north and south. For example, rural land ownership is so complex that simply revising current legislation will not resolve problems which serve as the main rallying point for those seeking to promote an anti-foreigner or anti-outsider ideology.

With the notable exception of clauses in the constitution on presidential eligibility, the problem

is not so much legislation as its application, sacrificed to political interest and subject to authoritarian power since independence. Using principles of law and democratic procedure for political expediency is a favourite Gbagbo strategy. Pretending that the executive, legislative and judiciary powers are separate and using the law as a screen, Gbagbo has been able to wash his hands of contentious issues such as Ouattara's nationality, the indictment of soldiers under Gueï, and the trial of gendarmes implicated in the Youpougon massacre, to name but a few. His proclaimed attachment to the constitution, whose same exclusive terms he denounced in 1995 as being "racist, xenophobic and dangerous", demonstrates his political cynicism. Abolishing residents' cards might give policemen less of a pretext for abusing northerners and foreigners, but it would not address the problem of the political context in which these practices are tolerated, if not encouraged.

In this sense, there is every reason to fear that the accords are now a dead letter, not least because they have failed to provoke a debate in which political elites take a new message to their party bases and electorates. This is the true work of national reconciliation, and the context of political competition in the face of upcoming elections will not favour the renewal of bonds within a torn society. Aside from internal party divisions, which still follow a patron-client logic, the north-south division between indigenous populations and "foreigners" has been exacerbated by the war. This reality may paradoxically undermine the *Forces Nouvelles'* political program more than any Gbagbo strategy. Even if the peace accords are revived, there is a strong possibility that political elites from all sides may make mutually satisfactory arrangements among themselves, allowing some approximate form of the accords to be applied, while continuing to project divisive political messages to their supporters, a situation that has all the ingredients of a failed reconciliation.

B. PARTY STRATEGIES

While a number of small parties continue to play a role in the National Assembly and public opinion, particularly since their participation at Marcoussis, divisions around the accords and the presidential elections in 2005 separate the three main parties, the PDCI-RDA, the FPI and the RDR. The UDPCI, facing extreme difficulties following the death of

its leader, General Robert Gueï, and the inter-ethnic conflict raging in its regional base, will play a secondary role. The remaining three political heavyweights, Gbagbo, Bédié, and Ouattara, all were active in creating Côte d'Ivoire's crisis. It is unrealistic to hope that they will realise no one of them can be a President for "all Ivorians" and stay out of the 2005 presidential race. The hope has to be that their overweening ambitions do not sabotage peace entirely.

1. The FPI

While Gbagbo remains opposed to many points of the accord, he clearly has every interest in some sort of process of national reconciliation. His party is increasingly isolated, and he has good reasons to play the reconciliation card. He will be finished politically if he is seen as being responsible for failure of the peace process. Throughout mid-2003 he was in a good position, scoring points with the international community and keeping control of decisions and the pace of developments. However, his party is still in a strongly oppositional posture. His strategy appears to be to let the parties battle it out, while staying above the fray. Ominously, however, he has also been building up his military strength.

Having been peremptorily summoned by Mamadou Koulibaly to present his program for implementation of the accords to the National Assembly, Seydou Diarra spoke to the deputies on 28 May 2003, detailing the ten points of the accords with a time-table and budget. He was applauded by the majority, but the FPI positioned itself as the spoiler through the absence of Koulibaly and the interventions of Simone Gbagbo. She claimed not only that the accords had legitimated an armed rebellion, but also that they were inapplicable, not least because they "largely favoured foreigners", "transforming Côte d'Ivoire into an ECOWAS state, in which Ivorians won't even have the right to their own specificity, to organise their sovereignty, or, to borrow a term from other authors, their *ivoirité*".¹⁶⁹ On 9 June, Mamadou Koulibaly called on Ivorians to undertake "civil disobedience" against *Forces Nouvelles* ministers, adding that "France continues its war on Côte d'Ivoire".¹⁷⁰ On 27 June, 100

"young patriots" took him at his word, attacking the television station (RTI). Guillaume Soro, the minister of communications, had to be rescued by the Anti-Riot Brigade.

The battle lines are clear: the FPI, true to its concept of nationalism, has chosen the political strategy of presenting the accords, as they presented the rebellion and the RDR, as an affair of foreigners trying to get their hands on the country and its wealth. This has considerable support among southerners, youth in particular, and a section of the PDCI-RDA.

The FPI's opposition to the peace accords must also be understood in terms of the electoral danger posed by their provision for naturalising immigrants born in the country before 1972, or at least 1960, and by extension, their children. Not only might this tip the electoral balance in favour of other parties, notably the RDR, but it could also undercut FPI promises to its south-western constituency still hoping to recover land following a campaign of identifying "genuine" citizens and application of the 1998 rural land tenure laws.

Ivorian observers have recently noted a "cacophony" of voices within the FPI and its supporters.¹⁷¹ Gbagbo and his ex-prime minister, Affi N'Guessan, generally appear resigned to the accords, engaged in reconciliation, and working with the French. The president's wife, the president of the National Assembly, the state and party press, and others continue to speak against the *Forces Nouvelles*, the French and the accords alike. This should not necessarily be seen as the sign that Gbagbo is being isolated by his hawks, although those close to both Mamadou Koulibaly and Simone Gbagbo do emphasise their relative independence.¹⁷² During the first few months of the crisis, diplomats and other observers wondered, in view of the government's violent and authoritarian reaction, if Gbagbo had not been dominated by hawkish counsellors. Today, few feel that Gbagbo is a victim of his entourage, but rather that he continues to make the decisions.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ See "De la social-démocratie à l'ultra-nationalisme, le FPI bascule", *24 Heures*, 3 June 2003.

¹⁷⁰ "Le président de l'Assemblée Nationale fait de la résistance", Agence France-Presse, 11 June 2003.

¹⁷¹ Editorial by Venance Konan "Cacophonie", *Fraternité Matin*, 3 June 2003.

¹⁷² ICG interviews with FPI members, Abidjan, March 2003.

¹⁷³ ICG interviews with Western diplomats, Abidjan and Paris, March and May 2003.

It is unlikely that the hard line of key figures such as Simone Gbagbo contradicts their chief. Rather, Gbagbo is keeping his options open. Playing the game of president of the republic rather than president of the FPI, he avoids direct confrontation with the French, the Monitoring Committee and the prime minister and reaps the benefits of a peacemaker, while letting his "alter egos" take positions he is not willing to renounce. The French want to work with Gbagbo – should anything happen to him, they would face the prospect of seeing him replaced under the constitution by Mamadou Koulibaly.

The FPI has been able to undermine the accords through the key ministries it holds and within the National Assembly, where the other parties have difficulty reaching the two-thirds majority required to pass laws. Gbagbo and his party also have other political cards. A tactic of exploiting existing divisions within the major political parties and in some cases pay-rolling dissenters may bear fruit. Over the past several months, four new political parties have appeared. It is too early to say whether they will stay the course, but all of them appear to have affinities with the FPI program.

Another FPI advantage is the mobilisation it has achieved of youth and various civil society organisations. It is the only party to have given its young members their head, all the while manipulating them, and to have exploited its connections with civil society organisations forged in its long years in the opposition. However, these supporters represent something of a double-edged sword. The mass marches of the first months of the crisis and the increasingly violent and extremist positions that came out of them have alienated other parties and exasperated large sections of the southern population, not to speak of the reaction of *Forces Nouvelles* and RDR supporters. For now, the leader of the Alliance of Young Patriots, Charles Blé Goudé, is keeping things under control, even if the meetings continue to present the ultra-nationalist, anti-French and anti-reconciliation line. Reportedly ambitious and at times paid as much as \$80,000 per month by the presidency,¹⁷⁴ he has every reason to remain his master's voice. However, two other ex-FESCI leaders who head substantial urban militias, Eugène Djué and Charles

Groguhet,¹⁷⁵ are as outspoken and extremist and apparently less well controlled by Gbagbo. While promises of imminent war and vague threats that Gbagbo is too soft¹⁷⁶ may be tactical, security officers allege that both have close relations with Koulibaly and Simone Gbagbo, whom certain diplomatic sources accuse of providing financial support for the Groguhet militia, the *Groupement Patriotique pour la Paix* (GPP).¹⁷⁷

Yet another card is FPI control over the state media, especially television and radio, even though Guillaume Soro is communications minister.¹⁷⁸ While the worst hate media offenders are perhaps the private newspapers close to the FPI, some state television and radio programs, including news broadcasts, are also guilty of inciting ethnic hatred and violence, and infinitely more dangerous given their wide audience.¹⁷⁹ The Marcoussis accords address hate media but the question goes well beyond simple legislation.

¹⁷⁵ Groguhet has been removed from the leadership of the GPP, largely because of infighting and likely also because of his provocative statements to the press.

¹⁷⁶ "Charles Groguhet (leader du GPP) parle: Je n'ai jamais été arrêté. Nous déclarons la guerre au MPC. Le GPP a des armes pour tuer la rébellion. Les soldats du GPP doivent être intégrés dans l'armée régulière. Nous sommes en contact avec des autorités militaires. Gbagbo ne peut pas nous empêcher de faire la guerre", *Soir Info*, 6 March 2003.

