**"Mano River Region at Risk?:
Post-Conflict Conversations Within and Across Borders"**

**A States at Regional Risk (SARR) Conference
Monrovia, Liberia: January 13-14, 2009**

**Hosted by the Institute of Critical International Studies (ICIS)
of Emory University**

Implementing Partner: Liberia Democracy Watch

Responses to Lead Questions

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States at Regional Risk--Mano River Union Concept Essay

The Mano River Union includes the modern nation states Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. Côte d'Ivoire has recently become affiliated with the other three countries and may become a full-fledged member in the years to come. The four countries share much in common, including populations that have been highly mobile within the region since the precolonial period, and several ethnic groups (Fulbe, Maninka, Kissi) who live in three or four of the MRU countries. Against a background of shared history and culture, there are also major differences. Liberia and Sierra Leone are Anglophone while Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire are francophone; the histories of Liberia and Sierra Leone were shaped in important ways by the presence of freed slaves (manumitted in North America or liberated from slave ships intercepted at sea), while this was not the case in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. Guinea was linked to the large-scale states of Mali (13th to 16th c.) Umar Tal (19th c) and Samory Touré (19th c.), and Côte d'Ivoire to the Asante state through the Baule, while the people of Liberia and Sierra Leone were typically part of smaller-scale political formations.

Against this patchwork of difference and similarity, the postcolonial history of the four countries has been varied. Liberia was never colonized by Europeans, while Guinea was one of the two flagship countries in sub-Saharan Africa to reject colonialism in the 1950's. The "Fathers of Independence" in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire both ruled until their deaths (Sékou Touré's in 1984, Félix Houphouët-Boigny's in 1993). Although the two were quite different, what followed in both countries was a gradual dissolution of the coherence that each charismatic figure had stamped on his country. Political succession in Sierra Leone and Liberia was more regular, but was also punctuated from an earlier date by coups d'état.

The factors that led to civil wars in three of the four countries and a variety of different disruptions in Guinea have been debated, but in all four cases we can identify an intersection of external and internal causes. Externally, the end of the Cold War meant that leaders no longer gained significant support from the socialist countries (as Sékou Touré's Guinea had) or from the anti-communist bloc (as in the case of U.S. support for Samuel Doe and French support for Houphouët). The 1990s also brought in the exigencies of structural adjustment, which meant that the state lost its role as the primary national employer of those with at least a high school diploma (both through the civil service and parastatal companies). The problem of unemployed youth, some of them highly educated and others poorly educated or illiterate, was and still is one of the major threats to regional security and peace.

The war that began in Liberia on 24 December 1989 also had regional and sub-regional dimensions, inasmuch as it was supported and to some extent conceived in Libya, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. These countries were also involved to greater or lesser extents in the wars and upheavals that struck Liberia's neighbors, just as France, the US and the UK have been credibly accused of supporting one combatant group or another over the course of the 1990s and into this decade. Around the late 1990's, many scholars, civil society activists and human rights advocates began arguing that the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, and later the cross-border attacks into Guinea and the war in Côte d'Ivoire, were in fact manifestations of a single nomadic war. Not only did they rise out of the same structural factors mentioned above, they were also often planned and executed

by a small group of people, and there was even a hard core of fighters who had undertaken "missions" in several countries over the course of a decade.

Organizations like the African Union and the United Nations are composed of nation states, and they are not always well-equipped to address political problems in a way that demotes the nation state to a second order of importance. In the MRU countries, this was a challenge, but one that was eventually overcome first by the obvious roles played by such figures as Charles Taylor and Blaise Compaoré in several of the region's wars, but also because the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), is one of the most effective regional bodies in the world. It was involved in important ways in imposing peace in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, before other international actors could muster the political will to intervene. Despite various criticisms of the ECOMOG soldiers, it is sufficient to compare the results of their interventions to those of NATO in the Balkans, the AU in Darfur, or various actors in Somalia to see that ECOWAS deserves serious respect at the international level.

Over time, actors such as the UN became convinced that the MRU region's wars were in fact a series of interlinked conflicts, and finally created a regional office in Dakar (The UN Office for West Africa) to address regional issues. Humanitarian and development aid agencies began to take a more regional approach. Even UN peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire began cooperating in unprecedented ways, stationing, for example, peacekeepers from the same country (Pakistan, Ethiopia, Senegal) on both sides of a border so as to facilitate cross-border communications and coordinated maneuvers against would-be rebels.

All of these things are welcome, and they should also serve as a model for other holistic, regional approaches to peacekeeping and conflict resolution in other parts of the world in the future. However, we should ask whether politics, peace and security issues, and economics in the MRU region have always been and will always be regional, or whether the national level might have become dominant again. This is a question of emphasis, since at any time there is of course a mixture of regional, national, and even subnational factors to take into account, just as international factors like the current economic crisis also play a role. This conference aims to facilitate a conversation about these different levels of political activity and causality, and how they change over time.

