CHAD: THE ROOTS OF CENTRE-PERIPHERY STRIFE

SAMUEL DECALO

THE total collapse of central authority in Chad in February 1979, the victory of the periphery in its decade-long struggle against Ndjamena, the partition of the capital by opposing factions of the 'liberation' forces, and the *de facto* disengagement—social, economic and political—of the south from the state they had just lost control over, were all only stages in the political decay and disintegration of Chad. The creation of the Transitional Government of National Unity structurally binding the defeated south to the victorious north and east in 1979 should thus have been seen as but one step in the opposite direction, and certainly not a cause for significant optimism. While one may rejoice that common sense prevailed for a time and that southern representation was raised from its original insignificant role,[1] the rebuilding of the Chadian state and the soothing of inter-ethnic relations will be a lengthy and difficult process—especially after the further bloody disturbances earlier this year.

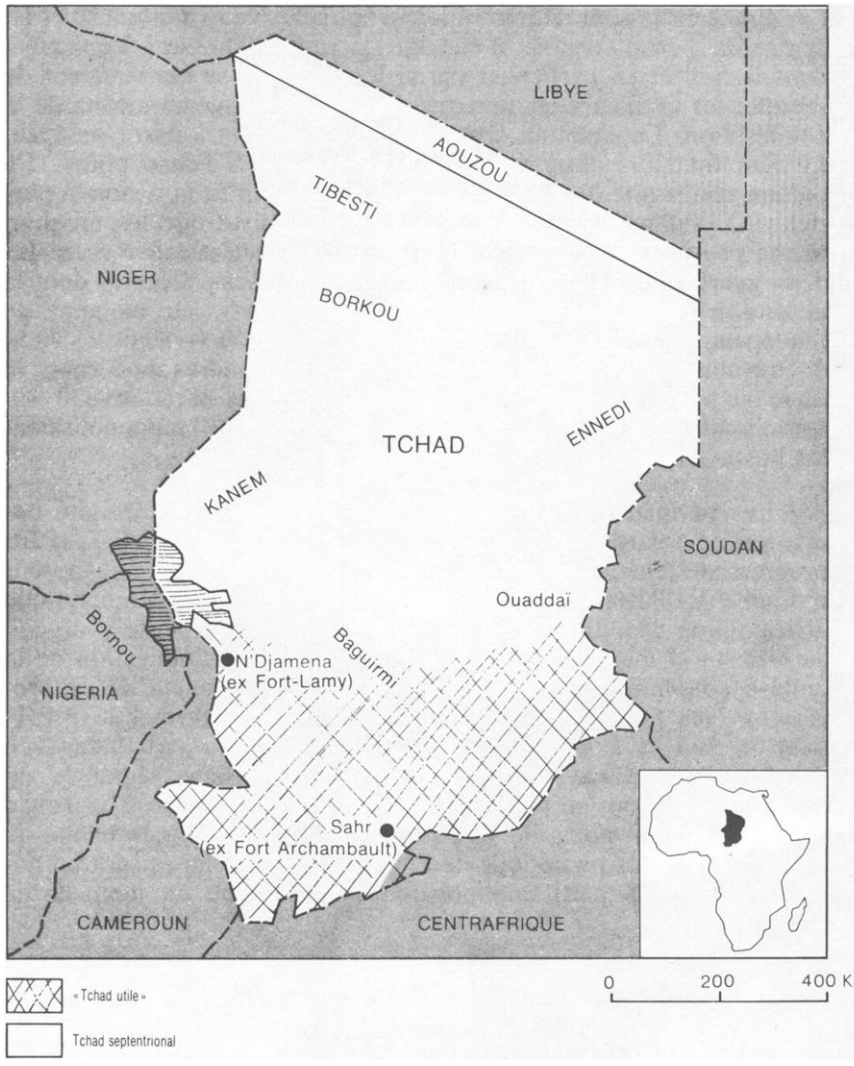
The origins of political decay go back two decades, to the abolition of competitive politics in 1961 and the widescale purges of the mid-1960s. The roots of the disintegration of Chad, its deep centre-periphery cleavages, are anchored in the very nature of the society that became a French colony in 1900. The immensity of the developmental problems facing Chad—one of the weakest and poorest of African states—may come into sharper perspective if one also appreciates the weakness of the state apparatus inherited at independence. Neither a nation, nor in many respects a viable state, the ineptitude of Tombalbaye's rule shattered the inertia inherited from the colonial era, setting the polity in the direction of either a redefinition of the dimensions of both state and nation in Chad, or total disintegration and chaos.

The current situation in Ndjamena is much too chaotic for any balanced assessment as to the direction Chad is likely to follow. Certainly the internal dynamics still incline the system towards disintegration, though the external forces are supportive of stabilization. The purpose of this article is to highlight the factors that impelled Chad to the brink of disintegration, rather than either to predict the future evolution of the country or to suggest possible solutions to the explosive tendencies in the Chadian polity.[2]

The author is presently Professor and Head of the Department of Politics at the University of Botswana and Swaziland at Gaborone.

1. Three out of eight posts, compared to the ten out of twenty-two cabinet posts in the new government. For the original array of power see *West Africa* 26 March, 2, 30 April 1979.

2. For a more detailed analysis see my chapter on Chad in *Regionalism and Political Instability in Africa: Three Francophone Studies*, forthcoming.



DIVISIONS ET OPPOSITIONS RÉGIONALES AU TCHAD*

*This sketch map of Chad is one of many bold illustrations from **L'Afrique au XXe siècle, le continent convoité,** by Elikia M'Bokolo, Études Vivantes, Paris and Montreal, 1980. This paperback guide to contemporary African politics is especially helpful on northern and western Africa—Editor, *African Affairs*.

Socio-economic background

Many African states are beset by major ethnic/regional cleavages and acute socio-economic disparities, but possibly nowhere is this more visible than in Chad, Africa's fifth-largest political entity, and one of the poorest on the continent. The artificiality of Chad's colonial boundaries, the territory's immense size, its unfavourable geographical location and its economic non-viability, neglect during the colonial era and mismanagement since, have all constituted major impediments to state-construction and nation-building. So sharp indeed are Chad's internal cleavages and inconsistencies that the major question about the post-independence era may well be why the territory did not disintegrate more rapidly—rather than why it only ultimately did so in the mid-1970s.

At the core of Chad's political difficulties lies the fact that its 497,750 sq.m. of landlocked territory straddle basic continental north–south, east–west ethnic and geographical dividing lines (see map on page 490). The country stretches from the heart of the Sahara desert to the savanna fringes of the equatorial belt; it has always been, and still is, the crossroads of powerful competitive socio-cultural and religious influences, the meeting place of the Maghreb with Black Africa, of the oriental Sudan with Nigeria and West Africa. A huge mosaic of small and splinterized, unintegrated ethnicities, many with sharply different patterns of socio-cultural organization and evolution, lifestyles and religions, the country has always been more a complex patchwork of mutually-competitive microcosms than a political entity, no matter how fragile.