¹⁷⁷ ICG interviews, Abidjan, March, May, 2003.

¹⁷⁸ In the weeks following the September 2002 attacks, radio and television were purged of "pro-RDR" members, or those northerners suspected of being so. Following the attack against Soro at the RTI, its director, Georges Aboké, was removed from his functions. However, following legal proceedings, Gbagbo managed to have him reinstated. It was only following severe French pressure and promises concerning a military deployment to the north (not a reconquest, but rather a military presence) that Gbagbo finally agreed to sign a decree nominating a director acceptable to Soro Guillaume.

¹⁷⁹ During the program "On est ensemble" (We are Together) broadcast at the end of May 2003 on national television, Hanny Tchelly, well-known for her xenophobic positions, invited children to express themselves against the rebellion. An eleven-year-old said: "We've got to kick all the foreigners out. When these immigrants will have children, they'll want to be president, and when people will refuse, then they'll make war on us". "Emmission 'On est ensemble' – Hanny Tchelly joue avec le feu", *Le Patriote*, 3 June 2003.

¹⁷⁴ George Packer, 'Gangsta War', *The New Yorker*, 3 November 2003, pp.68-77.

2. The PDCI-RDA

Still suffering from the 1999 coup and internally divided, this 50-year-old party was carefully silent during the first months of the crisis. Until Marcoussis, observers were not sure which way it would lean. Since early March 2003, however, it has begun to awake from its lethargy. Following well publicised accusations that Bédié had financed MPIGO, it began to take strong positions against Gbagbo and the FPI. As early as December 2002, the elected officials from the centre of the country, largely PDCI-RDA, expressed their anger with Gbagbo for having left Bouaké in rebel hands, and for creating obstacles to humanitarian convoys. Party militants criticised the barons, especially the general secretary, Alphonse Djédjé Mady, for being too close to Gbagbo and putting ethnic ties over party responsibilities. The breaking point was Gbagbo's refusal of General Ouassenan Koné, PDCI-RDA parliamentary group leader, as defence minister.¹⁸⁰ On 6 May 2003, the PDCI-RDA organised a meeting of the parties present at Marcoussis to develop a common position on the implementation and the nomination of the missing ministers. The result was a document signed by all but the FPI in which the President was given until 22 May to name the ministers and begin implementation.¹⁸¹

The FPI reaction was virulent. Its youth supporters attacked the party's offices, and the PDCI-RDA was treated in the press as yet another secret godfather of the rebellion. The party appears to have realised that the 2005 campaign is already underway and has begun to mobilise its youth. One longstanding problem has been its unwillingness to democratise internally. It remains controlled by aged barons, leading to frustration among young people and militants. The first youth congress in twelve years was held during the last week of May, and the new leader, Kouadio Konan Bertin (KKB), has vowed to take the street back from the FPI. Echoing positions of his elders in the National Assembly, KKB has violently criticised the FPI and its young patriots, declaring a return to

Houphouëtism and evoking a possible youth alliance with the UDPCI and the RDR. It will not be easy, however, for the PDCI-RDA to regroup the various aspects of Houphouëtism with those parties, even if those one-time opponents have been weakened. The PDCI-RDA may prove a paper tiger when it goes up against the FPI. Its veiled threats to leave the National Assembly are unlikely to be carried out.

However, its current position is a definite reversal for the PDCI-RDA in the light of its recent history. The Bédié years of *ivoirité* and the PDCI-RDA collaboration with the Gbagbo government make it difficult for the party now to rediscover Houphouëtism, especially as Bédié stubbornly refuses to drop *ivoirité*. Clearly he is the main obstacle in the electoral strategy. If Bédié manages to become the PDCI-RDA candidate in 2005, the FPI has every chance of winning. If the party succeeds in its apparent attempt to renew the "community of destiny" forged by Houphouët between north and south and finds a candidate able to embody this, it may well lose some "*ivoiritaires*", but is likely to win back many former supporters.

One hopeful is Charles Konan Banny, a technocrat, head of the Banque centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO) and not politically compromised, whose elder brother Jean is a faithful and still influential Houphouëtist. Emile Constant Bombet is also in the running but has to overcome the stigma of his years in the Bédié government. Time will tell if the PDCI-RDA can restructure and democratise, overcome internal differences, let its youth finally have their say, and play the role for the first time in its existence of a real opposition party.

3. The RDR

The RDR and its leader have been the principal political victims of the war. The great majority of its leadership went into hiding or exile following the attempt to kill Ouattara on the morning after the September 2002 coup attempt and during the violent witch-hunt that followed. Widely accused of masterminding the coup by the FPI and its supporters, and of at least being complicit by more moderate sectors of the population, the RDR is faced with the daunting task of reorganising itself and its base. It may lose ground to the MPCCI if the latter manages to constitute itself as a political

¹⁸⁰ Proposed by Théodore Mel Eg, president of the UDCY, his candidature was accepted by nine of the fifteen members of the National Security Council, and nine of the ten signatories at Marcoussis.

¹⁸¹ As already discussed, Gbagbo nominated ministers only in September 2003 and then not in accord with agreed procedures.

party, since many of its hardliners have long criticised Ouattara for his authoritarian control over the party. While many appear to believe that Ouattara is manipulating Soro, numerous observers claim that the opposite is true. Soro is using Ouattara and his impressive connections to build his own political career.

Ouattara appears determined to run for the presidency in 2005, and his candidacy will inflame passions. It is extremely hard to envisage him as president of "all the Ivorians". The RDR's aim appears to be to prevent Gbagbo from being able to play the role of reconciler, which paradoxically places it in the position of dramatising the dangers and casting doubt on the process led by Diarra, trying to show that the truce is only an illusion, and the volcano may erupt at any minute. Ouattara has developed ties with Soro, and exercises control over some military leaders, such as Tuo Fozié. He is trying to use the *Forces Nouvelles* to guarantee the best possible position for the RDR in 2005, but he does not control them. Diplomats have been using Ouattara to try and mediate with Soro, and report that Ouattara feels that there is every chance the country may remain divided beyond 2005. As he points out, Marcoussis is at an impasse because it involves a catch-22: the respect for the constitution and its revision. The central texts will not likely pass the National Assembly, and even if they do, according to the constitution, they cannot be implemented while the country is divided. Without trust of both sides, disarmament will not begin.¹⁸² While Ouattara and members of his party do not appear to harbour many illusions about Ouattara's own chances for 2005, they all realise that should relatively free and fair elections occur, Ouattara will be in the position to decide who wins.

4. The Forces Nouvelles

While they are not yet organised as a political party, there is a strong chance that the political leaders of the *Forces Nouvelles*, Guillaume Soro and Louis Dacoury-Tabley, have ambitions, perhaps even for 2005. Soro has been untiringly making contacts, and as minister of state and information has taken a huge step forward from his student militant days. Dacoury-Tabley, whom Gbagbo refused to have in the government, has

been nominated as a counsellor to Seydou Diarra. The danger for the *Forces Nouvelles* is, of course, the passage from the armed struggle to politics. What sort of influence over Gbagbo will Soro have without his armed forces? And will these forces be willing to be sacrificed to his political ambition? Nothing is less sure.

The hold political leaders have over troops on the ground is increasingly uncertain. Many rebel soldiers feel they have nothing more to lose, and while they consider the Marcoussis accords a political victory for their side, they are highly suspicious of Gbagbo and other politicians. MPCCI local commanders did not fight so that some of their comrades could get ministerial posts. Along with the split between pro-Soro and pro-IB troops is the split between the negotiators and the warmongers. It is not inconceivable that Soro attempts to make his peace with IB, realising that without support from commanders on the ground, he can't hold his weight politically. In any case, the split is less and less between military and politicians, and increasingly between radicals and moderates. The major problem facing the *Forces Nouvelles* is indiscipline and growing warlordism, which clashes sharply with attempts to give the *Forces Nouvelles* a more acceptable political face.

C. THE RISK OF NEW WAR

The joint declaration by the *Forces Nouvelles* and FANCI on 4 July¹⁸³ and the entente among troops can be read as a warning to extremist politicians in the two camps. There is a good chance that behind this warning lies the possibility of a coup d'état. Should the politicians, in whom neither FANCI nor the *Forces Nouvelles* has the slightest confidence, continue to play partisan politics or should a part of the military on either side feel that the reconciliation process gives it a bad deal, there is every reason to fear a palace coup. General Doué's recent declarations, as well as recent attacks against

¹⁸² ICG interviews with Western diplomats, Abidjan, November, 2003.

¹⁸³ "Déclaration conjointe des FANCI et des Forces Nouvelles pour l'arrêt total de la guerre: Les forces combattants déclarent la fin de la guerre", *Le Nouveau Réveil*, 4 July 2003. Press reports claim that Gbagbo was taken by surprise and forced to accept a fait accompli. See "Un membre du MPCCI révèle: Comment les FANCI et nous avons préparé la déclaration. Comment Gbagbo a été mis devant le fait accompli", *L'Inter*, July 10, 2003.

Gbagbo from his own camp,¹⁸⁴ coupled with growing dissatisfaction amongst the FANCI, as well as the young recruits make this possibility increasingly plausible.