Let us begin with a proposition: **Politics in the four countries in the MRU presently operate primarily in response to national, rather than regional issues**. First I shall try to demonstrate this, and then draw some questions out of that proposition that may be worth discussing in the context of this conference. Considering the countries one-by-one, we have:

Liberia--Now more than five years past the end of the second civil war, and nearly three years past the inauguration of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia is working toward increased stability and economic growth. Some 15,000 UN peacekeepers have made foreign attack unlikely. This in combination with the stabilization of Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire has meant that would-be "regional warriors" have had to find other means of employment in the medium term (and not just temporarily). Issues such as land tenure and access, access to justice, and government decentralization have now become significant topics alongside the reform of the police and intelligence agencies and the building of a new army from scratch. Like the GEMAP economic governance program, these are all national concerns, and at the moment, Liberia's stability is much more likely to depend upon the success of these initiatives than on the situations in neighboring countries. The situation in Guinea, though worrying, is still unlikely to change this.

Sierra Leone-- Sierra Leone is furthest along in time of any of the four countries on the road toward building a new post-conflict society. The 2007 split of the ruling SLPP government and the eventual election of APC candidate Ernest Bai Koroma were at the least votes against the old guard in both parties, and also a victory for a more technocratically-oriented and less patrimonial government. Koroma ran on a platform of attacking corruption, and many Sierra Leoneans agree that this is in fact not just the greatest threat to their own happiness and health, but also to national security. As the 2007 use of former West Side Boys and RUF fighters within SLPP and APC "security squads" shows, ex-combatants are still present and still play some role in local politics. By the same token, the limited violence surrounding those elections and the fact that the security squads were a way of containing these ex-fighters show that Sierra Leone is working out ways to address its own security threats in the absence of a major peacekeeping force. Despite Guinea's present instability, it would seem that the Koroma government's success or failure in dealing with youth unemployment and corruption will be the major determinants of the country's stability, rather than regional factors.

Côte d'Ivoire--Surrounded by now-stable Liberia, Ghana, Mali, and a Burkina Faso that is now playing the role of a responsible actor, Côte d'Ivoire's only potentially destabilizing neighbor is Guinea, though it would seem that Guineans are more afraid of destabilization from Côte d'Ivoire than vice versa. The issues that fed into the 2002 rebellion and de facto partition of the country are still those at issue: citizenship rights and the ability to exercise them as voters and in other arenas, intergenerational tensions and youth unemployment, and the perception that the republican institutions are illegitimate because poorly elected and/or because their mandates have expired. Again, it is the internal politics surrounding the country's voter registration, disarmament, and elections that will determine future peace, not regional factors.

Guinea--The long-awaited moment of a change of government in Guinea arrived on 23 December 2008, and in characteristically Guinean fashion, it has been shockingly smooth and consensual on the surface, and anything but underneath. Guineans value the fact that the coup took place without bloodshed, and many of their West African neighbors agree. However, the question of whether avoiding strife today will increase or decrease the likelihood of violence in the medium term remains an open question. Guineans in Guinea (unlike the 3+million living outside the country) have remained convinced since the famous "No" vote of 1958 that their country is unique. Non-Guineans have rarely had the courage to challenge this truism, even as a country with zero tolerance for corruption and theft (under Sékou Touré) became one of the most corrupt in the world, and even today, as the putschistes in power begin to look more and more like Jonny Paul Koroma and Samuel Doe than ATT. Guinea is the country where the regional factor might play the biggest role in future peace and security, not because neighboring countries are likely to pose a major threat (this is still not entirely out of the question), but because continuing to treat Guinea as a special case may allow a fragile situation to devolve into a violent one.

These thumbnail sketches are certainly not complete, and some participants will disagree even with the brief analyses presented here for the four countries. However, if these descrptions have some validity, what kinds of questions do they suggest for our meeting? I will suggest several:

1. Does the temporal variable change in conjunction with the spatial one? For instance, as the time since war stopped in a country increases, does political activity tend to revert to the local level?

2. Should we think of regional security factors more in terms of what is done (rebels or weapons exported from one country into another), or what is *not* done (failure to speak out against policies

or practices in neighboring countries that will eventually destabilize the region, failure to rein in soldiers who make incursions on the territory of neighboring countries)?

3. One of the clearest risks in all four countries is the exceptionally high level of youth unemployment. Is this best addressed as a regional or as a national problem? When do the failed youth employment policies of one government (or the lack of any such policies) become the legitimate security concern of their neighbors?