Though the various ethnic groups within Chad may be divided into a small number of categories for purposes of generalization (with lifestyle pattern along a continuum between sedentary and nomadic proving the prime classificatory criterion) such compartmentalizations—except for the Sara clans—belie the total ethnic fragmentation and the strong centrifugal drives throughout the country. The largest population group in Chad are the twenty-odd culturally-assimilated Sara clans residing in the extreme south and numbering over one million people or one quarter of the total population. Mostly farmers and fishermen, historically never organized politically on a higher plane than small village groups under weak chiefs, the Sara had been the prime target for slave *razzias* from the Sahel Sultanates to their north.[3] Largely animist—though Christianity has made its deepest inroads among them during this century—the Sara were the main group that grasped with any avidity whatever meagre opportunities were presented them for upward mobility by the colonial power, to emerge eventually as the economic mainstay, and the political centre of power of Chad, until the recent upheavals in Ndjamena.

North of the Sara belt are scattered a large number of small Islamized ethnic fragments some of which had formed centralized quasi-sacred kingdoms that

3. See for example G. J. Kogongar, 'Introduction à la vie et à l'histoire precoloniale des populations Sara du Tchad', unpublished dissertation, University of Paris, 1971.

survived into the immediate pre-colonial era.[4] Despite their important historical past, only one—the Maba—encompasses a quarter of a million people, or 5 per cent of the population. The Maba, in the far east of the country, were the core of the powerful Ouadai Empire centered around Abéché.[5] Semi-sedentary pastoralists, historically much more pulled towards the Maghreb and the Sudan (Darfur), xenophobically Muslim and suspicious of 'Western contamination', the Maba and allied groups are to this day widely feared and hated by the Sara due to their former regular slave raiding activities and contempt of the black south. With the onset of the colonial era (an era that Ouadai resisted until militarily crushed), the east became a stagnant backwater of the new colony. Passive resistance to anything introduced by the French 'infidel'—and French fears of a revival of militant Islamic nationalism in the east—helped to create major socio-economic disparities between Ouadai and the rest of the country, especially the south.[6] Seething with resentments dating to the French occupation which were further exacerbated by their rapid subsequent decline in importance; and unwilling to accept as their equals—and later, as their political masters—the black populations of the south, the eastern groups have formed one of the principal centrifugal poles in post-independence Chad.

Also in the Sahelian belt one can note the Barma, founding group of the Baguirmi kingdom (which also raided the south for slaves even though it was more often than not a tributary to other powers);[7] and the Kanuri and Kanembu, who together with their more numerous brethren in northern Nigeria had constituted the core of the longest-lasting Sudanic empire in African history—Kanem-Bornu. Politically the Kanuri gravitate towards Maiduguri (in northern Nigeria), while the political centre of the Kanembu is at Mao in Kanem.[8]

In the extremely sparsely-populated desert northern half of Chad reside the semi-nomadic and fiercely independent Toubou, since 1966 the backbone of the rebellion against Ndjamena. Divided into two main branches—the Teda of Tibesti, and the Daza of Ennedi and Borkou—and internally split into numerous feuding clans, the 160,000-odd Toubou used to control the caravan trails from the Fezzan (Libya) to Bornu.[9] Strenuously resisting the French intrusion into

4. Annie M. D. Lebeuf, *Les Populations du Tchad*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1959; Albert Le Rouvreur, *Saheliens et Sahariens du Tchad*, Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1962.
5. J. Ferrandi, *Abéché. Capitale du Ouadai*, Paris, Edition de l'Afrique Francaise, 1913.
6. Nowhere better is this visible than in school attendance rates, which stood in 1970 at 4 per cent for the Ouadai prefecture, compared to 61 per cent in the south.
7. V. Pacques, 'Origines et caractere du pouvoir royale au Baguirmi', *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, vol. 37, No. 2, 1967.
8. There is a vast literature on Kanem-Bornu and on the Kanuri. See especially Yves Urvoy, *L'Histoire de L'Empire du Bornu*, Paris, Larose, 1949, and Ronald Cohen, 'The Bornu Kingdom', *Boston University Papers on Africa*, vol. 2 1966, pp. 39–83.
9. L. C. Briggs, *Tribes of the Sahara*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1960; R. Capot-Rey, *L'Afrique Blanche Francaise*, vol. 2, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1953 and Walter Cline, *The Teda of Tibesti, Borku and Kawar*, Menasha (Wisc.), George Banta, 1950. See also the seminal work of A. Adu Boahen, *Britain, the Sahara and the Western Sudan*, Oxford University Press, 1964.

the region—under both the Ottoman and the Sanusiya banners—they were not completely pacified until the 1920s. Totally outside the mainstream of political and economic life until their rebellion in the mid-1960s, the Toubou had been virtually left alone by the French in exchange for a pledge to maintain the security of the caravan trails.

South of the Toubou zone of nomadization, and in an arc stretching from Sudan to Nigeria, are found Chad's various Arab clans. By far the country's second-largest ethnic grouping (14 per cent of the population), these nomadic, highly splinterized Arab clans have, like the Toubou, figured only marginally in the country's political evolution[10] and have known little unity beyond the clan level. Interspersed among them, and further to the south, are to be found also small numbers of Hausa and Fulani, both non-indigenous to the area.[11] Except for the Sara and the Arabs—who, as has been noted, are culturally compact but politically as fragmented as the rest of the country—most of Chad's ethnicities encompass less then 100,000 people each.

Immediately prior to the arrival of the French, the territory had been contested by two powers; from the east the great slave-raider Rabah had carved up for himself a huge personal empire stretching from Sudan through Ndélé (currently in the Central African Republic) to Nigeria, where he had vanquished the declining Bornu. Though Rabah had not attacked Ouadai frontally, his sweep had conquered many of the latter's peripheral domains and tributary regions, demolishing Ouadai's previous hegemony over central Chad. And from the north, via the Toubou and other semi-nomadic groups, the Sanusiya order had been making deep inroads into Kanem. The French conquest of Chad effectively boxed in the Sanusiya order in Libya, eliminated the Rabahist challenge, and by crushing the pre-eminence of the Sahelian sultanates (especially Ouadai) set the stage for the eventual ascendance of the Sara south, based on the latter's agricultural potentials, numerical superiority, cultural unity and pre-French orientations.