The political war is far from over, with Gbagbo facing off against Soro and Dacoury-Tabley, but also the RDR. Given the highly politicised nature of the armed forces on both sides, this political war carries a danger of new hostilities. The situation of neither peace nor war may be a game of bluff, with neither side wanting to be seen as derailing the reconciliation train, but it is likely that if not Gbagbo, then at least among his die-hard supporters and certain hardliners in the *Forces Nouvelles* there are individuals who would very much like to see an "incident" provoke new fighting. The attack on Soro at the RTI on 27 June was not spontaneous, although it is not known who the organiser was or who was responsible for letting the crowd of "young patriots" into the well-guarded enclosure. Until Soro calmed his troops, they were on the verge of starting fresh hostilities. This sort of provocation, in which it is difficult, if not impossible, to locate the direct responsibility of political leaders, is one of the greatest risks facing the reconciliation process at this stage.

A *Forces Nouvelles* spokesman claimed in November that Soro had narrowly escaped an assassination attempt, stating that Gbagbo had been infiltrating men with the intention of having Soro killed, but making it appear to be the work of IB's men. In response, a wave of arrests within the ranks of *Forces Nouvelles* has begun. Likewise, the arrest of IB in Paris provided the occasion for Gbagbo to act against political opponents whom he claimed to be part of the plot on his life. Gbagbo's manipulation of the French government, not least by means of the anti-French activities of the 'young patriots' in Abidjan, has put France in a position where it must guard against being used to support or even participate in an attempt by Gbagbo to reconquer the north by force.

Anti-Gbagbo forces continue to draw attention to his arms purchases, claiming they are evidence of his intention to continue the war after sabotaging reconciliation. Gbagbo has bought some U.S.\$150 million of arms since March 2003 according to World Bank sources, purchases that do not

correspond to the logic of reconciliation. Cocoa prices having been high, due in part to the conflict, and the government has devoted much of the windfall to weapons and recruitment of fighters.¹⁸⁵ The purchase of three MI-24 helicopter gun ships in October 2002, followed by four Puma helicopters,¹⁸⁶ and, at the end of April 2003, two more MI-24s, two Russian-made MIG-23 bombers and two Sukhoi fighter planes makes one question Gbagbo's intentions.¹⁸⁷

This has greatly annoyed Western diplomats and military, who see in this program of acquiring costly weapons poorly adapted to the conflict the potential foundering of the fragile peace process.¹⁸⁸ Gbagbo claimed the purchases are meant to dissuade future attacks, and Diarra somewhat lamely added that since the armed forces would merge, the arms were for everyone. Part of their purpose, however, is clearly to step up pressure on the rebels and send a warning to troublesome neighbours. The bottom line in understanding

¹⁸⁵ In early May 2003, ex-Minister of Defence Kadet Bertin, accompanied by Pasteur Koré Moïse, went to Ukraine to negotiate new arms purchases. Bertin has recently been named Special Military Counselor to the President, for the Acquisition of Material.

¹⁸⁶ "Deux hélicoptères Puma roumains pour le président ivoirien", Agence France-Presse, 15 May 2003. The contract for the four Pumas, two of which have been delivered and two of which are expected before the end of 2003, was worth U.S.\$12 million.

¹⁸⁷ ICG interviews with Western officials, April 2003. Ivorian press reports claim that Gbagbo has bought two British made "Strikemaster" planes designed for ground combat, delivered via Conakry. *La Lettre du Continent* of 15 May 2003 repeats this, as does *The Observer* "UK fighter jets sold into Ivorian war zone" 29 June 2003.

¹⁸⁸ According to *la Lettre du Continent*, op. cit., supported by Western military sources, apart from fighter aircraft, recent purchase orders include: ten light tanks type BMP-1 and BMP-2, ten heavy tanks type T-55, 300 anti-tank missiles (Konkurs and Komet), 30,000 land-air rockets C-5KO, C-5KO, five Howitzers 2C1 122 mm of Chinese origin with about 5,000 shells, and 30 canons 20 and 23 mm type ZU-32/2. Also, via Israeli and Eastern European intermediaries: 10,000 Kalashnikovs with 36 million rounds, ten light Negev machine guns, 3,800 RPG-7 rocket launchers with 42,000 rockets, 33,000 40 mm grenades for GP-25, 43,000 hand grenades, 100 heavy machine guns calibre 12,7 mm, 160 mortars of various calibres, several SATCP missile launchers type SA-7 and 330 night vision systems. And from China, 21,000 assault rifles type 56-1 (24 million rounds), 5,000 machine guns 56-2 with ten million rounds, 200 Dragunov precision rifles, 50 canons calibre 20 mm, ten canons 90 mm, 200 troop transport trucks and transmission equipment.

¹⁸⁴ See "Gbagbo capitule devant la rébellion" in *Le Temps* 17 October, 2003.

Gbagbo's strategy is his determination to hold onto power. Control of the defence ministry, arms, mercenaries and recruits bolsters his position both for negotiation and the eventuality of a return to armed conflict.

An obvious problem with these arms purchases is the strain they put on the budget. The World Bank is clearly alarmed and has also voiced concern over the lack of accounting for cocoa revenues over the past months.¹⁸⁹

The finance minister claimed in May 2003 that the entire war effort had cost 100 billion FCFA (U.S.\$177 million) but this amount is clearly far too low. Fifty billion FCFA of extra-budgetary funds were accorded for war bonuses and troop support alone, even if the new Minister of Defence is finding it difficult to trace the whereabouts of these funds. In January, an evaluation by the European Union expressed concern that the government would have difficulty meeting current expenses and paying salaries. The finance minister has not provided a clear indication of public finances, but the question will be key to Gbagbo's ability to control the political situation. The government is keeping its head above the political water through its distribution of funds to clients, supporters and potential allies. If Gbagbo wants to run the reconciliation process on his terms, this is likely to be very costly. When the finance minister, Brouhan Brouabré (FPI), presented the budget to the National Assembly on 17 June, PDCI-RDA deputies protested the increase of the President's Sovereignty Fund to 23 billion FCFA (U.S.\$42 million), only slightly less than that accorded to Agriculture, and nine billion more than under Bédié.

Apart from the dangers the incapacity to meet current expenses will pose on the social front, Gbagbo cannot afford to lose clients and potential allies. A cash-flow crisis would be followed by desertions, which might put his back against the wall. However, this scenario is unlikely as donors would not allow the government to fall over an inability to pay salaries. But donors need to target and condition aid. The French appear to be clear on this; they are not prepared to restart their extensive development program in the near future. At least 250 development personnel have been sent home and will not be replaced in 2004. As a diplomat

noted, "if President Gbagbo can buy MIG-23s, then he can pay for school books and chairs".¹⁹⁰

The last and most ominous cloud on the horizon is represented by the urban militias headed by "young patriots",¹⁹¹ in particular those co-ordinated by ex-FESCI leaders Djué and Groguhet. Since March 2003, these groups have been openly recruiting and training in Youpougon, but were formed earlier. Djué said in April 2003 that he had 55,000 young patriots in self-defence units throughout Abidjan and other towns and cities and that "we've been ready for the past four months. We have the same military-civilian capacity to do harm as the rebellion".¹⁹² Charles Groguhet's more radical *Groupement Patriotique pour la Paix* (GPP) is organised into companies of 500 to 700 head-shaved youths, each group with its own distinctive t-shirt and name. Its numbers have been estimated in Abidjan at around 6,000. Associated groups are also present elsewhere in the south, notably Bonoua, home of Simone Gbagbo, Agboville, and Bassam. Clearly, significant funds have been invested in recruitment and upkeep. Djué and Groguhet are by no means isolated examples; press investigations claim that at least twenty new militias have sprung up in Abidjan and southern towns.¹⁹³ Although steps were taken in October 2003 to rein in the militias, these were not followed up by concrete actions, and those arrested

¹⁹⁰ ICG interview with diplomat, Abidjan, May 2003.

¹⁹¹ See Yacouba Konaté, "Les enfants de la balle: de la FESCI aux mouvement de patriotes", *Politique Africaine* N°89, March 2003.

¹⁹² "La multiplication des milices patriotiques inquiète le gouvernement ivoirien" Agence France-Presse, 27 April 2003.

¹⁹³ In its edition of 5 June 2003, the government newspaper *Fraternité Matin* identified the following 23 militias: Mouvement du Parlement en action (MPA), Le Front de libération d'Eburnie (FLE), Le Front de libération totale de Côte d'Ivoire (FLTIC), Le Groupement des patriotes pour les actions concrètes (GPACCI), Les Volontaires pour la sécurité et la défense, Les Volontaires pour la sécurité, Les Enfants de la paix pour la patrie (EPP), Les Guerriers du 19 septembre, Les Pacifics ninja (PN), Les Tontons républicains (TR), Les Non alignés (AL), Le Groupement des patriotes non violents (GPN), Les Amis de la République (AR), Harkis Côte d'Ivoire (HCI), Le Rassemblement des sentinelles de la patrie (RASP), Le Mouvement des patriotes indépendants, FLIC-FLAC CI, Mouvement indépendant du 24 septembre (MI-24), Rassemblement des patriotes pacifiques (RPP), Rassemblement des patriotes pour la résistance (RPR), Mouvement des patriotes pour la paix (MPP), Groupement des soldats pour la paix (GSP), and Volontaires pour la sécurité totale (VST).