4. What are the links between criminality, including but not restricted to drug trafficking, and regional insecurity? Is this best addressed as a regional issue, since drug dealers have shown themselves at least as mobile as arms dealers and rebels?

5. What are the successes in each of the four MRU countries that can be transmitted to the others? Are these more likely to be translatable at the level of civil society and NGO initiatives (Mano River Women's Peace Network, Talking Drum Studio), or can government-level initiatives also be translated (the IMATT security sector reform program in Sierra Leone or Liberia's SSR programs)? To what extent is the language (and cultural?) barrier between the two Anglophone and the two francophone countries a problem?

6. In looking at each of the four countries as it has put distance between itself and the conflict(s) it has experienced, what lessons might be applicable to the other countries? Are the different countries likely to go through a comparable set of steps of experiences?

7. Has the process of post-conflict reconstruction been mostly one of transformation or of reconstructing the prior status quo? What mixture of the two is most likely to result in durable peace?

Session #1:

Under what conditions are international peacekeeping operations appropriate? Looking forward, how should they ideally unfold in the future? How might they differ in various contexts in West Africa?

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"Under what conditions are international peacekeeping operations appropriate?"

The political sustainability of a peacekeeping operation should be counted among the necessary conditions for initiation of an international peacekeeping operation. Once the decision is made to intervene, those who back the intervention accept a moral and a political responsibility to protect the people in the area in question. Local people make plans and orient their expectations toward the hope that intervention will be sustained. Abandoning these people may cause them to pay a hefty price for their earlier decisions that were based upon the expectation of a lasting commitment.

It is not unreasonable to think about intervention in terms that are applied to counterinsurgency, even if that is not politically palatable. The resemblance comes in the counterinsurgent's promise to local civilians that they will be protected if civilians provide information about insurgents and recognize the authority of the counterinsurgent force. This causes the local community to show onlookers that they have made a political choice, which then exposes the local community to retaliation from insurgents in the event that the occupying force cannot protect the community. Communities that are caught between weak or indecisive occupying forces and aggressive insurgents find that their most sensible courses of action are to remain as unengaged in politics as possible and to leave the area if they are able.

Peacekeeping forces ought to think of their own roles as similar to the counterinsurgent role. While they may be able to come to agreements with local armed groups, they are playing an important political role in these conflicts, pretenses of impartiality or assumptions of pure good aside. And if one thinks of peacekeeping in these political terms, sustainability is absolutely a necessary if not a sufficient condition for success.

If the political will to sustain a peacekeeping force is present, the nature of the local political terrain will be less important. Obviously it requires more political will to sustain a peacekeeping force under conditions of active combat, compared to one where there is a high degree of acceptance among armed groups.

One also ought to consider in this vein the impact of the US intervention in Iraq and the NATO operation in Afghanistan. These interventions have caused US and European officials to be much more considerate of their national interests and the domestic political impact of participation in peacekeeping operations. These experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan also cause officials in the US and Europe to look more critically on the prospect of state-building. They tend to be suspicious of promises of quick gains and cynical about the prospects for sustained progress once external powers disengage from a situation. With regards to the situation in Liberia, I think that a lot of foreign officials are much more cynical about its future than they are in public. This may be due to a greater realism about the degree of commitment required to see though and support changes, and their recognition that this is not likely to be forthcoming from their home country governments.

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It might be worthwhile to consider the mindset of Nigerian, Ugandan, and Ghanaian officials toward peacekeeping in the wake of Iraq and Afghanistan. I suspect that they form their opinions on the basis of more regional experiences. The current situation in Somalia might not be a positive development in terms of commitment to future peacekeeping operations. Some states will commit soldiers to peacekeeping operations on the basis of external support to do so. But this also presents the danger of shallow commitment and political sustainability, particularly in Africa's democratic countries.

In sum, the political sustainability of peacekeeping operations is the most important condition of appropriateness. I have avoided considering local conditions in determining appropriateness, as each situation presents very different challenges, and international contexts can change quite rapidly. Obviously, these local conditions are important, especially when one considers a particular case.

"How should they [peacekeeping operations] unfold in the future?"

Here one faces the dilemma of a preference for a broad intervention that includes as many contributing countries as possible, versus a preference for a narrow intervention that can act decisively. The former will score higher marks for international legitimacy, while the latter will likely be more effective. The ideal is to combine the two. This is difficult, outside of leadership by a regionally powerful state that is widely accepted as a provider of benefits to smaller countries that are within the reach of its influence. Nigeria at times has fulfilled this role; it has been the hope of some South African politicians that their country would perform this role too.