French rule did not, however, result in a strong centralizing administration that might have alleviated centre-periphery tensions and external counter-pulls, and soothed regionalist sentiments and inter-ethnic animosities. Nor did it result in the smooth development of the colony. This never was the goal of France in the area (or for that matter, elsewhere). The task would in any case have been monumental given Chad's size, diversity and existing cleavages, while the territory's economic non-viability seemed to preclude anything beyond the establishment of a very loose Gallic peace in the area. Hence sixty years of French rule did not result in major changes in the territory though it did set the stage for the emancipation of the south from earlier hazards. The contending

10. Louis Courtecuisse, *Quelques populations de la République du Tchad, Les Arabes*, Paris, CHEAM, 1971.

11. The former essentially as transient merchants on the *hajj* (though many long-resident in Chadian towns), while the latter arrived in the country only in the 1920s and 1930s. For the Hausa see John H. Works, *Pilgrims in a Strange Land*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1977.

political poles and their ethnic bases remained virtually intact; the economy—outside the south which became the centre of intensive cotton cultivation—remained stagnant; ethnic animosities continued festering even as new regional disparities multiplied.

Though the French had fought hard to conquer the territory, once it was theirs it was largely neglected. Most of it either barren desert or swampy and inhospitable, a posting to Chad was regarded within the French colonial service as a sign of demotion and as the lowest rung for administrative personnel. Some of the most unsuitable staff were posted to the colony with periodic scandals erupting consequent to their misadventures; many posts remained vacant or were staffed by junior personnel, while administrative turnover was consequently extremely high.[12] Understaffed and with a minimal budget, Chad stagnated during much of the colonial era,[13] its internal cleavages frozen and its artificial unity uneasily maintained by French force of arms.

In light of the paucity of administrative personnel greater emphasis was placed in Chad on indirect rule, utilizing chiefs, and especially the Sultans of the principal pre-colonial entities (Ouadai, Baguirmi, Kanem) as surrogate rulers. Though this policy served the French well, it had major destabilizing consequences for the post-colonial era. It entrenched chiefly government and sanctified traditional rule in the Sahel—where it already had been powerful—inevitably laying the backdrop for future friction with Ndjamena; and it artificially created powerful chiefs in the south, where there had generally been none, paving the way for anti-chiefly demonstrations such as those in the 1950s. Both were to work to the detriment of the unification of the nationalist movement prior to independence, and were major impediments to Ndjamena's attempts to impose its authority in the countryside after it.

In summing up Chad's colonial 'heritage', it would hardly be an exaggeration to note that large parts of the territory and significant numbers of its population, were never effectively governed or administered directly by the central government. BET had only nominally been under French rule, the French presence confined to small garrisons especially in Faya-Largeau. Not until 1960 were parts of the huge prefecture fully charted or explored. The taciturn Toubou who avoided contact with the French were largely left alone, as were many of the nomadic Arab clans and other groups in Kanem and Biltine. Ouadai, and the East in general, were allowed to stagnate in light of the population's general disinclination to more than tacitly accept French over-rule. Groups straddling the poorly demarcated eastern wastelands continued defying *any* central

12. See William B. Cohen, *Rulers of Empire. The French Colonial Service in Africa*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1971. In 1928, for example, fully 42 per cent of all posts in the colony were unfilled.

13. In the educational field, for example, the huge colony still had in 1933 only 18 qualified teachers, and the largest school (in Fort Lamy, largely attended by children of the Senegalese *Tirailleurs*) had only three grades and 135 pupils. Chad's *first* high school was only established after the Second World War.

authority, and their age-long intermittent brigandage continued across the international boundary. (The neighbouring Darfur province of Sudan was likewise among the last to feel British presence there.) The sparsely-populated and largely isolated prefectures of Guera and Salamat for long did not feel Fort Lamy's control. Inter-ethnic violence and *razzias* continued there well beyond the formal conquest of the territory as also did slavery.[14]

Nor was the colonial power able to control or patrol the country's fissiparous borders across which (to this day) major traditional trade continues. Kotoko riverain chiefs continue to exact river-crossing 'taxes' on cattle moving to Cameroun and Nigeria. Currently half of Chad's exports of cattle (on-the-hoof), and much of the wheat produced on Lake Chad's polders, completely bypass central government controls, as they did during the colonial era. Government edicts can be enforced in the periphery only when accompanied by a show of force, and sporadic revolts, riots and eruptions of inter-ethnic violence fully tax the powers of the centre, that can hardly react to these incidents let alone intervene or prevent their occurrence. Thus it is not surprising that when the post-colonial Sara government of Tombalbaye assumed power over 'Chad'—where power had been only intermittently or not at all exerted in much of the country in the past by the French—the fragile status quo was shattered and the periphery proved to be much more resilient and powerful than the centre in the resultant tug-of-war.

Exacerbating existing regionalist sentiments, and restricting the political choices of central authority in Chad, is the acute non-viability of the country. Classified by the United Nations as one of the world's 25 least developed countries, the recent ravages of the Sahelian drought have further deteriorated Chad's economy. Essentially an agrarian economy, the country's main cash crop is cotton, cultivated in the south. Accounting for up to 80 per cent of Chad's exports; occupying the productive labour of one-half of the population; providing employment for fully 75 per cent of all industrial labour, and the sole mainstay of the tertiary (service) sector; Chad has a classic unicrop economy with all the hazards this entails.[15] Despite the centrality of cotton to the economy, its cultivation is neither favourably regarded by the bulk of the population, nor is its expansion assured, largely because of residual resentments over cotton's former role as a compulsory crop (to pay off taxes) and the low producer prices paid by the parastatal commercialization monopoly.[16]

14. It was only in 1911, for example, that the French moved against Mohamed es-Senoussi, Rabah's main lieutenant, Sultan of the slave-centre of Dar Kouti; and as late as 1923 Moslem pilgrims on the *hajj* were liable to be abducted in the countryside and sold as slaves.

15. For a review of the Chad economy see Georges Diguimbayé and Robert Langue, *L'Essor du Tchad*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1969; The World Bank, *Chad*, Washington, 1971, and 'Chad' in *Surveys of African Economies* vol. 1, International Monetary Fund, Washington, 1968.

16. Producer prices are low partly due to incredible wastage and corruption in the transport industry, and partly the distance of Chad from world markets.

Apart from cotton the country has large herds of cattle—mostly in the Sahel belt (recently decimated by 20 per cent by the drought)—that only figure marginally in official statistics due to extensive smuggling. Though there are many known or suspected mineral resources[17] (especially in BET) their insurmountable evacuation problems have to date deterred serious exploration or exploitation by cost-conscious consortia.

The basic weakness of the Chad economy lies in the facts that exports have only covered between 45–85 per cent of imports, that the regular budget requires foreign (French) subventions, that the development budget has either been *non-existent*, or in *toto* a function of external largesse, that private investment is at very low levels and that the country is in a classic dependency relationship vis-à-vis the metropole. Given the manifold social, economic and political problems facing Chad since independence—not least of which were the northern and eastern rebellions in the mid-1960s—Ndjamena's ability to either move forcefully towards their resolution, or even to react weakly to the most pressing crises, has been gravely circumscribed by the country's economic problems.