¹⁸⁹ ICG interviews, Accra, May 2003.

were released.¹⁹⁴ Martin Bléou, the new minister of interior has no means of standing up to Gbagbo, and may not have the inclination, so such measures cannot be considered an attempt to tackle the problem.

ICG was informed by diplomatic and security sources in March 2003 that as early as January, 3,000 automatic weapons were removed from a shipment of 30,000 destined for the west and were cached in Abidjan neighbourhoods for the use of pro-Gbagbo militias.¹⁹⁵ French forces deployed in Abidjan following the anti-French riots failed to locate them. ICG interviews in March and May confirmed the continued arrival of arms destined for use by militias and the existence of caches. According to Western security officials, recruitment for urban militias was stepped up from January onwards, with potential members being sought in private security companies such as Wackenhut, as well as karate clubs and gyms in Abidjan neighbourhoods like Koumassi and Youpougon. Intelligence sources have indicated to ICG the complicity of both Simone Gbagbo and Mamadou Koulibaly in their organisation. Western security officers even allege that some 200 children between thirteen and sixteen were being trained in riot techniques, some at the Naval Base in Abidjan and at least in part by elements from the elite Anti-Riot police (BAE).¹⁹⁶

Local press claims that two flights arrived in May, one with 12-gauge shotguns, and the other with shot rounds, and were unloaded by army personnel have not been confirmed; however, when the police raided Groguhet's home, his body guards had sawn-off 12-gauge shotguns. Other youth organisations have well-armed civilian bodyguards, whose weapons are the same model as those used by the Presidential Guard. Gbagbo, who met with the leaders of these militias on 18 May, claimed that police enquiries had shown that despite their leaders'

assertions, they were not armed. Declaring that the young people were simply "running and doing exercises", he urged them to constitute themselves as legal organisations.¹⁹⁷

The most alarming aspect of these groups is not simply that they have access to arms and training but their declared intentions. Charles Groguhet claims to be heavily armed and supported by numerous military and political elites. In response to the meeting with Gbagbo, which he refused to attend, he gave an interview on 3 June to the Ivorian newspaper, the *Soir Info* and set out the GPP position on the accords and national reconciliation, while implicitly threatening Gbagbo:

National reconciliation is not going to happen with these divisive accords, you can count on me. All these RDR and MPCCI ministers who are around Gbagbo are looking to kill him to finally take power. We're going to liberate Côte d'Ivoire; we want to tear Côte d'Ivoire away from the sons of immigrants who want to take everything away from the Ivorians. We know that it's Alassane Dramane Ouattara, that son of immigrants, who opened the door of Côte d'Ivoire to his foreign brothers to invade us. [...] The GPP has relations with senior military officers, we confirm it. We will not allow our country, full of strong youths, to accept the new form of colonisation that France wants to impose on us. [...] We aren't fighting for a political party, even less for an individual, even if he is the president of the republic; we're fighting to clean Côte d'Ivoire of its sons of immigrants and their spokesman, Alassane Dramane Ouattara.

These statements may hide a call for a pay-off, especially as Groguhet claimed that "his" men expect to be integrated into FANCI. In a staged ceremony on 9 July, Groguhet handed over a Kalashnikov, noting that he was prepared to suspend hostilities for now but that his recruits were expecting to enter FANCI.¹⁹⁸ This symbolic disarmament may well be a game of bluff but it

¹⁹⁴ The GPP was disbanded, according to a decree signed by Gbagbo, on the grounds of document forgery - GPP members have identity cards that are practically indistinguishable from those used by the army. These militias have become veritable lawmakers in Abidjan neighbourhoods, taking over the role of police and municipal leaders, but with considerably more violence and discrimination.

¹⁹⁵ ICG interviews with Western security officers and diplomats, Abidjan, March 2003.

¹⁹⁶ ICG interviews with Western security officers, Abidjan, March 2003.

¹⁹⁷ "Laurent Gbagbo aux chefs des milices: "organisez-vous", *Le Patriote*, 19 May 2003. "Gbagbo masque les milices. Et pourtant, elles existent!", *24 Heures* 20 May 2003.

¹⁹⁸ See "Le GPP a déposé les armes hier", *L'Inter*, 10 July 2003.

helps reveal thinking among pro-Gbagbo youth. The militias, as well as the youths formally recruited in November 2002, are 90 per cent of southern origin. Observers allege that 80 per cent of GPP recruits are from Gbagbo's ethnic Bété group.¹⁹⁹ The reconciliation government has declared that the militias will be outlawed and disbanded, but few concrete steps have been taken to deal with this very dangerous problem. The French are in no position to take matters in hand. Both the PDCI-RDA and the RDR youth have declared that they will not be intimidated by the militias, and if necessary, will prepare their own response. The mobilised and radicalised youth may ultimately escape the control of their elders (or possibly be activated by them). If so, the consequences will be disastrous. Neither the French nor MICECI are in any position to control Abidjan or other southern cities if urban inter-ethnic violence breaks out. And while automatic weapons and shotguns may not be in the hands of every militia member, everybody has access to machetes. The several hundred thousand young northerners living in Abidjan know they have nothing more to lose, they have been ready and waiting for violence to befall them every day for the past year, captured in the chant heard following a pre-war political meeting: "Kill us, we are many".²⁰⁰

VII. CONCLUSION

After a year of civil war interspersed with precarious ceasefires, Côte d'Ivoire has still not embarked on national reconciliation. The crisis of the reconciliation government threatens to destroy the Linas-Marcoussis process, the only blueprint for peace that exists. The current equilibrium of neither peace nor war is fragile, and the risks are high. The international community has endorsed the peace accords but the implementation of core elements has yet to really begin.²⁰¹ The principal resisters – hardliners in President Gbagbo's FPI, his youth supporters as well as rebel leaders "left out" of the new government – can still mobilise support against the political process, and a fresh outbreak of hostilities is distinctly possible. The peace accords take positions on the internal political crisis, implicitly condemning the ultra nationalism of Gbagbo and his party. Yet at the same time, they have legitimated an armed rebellion while failing to address the regionalisation of the Ivorian conflict. The central challenge will be to arrive at a compromise between parties that still think like enemies.

International attention has been diverted but immediate steps are needed to reinforce the fragile national reconciliation process and prevent fresh fighting. In the report following its visit to Côte d'Ivoire and other West Africa countries, 26 June-5 July 2003, the Security Council urged the Ivorian political forces to implement the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra agreements, ensure complete disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration into society of fighters, appoint the ministers of defence and the interior, provide equal security for all members of the reconciliation government, dismantle all militias, stop use of mercenaries and the purchase of arms, and plan for free and fair elections in 2005.²⁰² Everything must be done to help ECOWAS play a more important role in winning the peace. It especially needs funding. France is not in a position to pressure the

¹⁹⁹ ICG interviews with Ivorian journalists, Abidjan, May 2003.

²⁰⁰ In French "Tuez nous, nous sommes beaucoup". See Yacouba Konaté "Les enfants de la balle" op.cit.

²⁰¹ In the report following its mission to the region, the Security Council noted the need to get President Gbagbo to commit to the key points in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. See "Report of the Security Council mission to West Africa, 26 June-5, July 2003", UN Document S/2003/688, para. 27, p. 6.

²⁰² Ibid., pp. 6-9, also "Les sept points de l'appel de l'ONU aux forces politiques", *Fraternité Matin*, 26 July 2003.

protagonists publicly, and needs more international support, particularly from the U.S. Experience has shown that multilateral pressure has been effective in Côte d'Ivoire but more of it will be needed with those on both sides who consider that the war is not yet over. The Monitoring Committee has been lacklustre in its approach and needs to take more decisive stands. MINUCI is too small to play the significant role required in disarmament and supervision of the accords. The Security Council should consider deploying a larger force throughout the country.

Charles Taylor was not West Africa's only pernicious meddler, and the problem has not ended with his exile from Liberia. The Security Council should warn the region's presidents strongly against further interference in their neighbours' affairs, particularly President Gbagbo from continued involvement with the MODEL group's efforts in Liberia, President Compaoré from his support of MPCI inside Côte d'Ivoire, and President Conté from his backing of LURD in Liberia. There must be a clear warning at the same time to all the domestic players against victimising Burkinabé and Liberian citizens in Côte d'Ivoire.

The existence of armed bands, left over from previous wars, will continue to be a grave source of insecurity in the region. Adding to the problem presented by these itinerant fighters will be many of those recruited and armed in the Ivorian conflict, especially the Liberians fighting for Gbagbo and FLGO, and the Sierra Leoneans left over from their collaboration with MPIGO and MJP, some of whom have been fighting for Gbagbo. Urgent measures need to be taken to prevent FLGO and other Guéré militia forces from being incorporated into MODEL and to disarm them as soon as possible.

While they have the forces necessary to carry out such a program in Côte d'Ivoire, the French need more encouragement and cover, particularly from the U.S. and the Security Council, to do this and also to increase their protection of civilians and refugees in the west. Meanwhile, it should be made clear to the various armed groups and their supporters that they risk prosecution for war crimes, perhaps before the International Criminal Court, if they engage in further ethnic killing. ECOWAS forces (MICECI) need to be more present on the ground, but for this to happen the

international community must provide more financial support.