In considering the tradeoffs between legitimacy and efficacy, the experience of the US in Iraq shows the limits of "decisive" action. On the one hand, the absence or dearth of legitimacy can have a negative impact on the physical and political capacity of an otherwise very capable force to act. On the other hand, one of the few true "laws" of political science holds that it is very hard to coordinate actions amongst a large number of participants. Look at the difficulties that an expanded European Union now faces in making decisions about the most basic issues.

It may be that the Congo presents some evidence of effective, if not ideal peacekeeping strategies. MONUC was fated to be fairly weak as Congo really is not central to the strategic concerns of global powers or even to some of Africa's most important states. Therefore, it would be difficult to get strong backing for a more comprehensive armed peacekeeping force and for more extensive assistance with "state-building". The periodic EUFOR (really French) interventions have stabilized the situation at critical points, with relatively little blowback, either of the military or domestic political brand, for French politicians. This is "intervention on the cheap" that acquires legitimacy under the MONUC label. It is also very dependent upon the domestic political situation in France (or whatever other country that intervenes) at that moment.

Consider for a moment the impact of the developing global economic crisis on non-African and African intervention in crises on the African continent. How will these developments affect support for and capacities to carry out peacekeeping operations?

Returning to the counterinsurgency model, think about how the Americans try to convince themselves and others that their current strategies in Iraq and Afghanistan are realistic and cheap. These strategies that involve the inclusion of "warlords" and other political actors who previously would be disqualified to participate in military or political aspects of peacekeeping operations would represent quite a shift in peacekeeping operations. While it is not common to think of Iraq and Afghanistan as peacekeeping operations (outside of some Pentagon offices), I think that these will become models for future operations in Africa. They are suited to contingency planning, cheap and reduced external intervention, and utilize local capabilities. They also have a major impact on local politics. The Americans are acutely aware of that impact, and as recent reports of providing Viagra to Afghan "warlords" indicate, the Americans might show a level of cynicism that converges with realism. I would not be so confident of UN and NGO personnel to be able to separate themselves from their own propaganda, at least on an organizational level.

Do not underestimate the pressure from outsiders on the UN and others to show more of this sort of pragmatism in their intervention strategies. The American strategies in Iraq and Afghanistan are widely reported. A closer look at France's loi no. 2003-73 in outlining a comprehensive military strategy shows surprising parallels to American thinking. One also ought to keep in mind the role of NGOs in these intervention strategies, particularly as adjuncts to military operations and tactical "political shaping strategies" as outlined in Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 of 2005 and subsequent related documents. The British military has made effective use of NGOs as "force multipliers" alongside UN and other multilateral intervention forces in Sierra Leone. This strategy (which predates American thinking on tactical and strategic uses of NGOs) is outlined in the joint Ministry of Defense, DfID and Foreign Office *Africa Conflict Pool* document.

In sum, my response is partly focused on how peacekeeping ought to unfold in the future and partly focused on how I think that it will unfold in the future. I encourage the group to be realistic and pay some consideration to the latter. I think that the latter is close to how these operations will actually unfold. Also keep in mind the extent of US, French and British military training programs in Africa, and the extent to which they orient African militaries and some of their government officials toward these externally devised doctrines.

"How might they [peacekeeping operations] differ in various contexts in West Africa?"

Variation of this sort is difficult to define, as it presupposes hypothetical interventions that may not come to pass. For example, an external peacekeeping (or other sort of) intervention in Nigeria's Delta region would present special problems. This region would involve the strategic interests of major non-African powers. This practically would be the only region where this would be true. Moreover, there would likely be an intact incumbent national political authority that would be capable of asserting its own interests in ways that

Sierra Leonean and Liberian government officials could not in the 1990s. In this vein, note the differences in the capacity of Gbagbo's government in Cote d'Ivoire to assert its agendas in comparison to the dependence that the IGNU government or Kabbah's government exhibited on the protection that international forces afforded to them.

Drug trafficking could be another factor that would shape future interventions. If the value of a few planeloads of drugs exceeds the yearly gross receipts of the government of Guinea-Bissau (as a recent UNODC document noted), drug traffickers and their partners represent a new set of powerful actors who will play a role in the considerations of future peacekeeping operations.

Dr Gilles Yabi

Peacekeeping operations have proliferated in the last decade and have become the most concrete illustration of a post cold-war consensus on the international collective responsibility for peace and security beyond traditional diplomacy. The largest and most complex operations authorized by the UN Security Council and conducted by UN peacekeepers have taken place on the African continent. The extremely difficult deployment of a UN/AU PKO in Darfur, the challenges of protection of civilians and the doubts on the capacity of the MONUC to help bringing security in the east of Democratic Republic of Congo as well as the possibility of a return of peacekeepers in Somalia will continue to be a significant part of the activities of the UN Secretariat and the Council in 2009.