Political decay since Independence

Politics in Chad have always been an elite activity, dominated in the immediate pre-independence era by an array of chiefs from the traditional nobility,[18] urban evolués, non-nationals and expatriate elements. Moreover, many of the electoral tickets and parties that emerged in Chad following the colonial reforms of 1944–46 were no more than personalist vehicles for regional leaders, both southern, northern and eastern, often linked to expatriate commercial interests anxious to arrest or control the political evolution of the colony. Nor was the local French administration neutral in the various electoral contests that in essence pitched traditional eastern, Moslem groups against traditional or quasi-modern Sara political formations. Indeed, until the mid-1950s directly or indirectly, but always actively and visibly, the colonial government lent the weight of its office to the chiefly and traditional parties of the territory. Among the parties of the south the originally militant Parti Progressiste Tchadien, founded by Gabriel Lisette,[19] painfully slowly acquired pre-eminence in the 1950s and eventually defeated its eastern traditionalist protagonists for political control of the country.[20]

If the Sara south ultimately emerged victorious in 1957 in its decade-long tug-of-war with the Moslem East it was largely due to two factors. Firstly, due to

17. Including oil, recently discovered and tapped in small quantities in at least two localities.
18. Roughly 60 per cent of Chad's first Conseil General were chiefs.
19. A colonial administrator from Panama.
For his biography, as well as those of other Chadian personalities see Samuel Decalo, *Historical Dictionary of Chad*, Metuchen, N. J., Scarecrow Press, 1978.
20. The best, indeed virtually only, comprehensive study of this period is Jacques Le Cornec's *Histoire Politique du Tchad de 1900 à 1962*, Paris, Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1963.

the utter inability of the dominant Moslem nobility (in Ouadai, Chari-Baguirmi, Kanem and elsewhere) to unite, and stay united behind one leader or party; constant fissiparous strains tore the Moslem formations, stemming from diverging personal ambitions of individual leaders,[21] and from historic inter-regional competitions, at times heavily suffused with sectarian considerations. Secondly, the progressive extension of the franchise and the greater cultural unity of the south inevitably raised the electoral weight of the more numerous Sara. The non-existence in the south of any great Sultans or chiefs of more than regional importance also assured that traditional authorities compromised more readily with the quasi-modern parties, merging eventually within the PPT. The latter had, moreover, mellowed during its long period in the political wilderness, shedding its early anti-chiefly stridency and bringing into its fold the traditional elements and their vote-delivery powers.

The final attempt to form a solid anti-PPT Moslem-Arab opposition (virtually a 'Who's Who' of Chad's Moslem leaders) collapsed in 1960 due to internal cleavages much as previous efforts had, and a much heralded 'unity' merger of the Moslem factions with the PPT (in April 1961) was haughtily ignored by Tombalbaye when compiling party lists for the forthcoming elections in which Moslem leaders were excluded. Shortly later (in January 1962) political opposition was banned and a purge and arrest of Moslem leaders commenced. Earlier, Tombalbaye's drive to consolidate his primacy within the PPT had brought about the purge of Lisette (in August 1960, on the grounds of his being a non-national) and several other veteran political leaders of the south. The purge developed in intensity, engulfing many of Lisette's lieutenants, ministers and supporters (such as the respected Jules Toura Gaba) and merged in 1963–65 with the wave of arrests of Moslem and Arab (particularly Ouadaian) leaders. Many of those not expelled from the country for citizenship reasons (a favourite tactic) ended up in remote BET garrisons. At least 23 of them were liquidated while in prison, as was discovered following the 1975 *coup d'état*.

The recent and difficult rise of the PPT to power, and the record of historic grievances against Moslem groups, contributed to a major settling of accounts after independence. The fragility and weakness of central authority as well as Tombalbaye's personal insecurity at the apex of the PPT (where he compared poorly with Lisette who was still popular) no doubt called for firm and unequivocal leadership; and the vitriolic and defiant rallying calls of the still-feared Moslem-East 'enemy' blanketed Ndjamena with a state-of-siege mentality, impelling Tombalbaye towards a tough stance vis-à-vis real or suspected sources of opposition. Certainly at the time there were sufficient real and potential sources of subversion in the country, and the view from the capital—itself a highly Arab-Hausa town far from the Sara centre of gravity—was hardly

21. Of which Ahmed Koulamallah's (with an ethnic base in Chari-Baguirmi) were the most disruptive. See Decalo *Historical Dictionary of Chad*, pp. 167–9 for the latter's multi-faceted political role ranging from an arch-conservative Moslem fundamentalist to militant Socialist.

reassuring. Several militant Moslem and Arab leaders were organizing grass-roots resistance in Chari-Baguirmi and Ouadai. Secessionist tracts and pro-Nasserite ideology had surfaced in Abéché, and in general unease was sweeping the East consequent to the entrenchment of a Sara-dominated government in Ndjamena and the banning of competitive politics.

In embarking upon a policy of widescale repression, constant purges, constitutional and electoral manipulations, and the centralization of all authority in his own hands, Tombalbaye confused, however, the *substance* and *myth* of State power, grossly overestimating his control of the former and under-estimating the fragility of the ethnic and centre-periphery status-quo inherited at independence. The clampdown on Moslem leaders unleashed massive riots and demonstrations with countless casualties[22] even as it radicalized opposition, driving it underground or abroad, beyond reach and control of the State security forces. The imposition of what was to become a long-lasting state of emergency (after the 1963 riots), electoral and constitutional manipulations (including the 1963 dissolution and massive purge of the National Assembly) eroded whatever legitimacy Chad's fragile structures may have had and gave further impetus to plotting against the Tombalbaye regime. The inability—indeed, unwillingness—of the PPT to transform itself into a truly mass, and national, party—despite its alleged status as such—coupled with the crass neglect and maladministration of 'hostile regions', triggered spontaneous *jacquerie* and direct political action that were to mark the start of the rebellions in Chad. And Tombalbaye's personal insecurity and need for absolute conformity from his colleagues assured that the latter were to become a group of sycophants precluding critical policy debate, even as they plotted his demise behind his back.

Thus, though the regime certainly inherited a deeply splinterized and inherently unstable society and a weak administrative apparatus, the policies that emanated from Ndjamena—practically from independence—exacerbated existing inter-ethnic and regional frictions and set the stage for the violence that was to erupt in full force in the mid-1960s. Though Tombalbaye alternated his purges with periodic 'reconciliations' and political amnesties, integrating rehabilitated politicians into the PPT and government hierarchies, these were but token gestures of appeasement largely under pressure from France that was growing apprenhensive at the volatility of the Chadian situation. No non-Sara politician, whether loyal or not to Tombalbaye, and few not of the latter's specific clan, were able to hold office for long. Those arrested in the purges of 1963–65, released and elevated to office in the major amnesties of 1968–69, were back in prison—often on mere suspicion of subversion—by 1971.[23] And as

22. In the famous 1963 riots in Ndjamena and Am Timan (Salamat)—connected with the arrest in the former of Koulamallah, former mayor of Ndjamena Jean Baptiste and former Tombalbaye Minister of Interior Djibrine Kherallah—over 500 people died in confrontations with the police.