While the MPCI's northern recruits are being identified, disarmed and demobilised, special measures should be envisaged for dealing with the traditional hunters, the *dozo*. Over 1,000 of them from northern Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Burkina Faso have participated in the rebellion, and their status as hunters should no longer provide a justification for their growing implication in regional conflict.

For the quartering and disarmament of forces to be undertaken, border security with Mali and Burkina Faso needs to be assured, but progress is also required with implementation of political aspects of the peace accords. Given the considerable suspicion that rebel leaders and their troops have of politicians, deadlock in Abidjan, as Guillaume Soro says, could lead quickly either to a fresh outbreak of violence or the rebellion's rebirth from bases in Mali or Burkina Faso.

The regional approach to disarmament that is required presupposes greater coordination and cooperation among Western powers on the Security Council. Especially France, the UK (with its lead role in Sierra Leone), and the U.S. need to concert on strategies for dealing with the ongoing problem of the circulation of arms and fighters from war to war. The U.S. should become more active in Liberia, where it has deep historical ties, and the UN Special Panel on Liberia should be extended to include Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso so that there is better information on the regional circulation of arms and destabilising activities.

Avoiding a new outbreak of violence. The risk of new fighting is high in Côte d'Ivoire, especially from urban militia groups and tribal militias in the west. MINUCI needs to act urgently to support the reconciliation government in dealing with this problem since President Gbagbo's promises concerning their disbandment should not be taken as sufficient. The attack on Guillaume Soro on 27 June by the so-called young patriots almost caused the rebels to resume hostilities and at least demonstrated the extreme fragility of the peace. It is entirely possible that incidents may be created by those on either side who feel the accords are not in their interest. The Monitoring Committee should issue a strong warning to both sides and seek greater cooperation from President Gbagbo

concerning the intervention of ECOWAS forces in crisis situations in Abidjan.

More concrete steps are also needed to disband the urban militias. Independent investigations should be undertaken to identify them, their supporters, trainers and financiers and the extent of their access to arms. President Gbagbo must be made aware that he is held directly responsible for FANCI, the gendarmes and police officers involved in training and arming these groups. Politicians and private individuals who are also involved should be told to cease immediately. Gbagbo, who has tacitly legitimated the groups, needs to make a public commitment to their disbandment. While French forces are not in a position to disband them, a joint operation between MICECI forces and the Ivorian police and gendarmerie should be considered.

The danger posed by urban militias is not only their very real potential for violence, but also the effect that their public opposition to the accords, RDR leader Alassane Ouattara and indeed a whole swathe of the Ivorian population, has on the reconciliation process.²⁰³ The government's declaration of 17 June, calling in the name of the president for an end to actions and statements which undermine reconciliation, and statements made by the government after the murder of French journalist Jean Hélène on 21 October 2003, are no more than gestures. Without a strong message from the president and his interior minister, the militias will continue to provoke both the reconciliation government and the French with impunity.

All foreign mercenaries should be expelled from Côte d'Ivoire, President Gbagbo's use of them criticised, and countries and private companies complicit in their presence named and shamed if they do not take immediate corrective action.

Meetings between FANCI, the *Forces Nouvelles*, French troops and MICECI have made progress in identifying seventeen sites throughout the country for the quartering of troops that are to be disarmed, demobilised and ultimately reintegrated into society or repatriated, a process that French military

sources recognise will go well into 2004. The accords stipulate that the French and MICECI will be responsible for physical disarmament. While the reconciliation government and the defence minister may ensure that FANCI is quartered on its bases and its arms are placed in depots, international supervision is needed. French and ECOWAS forces should quarter and disarm the rebel forces. The question of who should disarm and demobilise FANCI recruits, mercenaries and militias is more delicate. Significant opposition to French involvement should be expected, but it will be dangerous to allow FANCI to manage the process. This argues for more help from ECOWAS forces, as well as MINUCI involvement, as the Secretary General has urged, but the latter requires more UN troops than Security Council Resolution 1479 envisaged.

It is imperative that the program not entail the integration into the regular armed forces of those recruited since the beginning of the conflict by either side. Only those in the rebellion who were previously members of the army and security forces should be considered for reintegration. The new recruits who have already been taken into FANCI must be demobilised, as stipulated in the peace accords. The international community should expect resistance on this point, and reinsertion packages need to be designed. Bearing in mind the motives of many who rallied to the rebellion – discrimination, exclusion, poor material conditions, lack of career prospects and a corrupt and politicised hierarchy – great caution is needed to ensure that the conditions for reintegration of soldiers into the armed forces or society and the reinsertion packages for the rebellion's recruits are fair.

While the French have years of experience in military cooperation in Côte d'Ivoire, they clearly cannot be congratulated on the results. They should work with MINUCI to evaluate past failures and elaborate a long-term project for security sector restructuring.

Greater efforts need to be made to end hate media. Partisan politics and "democratic" expression cannot be excuses for the continuation of divisive and xenophobic messages. In particular, state media should not be used to project partisan or divisive messages. The government has attempted to rein in the most obvious offenders but warnings

²⁰³ In the report following its mission to the region, the Security Council expressed the need for President Gbagbo to "rein in the activities of youth groups demonstrating against ministers from other parties other than the RDR", "Report of the Security Council mission", op. cit., para. 27, p. 6.

have been insufficient, and it should be encouraged to take stronger measures.

Winning the peace. The international community needs to send a strong message that it intends to get the peace process back on track. Blockages should be more directly denounced by the Monitoring Committee, and the UN needs to take a more proactive role in encouraging speedy implementation of the accords. While the details of implementation are clearly the business of the reconciliation government, President Gbagbo must be encouraged to rein in those members of his party who seem determined to act as spoilers, including in the National Assembly. Donors should leave no doubt that their engagement to help rebuild the country and revive the economy is conditioned on implementation of the accords.

Other than an outright return to war, partisan politics as usual presents perhaps the main danger to national reconciliation. A political war over victims, crimes and punishment has already been declared, with each side claiming that the other has a monopoly on violence and denying its share of responsibility for the killings, destruction of property, and massive human rights violations. President Gbagbo has submitted a complaint against the rebellion to the International Criminal Court (ICC), in response to French President Jacques Chirac's threat on 20 February 2003, during the France-Africa summit, that the death squads might be considered by that tribunal. Blaise Compaoré has threatened to lodge a complaint with the ICC concerning the killings of Burkinabé on 24 January 2003, and the FPI has organised lawyers for victims of the rebellion.

As many observers have pointed out, impunity is one of the great problems facing the country. The reorganisation of the security sector is the greatest challenge in this regard. Impunity on the part of gendarmes and police, their manipulation by

political elites, and their corruption and tendency to make their own justice, have plagued Côte d'Ivoire. Judicial sanctions need to be applied where they - but also rebel fighters and FANCI - have been engaged in human rights violations.

The international community can help in this. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should be mandated to establish an in-country mission to investigate human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law.

The domestic process should be decentralised in order to avoid it being monopolised by politicians in Abidjan, and carried out in stages. Separate processes need to be undertaken to address violations committed by members of the security forces and their civilian partners, and the reconciliation of communities and civilian populations. Local community and religious leaders should be involved. Civil society organisations are often highly politicised and organically linked to political parties, but the *Collectif de la Société Civile pour la Paix*, headed by Honoré Guié, which includes Ivorian human rights organisations, religious leaders and traditional leaders, has done a remarkable job of bringing messages of peace to local communities and should be encouraged.

Donors need to commit both to humanitarian aid and a comprehensive program to restart the economy. A permanent humanitarian representative should be named by the UN to coordinate humanitarian actions. Getting the economy back on track is vital for stability in the region, whose countries are dependant on Côte d'Ivoire's economic health. Donor aid, however, should be carefully targeted and conditioned on political progress.

Freetown/Brussels, 28 November 2003

APPENDIX A

MAP OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE



Between March and November 2003, the UN established the MINUCI headquarters in Abidjan and deployed Military Liaison Officers throughout the country. Furthermore, French peacekeepers have been deployed to the rebel capital of Bouaké. For an updated map please refer to the Second UN Security Council Report on Cote d'Ivoire (S/2003/1069).