In West Africa, instability and violent conflicts in the 90s led to the gradual involvement of the international community and finally to the establishment of a PKO under chapter VII of the UN Charter in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL from 1999 to 2005), another one in Liberia (UNMIL from 2003) and in Côte d'Ivoire (from 2004). While Sierra Leone is a test case for a continuous UN political presence to help the country design and conduct a peace-building strategy in order to avoid a relapse into conflict, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire still hosts thousands of peacekeepers with very different mandates and prospects for future. In a context of limited resources and competing priorities for international political and military engagement, it is essential to identify the conditions under which PKO are really needed and can be effective in creating conditions for lasting peace and security. The temptation of calling for PKOs in Africa and elsewhere as a systematic remedy to conflicts which are always political and unique should also be openly debated.

In very general and candid terms, I would say that PKOs are appropriate when all the following conditions are met: the level of violence and devastation related to the conflict is high or the potential for that outcome is high in case of continuing fighting or resumption of fighting; the security situation has been or can reasonably be expected to be stabilized (including by a strong temporary bridge force) to allow for the slow and always problematic deployment of UN troops; the country's institutions are weak and ineffective, especially the security sector or when the government and forces under its control are the main threats to the security of the population and there is a regional or world power that is ready to take heavy political and military risks to back a PKO in an hostile environment. The doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) could provide a relatively good basis for deciding on future PKOS if it did incorporate the practical lessons of past and present interventions in difficult environments, including the recognition that the world powers are far from being ready to align the required substantial military and financial resources with the ambitions they claim.

Coming back to West Africa, the operations in Sierra Leone and in Liberia have certainly made a clear and significant positive difference in putting these countries back on the road of lasting peace. PKOs under UN flag were launched many years after civil wars began devastating human lives, economies, institutions and the societies as a whole, and when regional military interventions led by Nigeria reached their limits. PKOs have in fact come too late to save several thousands of lives, halt the destruction of the two States and rescue the embattled regional force. UN PKOs in Sierra Leone and Liberia have been essential to provide security in large parts of the territory for a limited period, to organize disarmament and demobilisation of ex-combatants, help rebuild basic security architecture, support the organization of national elections and to assist in the mobilization of badly needed external resources for reintegration programs and immediate post-conflict efforts. In both cases, the governments were weak, armies and police forces were in disarray, and the chances of the countries to recover without substantial external resources were inexistent. In that context, PKOs were appropriate and decisive to make it possible to rebuild viable States. It is worth recalling

that the PKOs were very large compared to the size and population of both countries and that was the minimum price to pay to make a significant difference.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the context was quite different. The PKO was not launched after a long and devastating conflict and the country had, relatively speaking, functioning institutions, government and security sector while the rebel group had a more sophisticated and "marketable" political agenda than their counterparts of Liberia and Sierra Leone. The size and level of diversification of the Ivorian economy, the central role of this country as a host of millions of immigrants from several West African countries, the place of the issues of identity, nationality and immigrant rights in the underlying political crisis and the special historical relationship with France made it possible to have rather quick regional and international diplomatic and military responses to the outburst of armed conflict. ECOWAS mediation efforts, French military intervention and the later deployment of UNOCI certainly saved lives and prevented the country from descending into a longer and bloodier conflict. But reunifying the country and creating the security and political conditions for a lasting exit of the crisis was a much more difficult challenge.

While Sierra Leone and Liberia had severely suffered from international neglect and abandon during years of chaos, Côte d'Ivoire might have suffered from over-attention and competition between the mediators. The three layers of international responses to African conflicts have been involved: the regional level with ECOWAS, the continental level with the AU and the world with the UN. Before each of the major Security Council resolutions on Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS heads of State used to meet to issue recommendations that were submitted to the AU Peace and Security Council. Then, AU PSC produced "decisions" which formed the basis but not the exact contents of the UN SC resolutions under Chapter VII. Ivorian actors of the conflict have been very successful in taking advantage of the diverse arenas where they could find supporters for their particular interests and annihilate any strong measure. The case exposed the fact that the coexistence of peace and security institutional mechanisms at the ECOWAS, AU and UN levels does not guarantee any clear and sensible common line of action. In fact, it can be argued that the personal positions and passions of a few heads of state in Africa and France played a disproportionate role in the international response to the Ivorian conflict and limited the capacity of the UNOCI to impact the peace process.

How should international PKO ideally unfold in the future in West Africa? Ideally, they should not unfold at all. Each regional organization should do its best to make PKOs irrelevant in its area of responsibility. The efforts of the ECOWAS to build the regional brigade as part of the AU stand-by peacekeeping force in the making are laudable and relevant in a long-term regional security perspective but engaging in more imaginative and pragmatic prevention activity should be the top priority. The challenges for ECOWAS, the AU, the UN peacekeeping missions and political offices in the region, and the Peace Building Commission should be to make sure that the peacekeeping and peace-building work is done properly in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone with carefully-designed and reviewed exit strategies; and that new practical ways can be urgently found to address potentially explosive national political tensions as well as the cross-border threat of criminalization of the states and the economies. Even large and multidimensional international peacekeeping operations cannot and should not be the substitute for a much more ambitious political transformation agenda by the ECOWAS, its member states and those who can influence the governments.