23. See also Samuel Decalo, 'Regionalism, Political Decay and Civil Strife in Chad', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, in press.

rebellion replaced subversion (after 1965) the stage of siege mentality—with its natural consequences—became ingrained in the Sara political strata in Ndjamena.

The Rebellions and Political Disintegration

The contemporaneous rebellions in eastern and northern Chad,[24] stemming from identical causes but each quite spontaneous, uncoordinated with the other, and both highly anarchic in inception, brought Ndjamena to its knees in 1978. Had French troops not actively intervened on the side of Tombalbaye, covertly as technical 'advisors' at the outset, overtly, in a fighting capacity later, the central government would have collapsed to the periphery forces fully a decade earlier.

The first region to rebel was the east, commencing with Batha and Salamat, for long Chad's 'Wild West', and so treated, with disdain, by Sara administrators appointed to these *prefectures* at independence. General unrest in these highly socially-fractured volatile and undeveloped regions—endemic even under the French—erupted in a bout of *jacquerie* and general revolt with the 1 November 1965 tax riots at Mangalmé (some 500 kilometres east of Ndjamena) that left 500 people dead. Spearheading the attack on all personnel and structures representative of Ndjamena, were Moubi (i.e. non-Moslem) tribesmen. Armed mostly with traditional weapons, tribesmen killed ten administrative officials (including the region's Assembly deputy) before security forces arrived and brutally quelled the disturbances, driving the Moubi into the countryside where they became an irredentist force for nearly a decade. The conflagration—for years not even acknowledged to have happened—was sparked off by the totally unchecked maladministration of the region by corrupt southern officials who, among others, illegally extorted from the population up to three times the taxes due, pocketing the difference themselves.[25]

The Mangalmé tax riots signalled the onset of the rebellions in Chad's eastern prefectures. From Batha the rebellion spread to Ouadai and Salamat where in February 1967 both the prefect and deputy prefect were killed. In Guéra the district capital of Mongo was placed under siege just as in Ouadai insurgents (linked with brigands) struck at will anywhere outside Abéché's city limits. In 1968 the rebellions leapfrogged to Chari-Baguirmi and anti-Ndjamena tracts and manifestations emerged in centres barely 100 kilometres from the capital. Communications between the different parts of the country—always difficult due to distance and inclement weather (seasonal inundation)—collapsed as all roads outside the south became unsafe, especially at night. Chad had become a patchwork of urban centres under permanent siege and frequently connected only by air.

24. In 1975 joined by the fictitious rebellion in Kanem that four years later catapulted its deputy-leader to the Presidency of Chad.
25. The raising of the head-tax (due to revenue short-falls in Ndjamena) and its extention for the first time to women added further fuel to simmering grievances throughout the country.

Though opportunistic leaders attempted to 'organize' and direct the rebellions, both from within, but mostly from abroad (Sudan, CAR), the anti-government insurgency was in most respects a highly anarchic and disorganized phenomena, with little tactical and hardly any financial support from abroad, and a classical example of peripheral disintegration of authority. *Jacquerie* moreover merged with the age-long brigandage endemic in the East—especially along the border wastelands with Sudan—detaching major portions of the country from *any* control—central, regional or even rebel. An early effort to coordinate the rebellions into a broad anti-Tombalbaye upheaval failed due to the mismatched personalities involved and their differing ethnic origins and ideological and religious stands. From this effort arose, however, the outside 'centres' of the rebellions (Tripoli for the northern and Khartoum for the eastern) and their external 'heads' (Dr Abba Siddick, purporting to head the northern FROLINAT and its Toubou First Liberation Army, and Hassan Ahmet Moussa, leading the eastern Moubi Second Liberation Army). Yet both leaders were largely divorced from 'their' units and/or forces and in both instances actual control over the insurgent forces was exerted by independent field commanders (in the north) or petty warlords (in the east). Thus, for example, when Moussa made his peace with Ndjamena in the early 1970s in the name of the FLT, fighting did not cease in the east and only some of 'his' Moubi groups rallied to Ndjamena.

Corrupt and arbitrary rule had in the meantime also set the vast BET prefecture aflame. Contemptuously maladministered as 'primitive' and 'enemy' territory by both civil and military officials since the withdrawal of the French garrison in BET on 23 January 1965 a dance-hall brawl in Bardai in which a Chadian soldier died, received precisely the kind of heavy-handed retaliation from the government designed to set the proud and independent-minded Toubou on the warpath. The entire village—men, women and children, and including the Derde of the Toubou[26] and his household—were paraded for hours, many stripped naked, amid jeers from the southern garrison troops, followed by the imposition of numerous fines for 'offences' ranging from the wearing of turbans to the growing of beards. Though the brutalization of the population was in due time checked, the damage was done. The Derde slipped into self-exile in Libya from which he was not to return until after Tombalbaye's death in the 1975 coup; his sons raised the banner of war in Tibesti and their southward thrust was only thwarted by the entry of French troops in the civil war in 1968. Here too the Chadian government only belatedly acknowledged the disintegration of its authority and for long referred to the Toubou rebellion as banditry. Yet, the then-secret Galopin report[27] accurately blamed the central

26. Head of the Tomaghera clan of the Teda branch of the Toubou of BET. The current Derde—Wodei Kichidemi—disinherited his last surviving son (currently the prime power-wielder in Ndjamena) in 1976 when the latter refused to lay down his arms, and named his successor Derde a chieftain from another clan.

27. Named so after its author, Captain Pierre Galopin, of the French forces in Chad. Galopin was later captured by Toubou forces and executed.

government's administrative, military and party cadres—inexperienced, insensitive and exploitative in mentality—for the explosive confrontation that led to civil war.[28]

As in the east, so in BET self-exiled elements attempted to claim leadership of the Toubou revolt—specifically Abba Siddick, a former Tombalbaye minister purged in 1959. Yet as in the east the revolt was highly localized, ethnically-based (retaining much of its exclusiveness throughout) and beholden to no outside force and certainly not to Siddick. The latter's abject lack of control over the Toubou rank and file was constantly visible, most dramatically, however, during the 1974–77 Mme. Claustre kidnap fiasco, and more recently in the 1979 rearray of power in Ndjamena in which Siddick's group was initially totally ignored in the allocation of cabinet portfolios.