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BCEAO	Banque Centrale des Etats d'Afrique de l'Ouest (Central Bank of West African States).
BAE	Brigade anti-émeutes – Anti-Riot police force. This Brigade was created by the Ivorian government to control attempts at insurrection. Sent with the FANCI to “clean up” the city of Man in December 2002, it was accused of indiscriminate killing and other major abuses.
COJEP	Congrès Panafricain des Jeunes Patriotes. The Coalition of Young Patriots is a group of militant youth loyal to President Laurent Gbagbo's ruling FPI party and led by Charles Blé Goudé.
CNSP	National Committee of Public Salvation formed by General Robert Gueï, which nominated a transition government and organised the Constitutional and Electoral Consultative Committee.
ECOMICI	ECOWAS Mission to Côte d'Ivoire (English acronym for MICECI)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States.
FANCI	Forces Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire: the national army of Côte d'Ivoire, loyal to President Gbagbo in the Ivorian crisis.
FESCI	Fédération Estudiantine et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire – Federation of Students and School-students of Ivory Coast – is a very active student movement created in April 1990. Serge Kouyo is the Secretary General, elected during the 4th Congress of the Students' Union held on 12 May 2003.
FIRPAC	Forces d'Intervention Rapide et d'Action Aommando, a special military grouping created in January 2000 by General Gueï to assist in reestablishing order, to control crime, and to put an end to abuses committed by the military.
FLGO	Forces de Libération du Grand Ouest, Liberation Forces of the Great West, a tribal militia recruited by President Gbagbo which has fought alongside MODEL inside Liberia.
FPI	Front Populaire Ivoirien, Ivorian Popular Front – forces loyal to President Gbagbo's party.
GP	Garde Présidentielle , Presidential Guard.
GPP	Groupement Patriotique pour la Paix – Patriotic Group for Peace (GPP) – a half dozen militias that sprang up in southern Côte d'Ivoire from September 2002.
JFPI	Jeunesse du Front Populaire Ivoirien – Young Ivorian Popular Front – a student movement inside President Gbagbo's party.
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, a rebel group opposed to President Charles Taylor's government and created in early 1999 in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

MFA	Mouvement des Forces de l'Avenir – Movement of the Forces of the Future – is a small party led by Innocent Kobena Anaki which obtained one ministry in the Reconciliation Government set up by the Linas-Marcoussis agreements.
MICECI	ECOWAS force, Mission de la CEDEAO (Communauté économique pour le Développement des Etats de l'Afrique de l'ouest) en Côte d'Ivoire (English acronym: ECOMICI).
MINUCI	Mission des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire (United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire).
MJP	Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix: is one of two rebels groups that emerged in western Côte d'Ivoire on 28 November 2002, two months after the beginning of the Ivorian conflict. It has received support from former President Taylor of Liberia and, especially, from the northern based Ivorian rebel group, Mouvement Patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire.
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia, a rebel group whose formation was announced in March 2003, composed of veteran anti-Taylor fighters, refugees and political asylum seekers predominantly based in Côte d'Ivoire since Liberia's civil war in the 1990s. It gains much of its financing from the Krahn ethnic diaspora in the U.S., is allied to the government of President Laurent Gbagbo in Côte d'Ivoire, and sought the overthrow of President Taylor in Liberia. It is essentially a faction of LURD that opposes the leadership claims of that organisation's Guinea-based chairman, Sekou Conneh.
MPCI	Mouvement Patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire, the first rebel group formed in Côte d'Ivoire in September 2002. It is mainly seen as a northern-based movement with strong links to Burkina Faso.
MPIGO	Mouvement Patriotique du Grand Ouest, the second rebel group that emerged in western Côte d'Ivoire in late November 2002. Its initial operations were heavily coordinated and influenced by President Taylor's top commanders.
NCOs	Non-Commissioned Officers.
PIT	Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs. Ivorian Workers' Party, led by Francis Wodie.
PDCI	Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire. Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire, which together with the RDA (below) formed the state party during the rule of President Houphouët-Boigny.
RDA	Rassemblement Démocratique Africain. From 1960 to 1990, Côte d'Ivoire was ruled by the state party, the PDCI-RDA – Democratic Party of the Ivory Coast/African Democratic Rally – led by the autocratic president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny. After the death of Houphouët-Boigny and undermined by internal contradictions, the PDCI-RDA, split into two: the RDR of Alassane Ouattara and the PDCI- RDA of Konan Bédié.
RDR	Rassemblement des Républicains – Rally of the Republicans – is the major opposition party, led by Alassane Ouattara. President Gbagbo's security forces have undertaken a witch hunt against this party that it accuses of having masterminded the coup and supporting the rebellion.
RUF	Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, the main rebel group in Sierra Leone's civil war.

- Sorbonne** A political association named after the *Place de la Sorbonne*, born from an Ivorian version of Hyde Park corner: speakers and their public gathered in the Plateau business district of Abidjan, at the *Place de la Sorbonne*, to give speeches, which became increasingly nationalist and pro-FPI.
- UDCY** Union Démocratique et Citoyenne, Democratic Civic Union, a small party which obtained one ministry in the Reconciliation Government set up by the Linas-Marcoussis agreements.
- UDPCI** Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix de Côte d'Ivoire, Union for Peace and Democracy in Ivory Coast, was inaugurated on 25 February 2001 and later led by General Gueï.
- ULIMO** United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia, formed in 1991 and opposed to Charles Taylor's faction in Liberia's first civil war.
- UPLTCI** Union Pour la Libération Totale de la Côte d'Ivoire, Union for the Total Liberation of Côte d'Ivoire, organised by Eugène Djué, who is directly involved in the creation of urban tribal militias.

APPENDIX C

CHRONOLOGY

From Independence to the death of President Houphouët-Boigny

- 1946 Creation of the PDCI-RDA led by Felix Félix Houphouët-Boigny.
- 7 August 1960 Houphouët-Boigny, Prime Minister at the time, proclaims the independence of Côte d'Ivoire.
- 27 November 1960 Election of Houphouët-Boigny as President of the Republic. Houphouët-Boigny goes on to be re-elected as President every five years to 1990.
- 1970 Kragbé Gnagbé, from the canton of Guébie in the Bété ethnic area of the south-west, creates a political party, the Parti Nationaliste Africain (PANA). Although theoretically allowed by the constitution, it is declared illegal, and an uprising follows, which is put down by the army, resulting in the deaths of an indeterminate number of Guébié people. Those opposed to Houphouët-Boigny claim between 3,000 and 6,000 died, and the incident has been termed by the Bété as the "Guébie genocide". Researchers place the number considerably lower. President Gbagbo has been an advocate of justice for the Guébié and often evokes the Guébié "genocide".
- 1982 The FPI is founded by Laurent Gbagbo. Following student demonstrations and fearing arrest, he goes into exile in France via Burkina Faso.
- 25 May 1987 Houphouët-Boigny announces the suspension of debt payments, estimated at more than U.S.\$8 billion. In July, faced with falling cocoa prices, Côte d'Ivoire places an embargo on cocoa exports which lasts eighteen months.
- September 1988 Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the clandestine FPI, returns from exile and develops links with President Samuel Doe of Liberia and key pro-Doe politicians.
- 3 July 1989 Under pressure from the International Monetary Fund, Côte d'Ivoire cuts cocoa prices to producers and engages in reforms in return for U.S.\$ 4 billion in assistance.
- December 1989 National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor begins an uprising against the Doe government from Danané, western Côte d'Ivoire. Côte d'Ivoire becomes the main transit route and supplier of arms for Taylor's war.
- February-May 1990 Côte d'Ivoire is in the grip of violent demonstrations by students and unions.
- 5 May 1990 Legalisation of political parties in Côte d'Ivoire.
- 1990 Alassane Dramane Ouattara, an IMF technocrat, is named prime minister, a post created for him. He is to lead the IMF reforms agreed in 1989.
- 28 October 1990 Presidential elections see for the first time in Côte d'Ivoire's history Houphouët-Boigny facing another candidate, Laurent Gbagbo (FPI). Houphouët-Boigny wins with 82 per cent while Gbagbo criticises electoral irregularities.
- 25 November 1990 First multiparty legislative elections. The PDCI-RDA wins 175 seats, the FPI 9.

- April 1990 FESCI is created, and is allied against the PDCI with the FPI and union leaders. Led by Martial Ahipeaud, it becomes instrumental mobilising demonstrations throughout 1990/1991. FESCI is "outlawed" by Houphouët in 1991, but rehabilitated in 1997, during the leadership of Guillaume Soro. Ahipeaud, Soro (general secretary of the FESCI 1995-1998) and Charles Blé Goudé (general secretary 1998-2001) are successively imprisoned for their activities, and FESCI is outlawed again by President Bédié in late 1997.
- May and September 1991 Under General Robert Gueï, Chief of Army staff, the army intervenes brutally against student demonstrations.
- January-February 1992 Violent student demonstrations, leading to the arrest on 18 February of Laurent Gbagbo and eight other political and union leaders. They are condemned to two years imprisonment but released after six months.
- 7 December 1993 President Houphouët-Boigny dies. Henri Konan Bédié, President of the National Assembly wins a struggle with Ouattara to succeed him, and Ouattara resigns as prime minister on 9 December.