Waly Ndiaye
Goree Institute

Is it because peacekeeping operations, while continuing to unfold in the same stage (after cease fire and agreement) are now intended to embrace a complex range of activities (like institution building, governance, human rights monitoring, DDR, SSR, etc.) that they appear more and more inappropriate in specific cases and their results questionable (not to say unsatisfactory) while human and financial resources involved are tremendously increasing?

From the above hypothesis and based on the following set of assumptions, we propose to share some reflections informed by our personal analyses and experiences of concrete cases, namely that of Guinea Bissau where we were involved for more than 3 years.

Four basic assumptions:

1: Civil wars and other mass violence situations have their root causes in frustrations of basic human needs and other economic, political and social inequalities that originate in specific relationships between the State and social groups and from differences in the perception of such relationships.

2: While the State (even weak) is perceived in West African countries as the primary governing, ruling and regulatory body within national boundaries and providing certain goods and services to the population (or citizens), it is (or some of its fractions are) always a protagonist in civil wars and other kinds of mass violence.

3: Civil wars and other mass violence situations most of the time lead to elite's expatriation as well as other population movements like displacement, thus creating human resources shortage during post-conflict and peacebuilding stages.

4: Even though they greatly differ in duration, size and resources involved, Peacekeeping missions have ultimately the same official aim: the restoration of "normality" (and even the improvement) of the "State".

In the light of our experiences and analyses, we think the following consequences deriving from the above assumptions should always be seriously considered, if we want to make peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions more appropriate and efficient.

Consequence of assumptions 1&2: It is known that in many African former colonies, the relationship between the State and population is very different from what it is in Western Societies. Due to the specific trajectory of each country, ethnic and social groups' relationships with the State can range from obedience and conformism to challenge and "escaping strategies".

Consequently, the diversity of agendas of visible protagonists as well as the existing "hidden" or "potentially confrontational" groups should be identified (behind visible main

protagonists) through a serious conflict assessment prior to agreements, to avoid exclusion of important groups leading to difficulties in implementation of agreements.

Equally, international interventions aimed at the signature of an agreement should be planned and executed in such a way that protagonist parties can easily endorse them. Very short "Special Envoy" missions should be avoided (restricted to the amount of funds made available by specific bilateral donors), and whose presence is most of the time imposed (under pressure and threat), with a draft content of the agreement.

Consequence of assumptions 3&4: post-conflict situations are very complex to handle, due to the "destructuration" of the State and Administration, competing priorities, absence (or insufficiency) of national elites, what most of the time obliges international staff to lead and achieve the conceptualization, designing, planning and implementation of strategies and actions supposed to bring normality, excluding national expertise and collective participation. For these reasons, assessments are very quick and inappropriate, then solutions "logically fine" because built on existing paradigms, but most of the time "irrelevant" and not "endorsed" enough by "beneficiaries.

Main conditions of suitability of international peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions

 - International peacekeeping missions should never be deployed until agreement is "waged" through a serious global stakeholders' endorsement, after a rigorous conflict assessment process and mediation.

- Due to the specific perception of the State as a provider of goods and services (what justifies adherence of many citizens), specific effort needs to be made during post-conflict stage, to help governments guarantee regular payment of salaries as well as other provisions that motivate citizens to recognize its authority.

- International peacebuilding programmes and other main reforms should never be designed without a real participation of national elites and populations (to avoid resistance and guarantee ownership), and should always pay attention to the need of initiating "conflict transformation" activities for the benefit of "second level leaders" and capacity building for a "critical mass" of credible citizens that could, later, contribute to enrooting new attitudes and behaviours in the society.

Session #2:

Conflicts often unwittingly transform patterns of gender, ethnic, class, and other inequalities. What is the best way to harness and reinforce the potentially positive aspects of this collateral effect of conflict?

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The Difference that Documents Make: Archives, Preservation, and New Technologies in the Context of Contestation

"Whoever controls the image and information of the past determines what and how future generations will think; whoever controls the information and images of the present determines how those same people will view the past." - George Orwell, 1984.