As the rebellions detached vast areas of territory in the east, centre and north from Ndjamena's authority, political instability increased in the capital. Tombalbaye's entire last decade in office was replete with factional clashes within his cabinet (over governmental priorities), competing personal ambitions among his lieutenants (several of whom were plotting his demise), confrontations with students and intellectuals (mostly southern), tract warfare, conspiracies and two guerilla attacks on Ndjamena itself for which Libya was blamed. Allegations of widespread corruption focused on the crass mismanagement of the distribution of world relief aid for victims of the Sahel drought that was mostly shunted for private profit or/and diverted to the (unaffected) Sara south and away from starving 'enemy' prefectures. As the groundswell of opposition threatened to engulf the south itself, the beleaguered regime protectively cloaked itself with an 'authenticity' campaign that stressed the (pre-Christian) traditional values of the southern populations. The excesses of the ill-conceived programme gained Chad world notoriety and multiplied sources of opposition from within the modern Sara elites.[29]

In 1968–69 the civil conflagration in Chad became externalized, first with France's dispatch of troops that virtually bore all the effort of containing the Toubou and quelling the eastern disturbances; later, following the rise of Qadhafi in Libya, through the latter's utilization of the rebellion to claim, and then occupy, the 200-mile strip of northern BET potentially rich with mineral resources.[30] Libya's role in the anti-Ndjamena fighting was, however, restricted to diplomatic, financial and limited military assistance to Siddick's faction.

28. It was only several years later, after the outbreak of the rebellion, that Tombalbaye publicly admitted that Ndjamena had contributed to their eruption. In 1971, for example, he noted that 'many errors of all kinds had been committed and have given rise to injustices . . . which are the cause of discontent which in turn led to subversion', *Africa Research Bulletin,* Political Series, May 1971.

29. For two opposing views see N. Tombalbaye, 'Expression de la Civilisation Sara: initiation au Yondo méne à Dieu', *France-Eurafrique,* November 1974, and 'Tchad: Revolution Culturelle', *Afrique Contemporaine* No. 69, September–October 1977.

30. The claim was based on the defunct (never-ratified) 1936 Mussolini–Laval treaty.

And not to the Toubou warriors, largely due to sectarian reasons[31] but also because the latter did not recognize Libya's territorial demands.

Mounting domestic opposition to France's role in this African 'Vietnam' forced the French to withdraw as Tombalbaye's main prop (at least overtly), but not before the Toubou forces were decimated, scattered into small groups, and rolled back to isolated desert outposts. In like manner the eastern rebellion was contained except for the ungovernable border wastelands that continued to see quick in-and-out incursions from Darfur. Among the reforms the French exacted from Tombalbaye was a total reorganization of the Chadian army and a retraining (and purge) of the administrative personnel, the elimination of the head tax (and other levies) in the north, widescale amnesties, the integration of Moslem leaders in the government and administration, the reinstatement of the Sahel Sultans with many of their traditional powers (especially of taxation) that had been whittled down in the mid-1960s, and a general 'reconciliation' policy.

Though at the time it appeared as if the corner had been turned and Ndjamena could reimpose its will over the periphery, such was not the case. In the north the Toubou forces were slowly regrouping under a more ideological and battle-tested leadership. The only surviving son of the Derde—Wodei Goukouni—and Marxist ex-lawyer-turned-guerilla-leader Hissene Habre, emerged in control of the main Toubou fighting force of roughly 700 men. The lull in the fighting and the peace-offerings implicit in the French-imposed reforms were no longer relevant to a rebellion that had acquired *maximalist* goals under a leadership with ideological pretensions[32] supported, even if lukewarmly, by external forces.

In the east the rebellion had always had a more fragmented ethnic base and the unruly and underarmed marauding bands had never coalesced behind any of the leaders headquartered across Chad's borders. Though scattered, and their original stranglehold over the eastern regional urban centres broken, they retreated to the more remote border areas from which they continued occasional forays against Chadian units or urban centres. With the defection of some of the Moubi leaders and warriors to the government in 1971 (over 400 of them were promptly integrated in the central security forces) the rebellion dwindled in dimension to the general unruliness always characteristic of the east.

The socio-economic and political repercussions of the war, however, had by 1971 begun to affect the south. Tombalbaye's purges had left scores of disaffected politicians and administrators. The 1969–71 'reconciliation' amnesties had similarly displaced senior Sara personnel hitherto in assured sinecures in favour of Moslem and eastern leaders. Much of the plotting within the Sara elite (and the subsequent dramatic arrests of those considered the heirs-apparent

31. The Toubou, and especially the Teda, are of the Sanusiya order, the head of which (King Idriss) had just been ousted in Libya.
32. See the interview with Wodei Goukouni in Andrew Lycett, 'Chad's Disastrous Civil War', *Africa Report*, September–October 1978.

to Tombalbaye) stemmed from this disaffection that was spreading within Tombalbaye's own power base. The political assassination in Paris of Dr. Outel Bono[33] was one indication of the seriousness with which the regime regarded the threat of the emergence of alternate political contenders from the south. Moreover, though France picked up the tab for much of the war effort, the economic dislocations consequent to the fall of large regions under insurgent control coupled with the ravages of the Sahel drought, cut into fiscal allocations to the south, always in the past the major beneficiary of governmental largesse. Most importantly, however, the disaffection was finally affecting the Chadian armed forces—the ultimate prop of the regime and the bulwark against the insurgency.

The Chadian security forces had been totally shattered and demoralized by the success of the civil rebellion, and had proved to be ineffective as a fighting force. Largely commanded by Sara officers but with significant numbers of non-Sara personnel in the rank and file (many of whom mutinied or deserted on the battle-field), the armed forces suffered from poor logistics and obsolete material. Indeed, in the last stage of the civil war they were completely outweaponed by the sophisticated electronic equipment in rebel hands. Neither well-trained nor well-led, aliens in the northern and eastern prefectures (where they were virtually regarded as an occupation force and whose populations and gripes they could not even begin to understand) rarely did the Chad army manifest any serious determination to fight pitched battles. Desertions and mutinies were a common occurrence; entire units melted into the countryside at the first sign of the enemy—fully half of the army defected or was captured in the 1977–78 campaign in BET.

The officer corps was held to blame for the various reverses in the battle-field, and among them powerful resentments emerged that ultimately led to Tombalbaye's fall. Though the 1975 coup had complex causes—and should be seen within the context of widescale disaffection with Tombalbaye's rule—as elsewhere many stemmed from personal and corporate motivations.[35] Foremost among these were deep interarmy resentments and competitions[36] and a series of arrests of top officers (1973–75) that, at the time of the coup, threatened to engulf yet another strata of the officer corps.[37]

33. As Director of Health in Ndjamena, Bono had fallen foul of the regime on two occasions (through critical speeches) and was on the eve of announcing the formation of an opposition party in exile (southern-based) when assassinated under mysterious circumstances. Tombalbaye disclaimed any role or knowledge of the killing, though later he implicated Georges Digiumbayé a former key minister of his. For further details see 'Chad: the killing of Outel Bono', and 'Light on Bono's Death', in *West Africa*, 3 September 1973 and 20 January 1975 respectively. See also Decalo, *Historical Dictionary of Chad*, pp. 66–7.

34. In 1976 numbering some 5,000 troops, See Decalo, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–4.

35. Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa*, New Haven Yale University Press, 1976, especially Ch. 1.