Henri Konan Bédié and the Rise of Ivoirité – 1994 to 1999

- January 1994 Former Prime Minister Ouattara and his supporters are warned in a campaign by the government newspaper that the government has the means to "crush" them.
- May 1994 Ouattara is named Deputy Managing Director of the IMF and leaves the country.
- December 1994 The National Assembly adopts a new electoral code, which stipulates that candidates for President must be born in Côte d'Ivoire to parents themselves born in Côte d'Ivoire, thus creating the distinction between "pure" and "mixed" Ivoirians. It is generally believed that this code is designed to exclude Ouattara from running for the presidency in 1995 Presidential elections. Gbagbo denounces the code as "liberticidal, racist, xenophobic and dangerous". The RDR and the FPI form the *Front Républicain*.
- 28 October 1995 The *Front Républicain* launches the "Active Boycott" which involves violent protests and marches and attempts to stop the voting process throughout the country, leaving many dead and dozens arrested, many of whom die in prison. Henri Konan Bédié is elected President. Army Chief of Staff General Robert Gueï refuses to use the army against the demonstrators, leading to his dismissal.
- 18 November 1996 The Bédié government claims to have foiled a coup attempt and begins to purge army officers considered to be close to Gueï or Ouattara and replace them with officers from his Baoulé ethnic group.
- February 1997 The Bédié government arrests FESCI leader Guillaume Soro.
- November 1999 A land conflict in the Tabou area pits local Kroumen against Burkinabé planters, and a young Krouman and a Burkinabé are killed. In the days that follow, some 10,000 Burkinabé flee their plantations under violence from the Kroumen. Many are killed.
- 29 November 1999 An arrest warrant is issued for Alassane Ouattara, who had declared himself the RDR candidate for the 2000 Presidential elections, on the grounds that he had falsified

documents used to obtain his nationality certificate. RDR marches are repressed, and leading RDR officials are arrested and imprisoned.

23/24 December 1999 Non-commissioned officers, led by Staff-Sergeant Ibrahim ("IB") Coulibaly, oust Bédié in a bloodless coup d'état. General Gueï is asked to lead the junta.

The Military Junta

- 4 January 2000 General Gueï proclaims that he has come to "sweep the house" and put an end to *ivoirité*, then quickly return power to civilians.
- 21 January 2000 The *Commission Consultative Constitutionnelle et Electorale* (CCCE) is created by decree to propose a new constitution and electoral code. Press attention focuses on the conditions of presidential eligibility. At the end of March, the President of the CCCE hands a finished text to Gueï in which the initially exclusive conditions of eligibility have been replaced by the formula "born to mother or father of Ivorian origin" and from which other prejudicial language has been dropped.
- January 2000 Creation of a special military unit by Gueï and other informal parallel groups by the NCOs who led the coup. Denounced by Amnesty International in May, Gueï's group is disbanded, while the others continue to operate.
- March 2000 The FPI press launches campaigns against the "massive fraud" of nationality cards held by foreigners, accusing the RDR, and against allies of Ouattara.
- 12 May 2000 General Gueï accuses the RDR of attacks against state security and on May 18 dissolves the government. Seydou Diarra is named prime minister.
- 27 May 2000 Publication of the new constitution, which, however, has had some of the prejudicial language directed at Ouattara restored.
- 17 July 2000 General Gueï modifies the constitution in a further attempt to exclude Ouattara from the presidential race.
- 23 July 2000 Referendum approves the constitution, with 86.53 per cent in favour and 56 per cent participation.
- 16 August 2000 General Gueï declares himself a "candidate of the people" for the presidency.
- September 2000 Political violence breaks out, including attacks by soldiers against Gueï's residence in an apparent assassination attempt and failed coup. Staff-Sergeant Ibrahim Coulibaly refuses to return from his post at the Ivorian embassy in Canada and goes into exile in Burkina Faso. Generals Palenfo and Coulibaly, both thought to be close to the RDR, go into hiding in the Nigerian embassy. An arrest warrant is later issued against them.
- 6 October 2000 The supreme court rejects fourteen of the nineteen presidential candidates, including all six PDCI candidates and Ouattara.
- 22-25 October 2000 On Sunday October 22 the first round of Presidential elections takes place. The PDCI and the RDR have called for a boycott, and participation is only 34 percent. Gbagbo announces victory based on partial results. The military physically breaks up the electoral commission, which the Ministry of the Interior then dissolves and announces Gueï's victory with 53 per cent of the vote. Gbagbo's supporters take to the streets, military factions clash, and on 25 October Gueï leaves the country by helicopter.

The Second Republic – Laurent Gbagbo's rule

- 26–28 October 2000 Laurent Gbagbo is declared winner of the Presidential elections with 59 per cent of the vote, while Gueï obtains 32 per cent. The RDR demands new elections open to all candidates. Violent clashes pit FPI supporters, gendarmes and military against RDR supporters and take on the tone of ethnic-religious violence. Churches and mosques are burnt and hundreds of northerners are arrested, many tortured, beaten and raped. Officially 117 are killed, but the RDR claims its victims number over 300. On 27 October the new government is formed but the RDR refuses to participate.
- 30 November 2000 Ouattara's candidacy for the legislative elections is rejected by the Supreme Court on the grounds that he is not Ivorian.
- December 2000 On 4 December, the RDR withdraws from the legislative elections and calls for demonstrations, which are brutally suppressed by the security forces, who restore order only after five days. Participation in legislative elections on 10 December is 33 per cent.
- January 2001 After attacks on the night of 7/8 January by unidentified armed assailants on the TV and Radio and the gendarmerie camp in Abidjan, the government announces an attempted coup and implicates Burkina Faso. A witch hunt against RDR leaders and supporters is undertaken, while many soldiers are arrested or go into exile. Observers note attacks against foreigners by the army and security forces. On 22 January, Mamadou Koulibaly, minister of finance, is elected president of the national assembly, becoming number two in the government.
- 25 March 2001 The RDR does best in municipal elections held throughout the country.
- October–
December 2001 Forum for National Reconciliation begins on 9 October under the chairmanship of Seydou Diarra but with a limited mandate.
- 22/23 January 2002 A summit is held among the "big four" – Laurent Gbagbo, Robert Gueï, Henri Bédié and Alassane Ouattara – in Yamoussoukro to discuss the Forum's resolutions. The leaders endorse them, adding ten points, emphasising rapid resolution of the problem of Ouattara's nationality, and call for an open, all-party government.
- June 2002 The national identification operation begins under which foreigners must register for new resident's cards, and Ivorians confirm their nationality. The RDR and leading intellectuals from other parties protest, claiming hundreds of thousands of Ivorians will lose their citizenship.
- 29 June 2002 RDR leader Ouattara is finally given a certificate of nationality.
- July 2002 Elections for regional government are marked by numerous anomalies and violence against FPI opponents.
- 2 August 2002 Balla Keita, the secretary general of Gueï's party, the UDPCI, is murdered in a government guesthouse in Burkina Faso, leading to further worsening of relations between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, which blame each other for the killing.
- 5 August 2002 A new government is formed, including RDR ministers but two days later Gueï's party leaves the government accusing Gbagbo of bad faith.

The Coup attempt of 19 September and Côte d'Ivoire's descent into war

- 19 September 2002 Heavy shooting breaks out in Abidjan. The government says a coup attempt was foiled and accuses Gueï, who, with his wife and entourage, is killed. At least 400 people die including Minister of the Interior Boga Doudou. Having failed to take the commercial capital Abidjan, rebelling soldiers retreat to Bouaké and later announce formation of an insurgent group, the *Mouvement patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI - Côte d'Ivoire Patriotic Movement).
- 22 September 2002 French troops arrive to protect foreigners.
- 24 September 2002 Gbagbo's ruling party, FPI, accuses Burkina Faso of being behind the "destabilisation" of Ivory Coast. Ouattara, who has sought refuge at the French ambassador's residence, tells a French newspaper that the soldiers who killed Gueï had also been after him. Loyalist troops launch an unsuccessful offensive on Bouaké.
- 27 September 2002 French troops evacuate some 1,200 foreigners from Bouaké.
- 28 September 2002 Abidjan calls for activation of the defence agreement with France.
- 29 September 2002 The Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS) sets up a "contact group" and decides to send a peacekeeping force.
- 30 September 2002 ECOWAS creates a six-member mediation group to help resolve the Ivorian crisis.
- 4-8 October 2002 A first ECOWAS mediation attempt fails and fighting breaks out in Bouaké. People start fleeing rebel-held areas. Some West African migrants return home or go to third countries. This movement continues throughout October and November. Government forces are repulsed from Bouaké after intense fighting.
- 14 October 2002 Loyalist forces recapture Daloa 48 hours after it is taken by rebels; the number of people fleeing Bouaké rises to 2,500 a day.
- 15 October 2002 Staff-Sergeant Tuo Fozié reveals the existence of a rebel political leadership, and Guillaume Soro, one-time FPI sympathiser and recent RDR collaborator, announces himself as General Secretary of the MPCI.
- 17 October 2002 A ceasefire is brokered by the Senegalese President, Abdoulaye Wade, and signed unilaterally by the MPCI just after government troops recover Daloa with Angolan help. President Gbagbo accepts deal, asks France to police it. The ceasefire line runs east to west, dividing the country in half. Under "*Operation Licorne*", French troops brought in to reinforce the 700-strong French forces already in Abidjan are asked to supervise the ceasefire until ECOWAS troops can relieve them.
- 22 October 2002 France sends more troops to police the ceasefire. Demonstrators stage a violent protest outside the French military base in Abidjan, demanding that Ouattara be handed over.
- 24 October 2002 ECOWAS designates Togo's President Gnassingbé Eyadéma to lead talks between the MPCI and government.
- 28 October 2002 Following intense diplomatic activity by West African leaders and the French, peace talks are organised in Lomé under the leadership of President Eyadéma.
- 30 October 2002 First direct talks between government and rebels begin in Lomé.
- 1 November 2002 Government accepts principle of amnesty and reintegration of rebel forces into army.
- 18 November 2002 An advance team of ECOWAS peacekeepers arrives in Abidjan.