The discovery of extensive extant presidential documents in 2000 and the subsequent work of the Liberian Collections Project at Indiana University to preserve and enable access to the Presidential and National Archives is a hopeful sign that Liberia's documentary history was not entirely lost during the civil wars. These newly discovered materials, some 2,400 linear feet of "government correspondence, communiqués and reports dating back to the early 19th century," are reportedly well preserved and in decent condition. The project leaders optimistically describe

> … a treasure trove of information on the founding and development of the first independent republic in sub-Saharan Africa. Of additional value to contemporary Liberians would be the use of these early records to reinterpret and retell the history of Liberia. Histories used in Liberian schools largely told the story of black settlers from the new world (both USA and Caribbean), never more than 5% of the population. These histories focused on the foreign-derived Liberian state with little appreciation for the societies into which it was embedded. Contacts and conflicts with the indigenous population and neighbouring European colonies were inadequately addressed. These earlier histories did not address the social cleavages spawned by such contacts and conflicts nor the resistance and rebellion that followed. The challenge of writing an integrated history of Liberia remains and the 19th century documents in the Liberian National Archives are the primary source materials with which to begin the process."[1]

Archives, libraries and museums are often called memory institutions, but the memories they collect and preserve are partial at best. Invariably, government archives privilege the actions and aspirations of the elite while marginalizing those of the indigenous populations, women, the poor, and others. [2] Archives are neither neutral nor objective. Even when archival documentation is comprehensive (and official state archives are nothing if not memorials to the minutia of governance), archival documents only obliquely illuminate the lives of colonial subjects in the hinterland -- the region tellingly referred to in one official document as "the Twilight Zone," a phrase that conjures up images of obscurity and ambiguity. [3] Indigenous peoples who seek access to archival repositories to examine the documentary record of their history, land rights, or social and political injustices face additional challenges. "Physical distances, educational and linguistic barriers, and poverty have all made archives unapproachable places for indigenous communities whose cultural materials and institutional histories are preserved within them." [4]

A challenge for all of Liberia's citizens is the promotion of trust in an institution that suffered from official neglect long before the civil war. Liberia's archives are in a state of physical chaos and intellectual disorder. Recent reports point to the failure, not merely of the preservation of archival documents themselves, but of the associated technology that sustains them. According to the World Bank, "The Deeds Registration System is in disarray. Records under that system have been scattered, damaged and in many cases destroyed, and this is encouraging widespread fraud and malpractice in land transactions. There is an urgent need to collect, consolidate and conserve these records, and to digitalize them for easy access in both land administration and land dispute settlement." [5]

The comprehensive digitization of Liberia's land deeds will undoubtedly preserve materials subject to environmental decay, loss, theft and forgery, but digitization is not a panacea. In fact, the creation of a digital repository could easily *double* existing requirements for administration, conservation and technical support services as there will now be two collections to maintain (analog and digital) rather than one. In addition:

1. Digitization may create perfect surrogates of imperfect documents. Digitization freezes existing problems in a particular point in time -- it doesn't resolve them. The World Bank remarks that the deed registration system did not certify the *validity* of deeds, their truthfulness of their contents (free from forgery or fraud). Similar digitization projects note that "Computerization can't undo all the errors made over decades when documents may have been overwritten several times. That's why even the new technology doesn't offer … much hope that the dispute over that acre of rice farmland will ever be sorted out." [6]

2. Digital versions of authentic documents are not necessarily also authentic. Methodologically, digitization projects must include protocols to assure --
- An unbroken chain of custody of all materials that will be scanned. Documents removed from Liberia will be especially suspect.
- Complete documentation of the processes used to create the digital surrogates.
- Documentation of the state of collections at the time of digitization (especially noting the absence of missing land registration deeds)
- Permanent storage of electronic records in a trusted digital repository

3. Authentic digital objects may lose their integrity over time due to --
- Electronic decay of the bit stream
- Alteration (electronic records are more easily forged than original documents)
- Loss of associated metadata that documents how they were created.

Finally, any new digitization program must recognize that individuals without a history of trust in traditional archival practices may have even lower trust in newly created digital surrogates (which are held to even higher standards for authenticity and integrity). [7] Stakeholder assurances might include --
- Provision for inspecting or comparing original and digitized land registration deeds
- Training in digital technologies
- Programs to instill trust in the archival profession itself.

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Session #3

What would you do with "no strings attached" donor funding?

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Between 1908 and 2008, always reacting to threats by a donor to suspend aid, Liberia acquiesced in implementing nearly two dozen public sector reform projects that had been designed, executed and controlled by the donor. Separately and also during that period, creditors implemented nearly a dozen receiverships in Liberia. The aid and receiverships were tied. Despite it all, Liberian public finance management (PFM) today, as in the past, misses all international benchmarks and is fraught with waste, fraud and abuse. Would "no strings attached" donor funding assist Liberia's economy grow and develop to expand and improve equitable public service delivery to all Liberians?