36. Tombalbaye had on several occasions privately and publicity humiliated the Army officer corps, and in defence allocations had favoured the gendarmerie and especially the specialized Compagnies Tchadiennes de Securité units.

37. Among the most prominent to be purged were General Felix Malloum (in 1973) in connection with political sorcery referred to as the 'Black Sheep Plot' and, in 1975, Colonel Djimé, Major Kottiga and General Djogo.

The coup broke the last tenuous cloak of legitimacy of Ndjamena's rule; it rapidly polarized and politicized the armed forces into factions, and by removing a score of the most senior officers from operational to administrative duties, further weakened military leadership in the battlefield. Despite General Malloum's ability to persuade the Derde of the Toubou to return to his capital, Zouar, the new regime was unable to forge towards its pledge of a non-military solution to the internal strife. The Chadian army, was, after all, a badly demoralized and defeated army with few sources of support in the countryside, and its major prop—France—had since 1970 been trying to extricate itself from the military morass largely due to internal public pressure.[38] The floundering military regime was beset from the outset with factionalism and internal plotting and was led by a drab and unimaginative officer (Malloum) who could neither inspire confidence among his colleagues nor come up with alternate suggestions for action.

When the final insurgent campaign southwards recommenced (now more heavily backed by Libya) the central forces crumpled completely, disintegrating along ethnic lines,[39] with residual French forces confining themselves to averting the physical overrunning of governmental positions in the Sahel belt. Though Malloum bitterly criticized Libya's 'conqueror's appetite'[40] he flew to the Libyan oasis of Sebha and later to Benghazi in order to arrange a humiliating truce. Yet even as the harsh conditions for a cease-fire were being hammered out, Goukouni's position hardened. Announcing the unification under his aegis of all the regional insurgent forces, he called for the unconditional surrender of Ndjamena and the definitive replacement of the 'dictatorial neo-colonial regime imposed by France since 11 August 1960 [independence]'.[41] Faced with renewed rebel advances Malloum attempted a last-minute gamble at splitting the insurgents along ethnic lines by elevating recently-expelled FROLINAT leader Hissene Habre to the Premiership.[42] The desperate move failed as Malloum and Habre—in terms of personality mismatched and with irreconcilable views on their relative role within the bicephalous executive—fell apart, leading to fighting in downtown Ndjamena and the partition of the capital with Malloum's 'army' seeking refuge behind a cordon of French troops. Following a series of 'summit' meetings between the various protagonists in which foreign powers (Libya, and increasingly Nigeria) played a dominant role in dictating the new

38. See 'Chad: French Senate Row', *West Africa*, 6 June 1970.
39. John Howe, 'The North Has it', *Africa*, No. 93, May 1979, p. 29.
40. 'Whom is Chad Fighting?', *West Africa*, 25 July 1977. See also 'The Many Faces of FROLINAT,' *West Africa* 15 August 1977.
41. *Africa Research Bulletin*, Political Series, May 1978, see also 'The Price of Peace in Chad', *West Africa*, 17 April 1978 and the issues of *Le Monde*, 18, 19, 21, 28, 29 April 1978.
42. Predicated on Habre's ability to bring over to Ndjamena some 500 battle-tested troops and to wean away from Goukouni members of his ethnic group, the Gorane. Some Toubou-Gorane fighting did indeed erupt, and Habre's troops did 'liberate' from the Toubou some villages in Biltine and Ennedi, but this was of little consequence to the future pace of events.

array of power to emerge,[43] the victorious forces of Goukouni entered the capital, marking the definitive end of an era for Chad.

The Long Road Back?

Goukouni's rise to power on 23 March 1979 signified the *de facto* end of Sara political hegemony, but did not, in itself, usher in either an end to civil strife or a new centre of gravity and authority. Sara power had collapsed less because of the strength of the periphery than because of the weakness of the centre. A new political elite, a new ethnic and regional coalition of leaders took over 'power' in Ndjamena, but the country remained as splinterized, as totally uncontrollable as before.

Few of the individuals that percolated to prominence in 'post-liberation' Ndjamena were important power-wielders; some, as *West Africa* so aptly put it, 'scarcely represent anyone but themselves'.[44] Indeed, many jumped on the FROLINAT bandwagon only once the smell of victory was in the air; others emerged to proclaim their anti-Sara credentials and claim their share under the new Goukouni sun—only with the fall of Ndjamena itself. The largely fictitious 'Third' Liberation Army—under Nigerian influence—created only in 1975 never baptized in action (a 'phantom Army'[45]), is a good example; yet nominal leadership over this force of 'little more than 100 men'[46] was sufficient grounds for the elevation of Shawa Mahamat Lol[47] to the Presidency of Chad in the new Goukouni-Habre administration. The largely inactive 'Vulcan Army', originally led by 'General' Baghalani from Khartoum, likewise emerged at liberation to claim its share of the spoils, and received two cabinet portfolios.

Few of the individuals who assumed control of the state apparatus had had any relevant administrative experience or decision-making authority in the past. Virtual novices to government and administration,[48] most (including Goukouni) had been petty local functionaries. Running the government machinery (of either Chad, or just Ndjamena) with neither expertise nor the assistance of Sara personnel and French technicians—the vast majority of whom had fled to the south or left the country—proved an impossibility and Ndjamena's municipal services sank to a level below that of sub-provincial villages.

43. The new Nigerian role in the Chadian crisis is to an equal extent based on a desire to assure stability on its northern flank, and on a desire to assist in the elimination of France from the region, a cardinal feature of Nigerian foreign policy though rarely stated in so many words. Also, Nigeria's recent role in the 1979 Chad 'settlement' may be seen as another example of Nigeria's rise to the status of the major regional power in West Africa.
44. *West Africa*, 11 June 1979.
45. *West Africa*, 30 April 1979.
46. *Ibid.*
47. He had joined the 'Army' only in 1979 and had never commanded troops or seen combat. For his biography see *Afrique Contemporaine*, No. 103, May–June 1979, p. 4. See also 'Tchad: Anarchie et Confusion', *Afrique Contemporaine*, No. 103, May–June 1979.
48. *West Africa*, 10 December 1979.