- 27 November 2002 French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin visits. The Ivorian military, supported – according to the French – by foreign mercenaries, launch an offensive on Vavoua.
- 28 November 2002 Two new insurgent groups appear in the west of the country, below the ceasefire line. Claiming revenge for the death of Gueï, the *Mouvement Populaire de Grand Ouest* (MPIGO) and the *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (MJP) express determination to remove Gbagbo. Considering they are not bound by the ceasefire, they attack towns and villages in the west.
- December 2002 Liberian and Sierra Leone fighters led by Charles Taylor's commanders, as well as independent marauding bands, attack towns, villages and rural camps throughout the region.
- 18 December 2002 ECOWAS summit is held in Dakar, many key players absent.
- 21 December 2002 French forces at Duékoué clash with MPIGO rebels.
- 23 December 2002 MPCJ leader Guillaume Soro calls on France and the UN to lead mediation, saying the rebels have no confidence in African efforts to broker peace.
- 24 December 2002 ECOWAS announces the deployment of 1,264 men, but the arrival of the first soldiers is put back to 3 January 2003.
- 28 December 2002 French contingent swells to 2,500.
- 3 January 2003 French Foreign Minister De Villepin begins two-day visit, obtains a promise from Gbagbo to honour the ceasefire, expel foreign mercenaries and halt air attacks.
- 6 January 2003 Rebels attack French peacekeepers in the western town of Duékoué, 30 rebels are killed, nine French injured. A truce is arranged two days later.
- 13 January 2003 A ceasefire is signed in Lomé between the government and the groups active in the west, to enable the participation of the latter's delegations at the subsequent peace talks in Marcoussis, but fighting continues throughout the talks and the following months.
- 15-24 January 2003 In the face of the failure of the Lomé peace talks and other West African mediation and ongoing conflict in the west, the French propose peace talks in France at Linas-Marcoussis. Agreement is reached to establish a Government of National Reconciliation with wide executive powers, composed of ministers from the main political parties and the rebel groups, to lead the country to general elections in 2005.
- 18 January 2003 The first 172 soldiers of the MICECI operation arrive.
- 24 January 2003 President Blaise Compaoré threatens to lodge a complaint with the ICC concerning killings of Burkinabé, and the FPI organises a group of lawyers for victims of the rebellion.
- 25-26 January 2003 A summit of Heads of State in Paris results in the Linas-Marcoussis accords, which determines the composition of the Reconciliation Government charged with their application.
- 26–29 January 2003 Following a week of intense negotiations among political parties and rebels, a peace accord is reached, ratified by President Gbagbo and West African leaders in Paris (the Kléber Summit). Youth groups attack French buildings, businesses and private homes in Abidjan.

- 4 February 2003 UN Security Council resolution 1464 legitimates French mediation, backing the French Operation Licorne and MICECI with a Chapter Seven mandate.
- 18 February 2003 After rallying support in West Africa, the MPCCI rebels announce that their movement is now called *Forces Nouvelles* (New Forces).
- March 2003 Political parties and rebels agree to form a government including nine members from rebel ranks. New "consensus" prime minister, Seydou Diarra, is given the delicate task of forming a cabinet. Gbagbo repeats charge that Ouattara masterminded the coup.
- 6 March 2003 1,100 soldiers of the MICECI operation arrive, under the leadership of Senegalese General Khalil Fall.
- 7/8 March 2003 The parties at Marcoussis are re-united in Accra, under the leadership of ECOWAS President, Ghanaian President John Kufor, to seek a solution to the problems of nominating ministers in the Reconciliation Government. The rebels renounce claims to defence and interior. A National Security Council of fifteen members, including all the parties to the peace accords, is to name these two ministers "by consensus".
- 1 April 2003 A contract signed between the Ivorian government and a British private security company, Northbridge Services, involving arms and men, creates international concern. The British government warns the company against sending mercenaries.
- April 2003 Throughout the month, intense fighting occurs for control of the road between Toulépleu and Danané. Villages are burned by MODEL-LURD forces, and between the 7 and 16 April, there are repeated attacks by government MI-24 helicopters.
- 26 April 2003 Intense international pressure persuades Gbagbo to ground his helicopters, and a meeting between Gbagbo and Taylor is organised by ECOWAS in which both presidents agree to secure the border.
- 3 May 2003 A total ceasefire is signed immediately preceded by a violent scramble on both sides to gain as much territory as possible before it goes into effect. The idea behind the ceasefire is to prepare the ground for the intervention of French and ECOWAS forces, and part of the deal is that each side should expel its Liberian fighters.
- 13 May 2003 UN Security Council Resolution 1479 establishes the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) and details the role to be played by the UN in assisting a return to peace and the application of the accords.
- 22 May 2003 Government of National Reconciliation meets in rebel-held Bouaké.
- 23 May 2003 Joint operation involving government and rebel forces, as well as French and ECOWAS peace-keepers, began to pacify the west, still a theatre of extreme violence.
- 30 May 2003 Prime Minister Diarra presents his government's program to the National Assembly. Simone Gbagbo, the president's wife and chair of the ruling party's parliamentary group, opposes it.
- 9 June 2003 Mamadou Koulibaly, President of the National Assembly and the President's second in command, calls for "civil disobedience" to prevent rebel ministers from carrying out their functions.
- 18 June 2003 The government and rebels agree to move forces back from frontline positions and exchange prisoners.

- 27 June 2003 The UN Security Council Mission, MINUCI, arrives to assist the Secretary General's Special Representative and the Reconciliation Government, French and ECOWAS troops in putting together and executing a comprehensive program of disarmament and reintegration. The minister of communication, former rebel leader Guillaume Soro, escapes from what the Ivorian press calls as a premeditated lynching.
- 30 June 2003 MPCCI rebel leaders declare a state of emergency and announce they will block access to territory they control following rejection of the disarmament program supposed to start on 1 August. *Forces Nouvelles* threaten to withdraw from government after one of their leaders is beaten up in Abidjan.
- 4 July 2003 Military chiefs of the army and rebel forces announce that the war is over. In a ceremony at the presidential palace, former rebels handed President Gbagbo a rifle in a sign they are ready to disarm.
- 17 July 2003 The signatories of the peace accords, except for the FPI, meet in Bouaké to denounce inadequate implementation and blockages provoked by Gbagbo and the FPI.
- 4 August 2003 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan says there are disturbing signs that both sides are rearming.
- 6 August 2003 The parliament approves an amnesty for rebels occupying the north of the country.
- 12 August 2003 The government releases 54 political prisoners accused of supporting the rebels.
- 25 August 2003 Increasing tension follows the arrest of eleven people on 24 August by French police in Paris, including the former Ibrahim Coulibaly, a key figure in the rebellion. Two French soldiers and an Ivorian rebel are killed in an exchange of fire near Bouaké, the first fatalities sustained by French forces since their deployment.
- 2 September 2003 The government announces detention of eighteen people for questioning about an alleged plot to assassinate President Gbagbo, his wife and several senior officials.
- 10 September 2003 Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso re-open their common border.
- 13 September 2003 President Gbagbo appoints his own nominees to the ministries of defence and interior.
- 17 September 2003 UN Special Envoy Albert Tévoedjré brushes aside rebel objections to the ministerial appointments and says he expects the demobilisation and disarmament of rebel forces in the north to start on 1 October.
- 23 September 2003 Complaining about insufficient implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Accords by President Gbagbo, the *Forces Nouvelles* suspend participation in the government and withdraw their nine ministers.
- 3 October 2003 In response to rising tension, Secretary General Kofi Annan calls upon *Forces Nouvelles* to resume participation in the government.
- 4 October 2003 Tens of thousands march in Bouaké in response to a large anti-rebel protest two days before in Abidjan. Guillaume Soro, the *Forces Nouvelles* leader, calls for Gbagbo's resignation.
- 17 October 2003 The government bans public marches and demonstrations for three months as it tries to persuade rebels to resume their seats in the cabinet and start to disarm. It also orders the disbanding of a youth groups associated with violent anti-rebel demonstrations in Abidjan.

- 21 October 2003 Jean Hélène, correspondent of *Radio France Internationale* (RFI) in Côte d'Ivoire, is shot dead by a policeman while he waits outside the police headquarters in Abidjan to interview political detainees.
- 30 October 2003 The presidents of Nigeria and Ghana fly to Côte d'Ivoire to meet President Gbagbo and discuss how to ending the political stand-off.
- 11 November 2003 West African leaders meet in Accra to urge Gbagbo to make a greater effort to save the faltering peace process. The communiqué gives little sign of a breakthrough.
- 12 November 2003 Rebels occupying the north of Côte d'Ivoire send out mixed signals following the West African summit but Louis-André Dakoury-Tabley, the deputy leader of the rebel movement, says in a speech that nothing more can be expected of the peace agreement signed in January, and the rebels might consider establishing a separate state in the area under their control. President Gbagbo tells ECOWAS leaders in Accra his army is well equipped and can defeat the rebels within two weeks.
- 13 November 2003 Security Council Resolution 1514 extends the UN Mission until 4 February, 2004.
- 15 November 2003 Army Chief of Staff, General Mathias Doué warns: "the war can restart at any moment".