Bitter ethnic animosities, personal jealousies and competitions between segments of the victorious 'Liberation forces' triggered persistent bloody confrontations among undisciplined factions, underscoring the total lack of unity or ethnic cohesion of the forces that had emerged victorious in the civil strife.[49] Until the demilitarization of the capital commenced (January 1980, alas abortively), the situation was most volatile in Ndjamena where all factions faced each other fully armed and jostled each other for marginal tactical advantage. So insecure was the capital, indeed, that Habre never left his headquarters unless accompanied by up to 350 guards.[50]

Control of Ndjamena, moreover, did not translate itself into control of the rest of Chad, as rapidly became clear. When a battle-tested Toubou column was sent into Mayo-Kebbi (chosen due to its largely non-Sara population) to test Colonel Kamougoué's military strength, the troops were decimated, and remnants chased north to within 50 kilometres of Ndjamena.[51] The circle had been completed; a new periphery, a new source of resistance to Ndjamena had emerged, the south. Though some moderate Sara officers were willing to cooperate with Goukouni—such as General Negue Djogo who was elevated to the Vice Presidency—Colonel Kamougoué, the most popular southern was not, and became the symbol of Sara resistance to the new order in Ndjamena. The break between the two Chads rapidly became complete as Kamagoué raised the banner of secession. Remnants of the Chadian national army—now stripped of their non-Sara personnel—stood guard over the southern prefectures that had become all but autonomous. Neither cotton nor foodstuffs—mostly raised in the south—found their way to Ndjamena. Swollen with the skilled Sara that had fled the Sahel towns, and purged of much of its Moslem populations following the bitter anti-Moslem massacres that had erupted at the death throes of Malloum's regime,[52] the Sara south presented a remarkable image of unity, cohesion and resolve, even more striking when compared to the bickering among the victors in Ndjamena. It was doubtless this unity, and the strong rebuff to his forces in Mayo-Kebbi, that in 1979 swayed Goukouni to adopt greater flexibility vis-à-vis the south, especially in light of progressive internationalization of the conflict.

For the collapse of central authority in Ndjamena had also brought about greater interference from interested external sources as well as a rearray of support behind the various domestic parties. France had virtually changed sides in the conflict, assuring the collapse of Sara hegemony by refusing to

49. See for more examples the reports in *West Africa*, 18 June and 2 July 1979.
50. John Howe, 'The North Has It', *Africa*, No. 93, May 1979, p. 32.
51. To save face, the advance was referred to as one aimed 'To show the flag, to provide a presence without seeking a confrontation' (*West Africa*, 21 May 1979), though it was a straightforward military exercise. See 'Les Accords de Lagos', *Afrique Contemporaine*, No. 105, September–October, 1979, p. 27.
52. 'Massacres of Moslems in Chad', *West Africa*, 12 March 1979. The violence was described as 'one of Africa's worst communal massacres for years' by *Financial Times*, 19 March 1979.

assume a combatant role. Nigeria, hitherto only on the sidelines, played a vital but exceedingly heavy-handed role in forcing the opposing sides to agree on the details for the transfer of power, the cease-fire, and the separation of troops in the capital.[53] When the new Ndjamena regime appeared on the verge of floundering a haughty Nigerian oil embargo promptly pulled it back into line, even as pro-Nigerian positions and options were expressed by representatives of the Third Liberation Army, virtually a Nigerian pressure group, if not creation.

Finally, Libya, previously lukewarm in its support for either Goukouni or Habre (for reasons we have noted) was deeply alienated by the fact that Dr Siddick's FROLINAT faction had been completely ignored in the allocation of portfolios in Ndjamena. In retaliation Libya abruptly switched its support to Kamougoué's south creating what has been reported to as 'a balletic symetry'[54] in the international array of power. In May 1979 a flow of arms to the south bolstered the holding-out powers of Kamougoué's forces while a 2,500 troop two-pronged Libyan military advance on Faya Largeau served notice that Libya's claims on the Aouzou strip were not to be trifled with.

The new threats to the territorial integrity of Chad led to a renewed bout of negotiations culminating in August 1979 in the Lagos Agreement in which each of the eleven factions demanding a role in the future government was given one largely irrespective of the merits of their case. The agreement also stipulated a twenty two-man cabinet called the Transitional Government of National Unity to be sustained by troops from three countries with non-contiguous borders (Benin, Congo/B and Guinea), an exchange of prisoners, demilitarization of the capital and national elections within 18 months.[55] The three pillars of the new Government remained Goukouni's FROLINAT, Habre's Forces Armées du Nord and Kamougoué's Forces Armées Tchadiennes; the three leaders were given key positions in the new government, with Kamougoué displacing Djogo as Vice President of Chad, and Habre retaining the Ministry of Defence over which he had laid a personal claim. Other factions were likewise allocated important posts (e.g. the Foreign Ministry was given to Ahmet Acyl, the pro-Libyan head of the Vulcan Army) though Dr Siddick was only confirmed as Minister of Higher Education. The 18 August Lagos Agreement began to be implemented only in early November 1979 when the heads of the eleven factions set up the agreed government after a protracted meeting at the 'safe' site of Douguia (60 kms north of Ndjamena on the river-border with Cameroun).[56] The demilitarization of the capital was likewise an extremely slow process since all factions (except for Kamougoué's) were reluctant to withdraw from their hard-

53. In the latter instance the unruly Nigerian troops in Ndjamena were requested withdrawn within a short period of time. See *Africa Research Bulletin*, Political Series, July 1979.
54. 'Chad: Trying to keep it together', *Africa*, June 1979, p. 37. See also *Jeune Afrique*, 13 June 1979.
55. 'Les Accords de Lagos', *Afrique Contemporaine*, No. 105, September–October 1979.
56. *Le Monde*, 9 and 13 November 1979. The later issue covers the full list of appointments.

earned positions, strategically invaluable in case of a renewal in the tug-of-war among the victors.

Despite the temporarily improving picture in Ndjamena, and sighs of relief from many observers over the seeming stabilization of the conflict, the situation was still highly volatile and should not have offered much ground for excessive optimism. The total disunity of the victorious forces, their internal cleavages and utter lack of discipline made for further explosive clashes; a murderous 'free for all' could easily erupt should either Habre or Goukouni fall victim to an accidental or calculated attack, while a power grab by Habre could likewise easily lead to a bloodbath. Moreover, though Goukouni had emerged as essentially the only figure that most other factions were willing to serve under—despite his somewhat morose, inward-looking personality—Habre's ambitions knew few bounds and the two key northern leaders still barely got along together. The importance to Goukouni of a true *entente* with the south, and Kamougoué, could easily deepen the rift with Habre as the latter feels his influence declining.

There were also many other factors, social, economic and political—including Ouadian resentments at their marginal role in the new power array—that could unhinge the precarious equilibrium of late 1979 in Ndjamena. But by far the greatest imponderable was whether or not the south could accept its definitive eclipse as the political centre of gravity of Chad. In light of the myriad of historic grievances and fears that have polarized the south against the Sahelian peoples, and in view of the socio-economic importance and cultural unity of the south, Sara acquiescence in anything short of equality is highly unlikely. The prospects for an enduring stable ethnic/regional sharing of power in Ndjamena appears overly optimistic. Several structural devices aimed at protecting regional interests and a measure of local autonomy—mooted at various times during the last five years—may be unworkable in Chad and, in any case, have failed widely elsewhere on the Africa continent. Thus, unless the various competing factions in the country are able to tap resources of goodwill currently not visible, 1980 may merely mark the onset of the third decade of instability in Chad.

Indeed, the resurgence of civil war in Chad in the first half of 1980 may indicate that even these somewhat pessimistic projections are overly optimistic.