Historically persistent misuse of resources emanates from and is sustained by poor governance; a dysfunctional governance structure that eschews decentralization, in which laws unhealthily concentrate power in the president, core civic values are uniformly illiberal and in which weak rule of law enables impunity to sustain corruption, ensures fraud to shrink public service. Consequently, greed and grievance interact to persistently destabilize Liberia through nearly ninety deadly conflicts between 1822 and 2003. With aid tied, Liberia and donors failed to build capacity to improve governance; without strings.
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Strings are neither desirable nor harmful *per se. S*trings' usefulness or otherwise depends on the competence of project design. Expressed differently, strings fail because they fail to focus Basil Davidson's *Blackman's Burden* and/or William Easterly's *White Man's Burden.* What objectives are strings designed to achieve? Are strings selected with a view to make African states outposts of western civilization or build individual nations? Are strings determined by the erroneous presumptions that aid promotes growth, or that democracy is indispensable to growth?

The design of public sector reform projects ignored Liberia's dysfunctional governance structure and non-commitment of successive governments to participatory, representative governance; resulting inappropriate strings failed to develop capacity to improve governance. The objectives of strings and their suitability to objectives were never synchronized. Liberia and donors might specify objectives strings would pursue in a comprehensive program approach in which strings and objectives are coherent. Strings inconsistent with the consensus for development financing such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness would be rejected. Such a process might identify indicators of commitment to participatory governance in a truly partnership approach to development financing. Such strings likely would reduce governance deficits, cultivate democratic political culture and develop governance capacity to assist nation-building. Note, however, that nation-building is likely to remain frustrated as long as donors posit low threshold for democratic governance in Africa.

 To inform the discussion, we list some major Liberian public sector reform projects whose flaws are referenced. The listing also notes the similarities of past, unsuccessful projects with current ones: (a) "white American" District Commissioners' Project (1930s), remarkably similar to 2000s UNDP's District Development Councils project; (b) OPEX (1980s), similar to GEMAP (2004); (c) SCOGO and the creation of GSA as procurement agency; GSA replaced individual agencies in procuring goods but its functions excluded procurement of services. But the Executive Mansion's disregard for rules of the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC) in procuring goods and services, ministries then did likewise. Some other components of SCOGO mandates are

similar to CISCAB (2007) and to some mandates of the current umbrella Governance Reform program (decentralization; visioning; land, etc). PPCC as a reform tool seems excluded from GC's mandate, as is security sector reform (SSR). Moreover, GC is pursuing reform of individual agencies, also ignoring the governance context, arguing the need to sequence activities, given resource limitation. The GC seems committed to ignore the history of reform in Liberia.

Projects designed by donors reflected ignorance of Liberia's uniformly illiberal cultural traits (conformity versus individualism; exclusion vs. participation, etc.) During project design, no reform projects enlisted nationals to co-own them. Reform projects were designed with minimal Liberian involvement; imported "technocrats", many of whom succumbed to the temptation to manipulate the corrupt system. Liberians were employed in subordinate positions and project finance ensured huge disparities in conditions of service. The project approach, distinguished from the program approach, ignored inter-dependence of agency capacity.

No Liberian government ever initiated, owned or championed public sector reform; each acquiesced to donor threats to withhold aid unless reforms were initiated. In many instances, Liberia expressed support only to undermine project implementation (e.g., Doe and OPEX). Liberian acquiescence looked forward to project pre-determined termination date. Acquiescence never committed the government to public sector reform. With money fungible, acquiescence was profitable.

Many projects were designed to build capacity in the supply-driven technical assistance mold, not driven by demand. But capacity to deliver public services transcends agencies and sectors, given cross cutting issues such as mutual "reciprocity" sustaining patronage, corruption and impunity. Laws that created new agencies did not redress overlaps in agency functions.

No projects considered reforming the legislative and judicial processes or of building their capacities, financial, physical and human. This failure ignored the fact that the three branches of the government under the Constitution are "coordinate and co-equal" with the executive branch. By ignoring governance, public sector reform inevitably returned to the status quo ante after project termination.

Each attempt to reform the public sector failed to relate an agency's potential to perform efficiently to that of others, whether in the same or different governance sectors. Every attempt to reform the public sector failed to relate the subject agency's potential to perform efficiently to that of others with which it interacts regularly, including agencies in the same sectors. Does the fact that the constitution and statutes centralized political power in the presidency and proscribed local governance, obviate checks and balances, and therefore endanger efficient public service delivery?

Design did not contextualize reform in Liberia's dysfunctional governance structure. All projects disregarded inter-dependence of agency capacity; projects were supply, not demand, driven capacity development. Flawed design tended to be repeated. No project had sustainable impact. Successive project design ignored lessons previous projects stood ready to teach.

Two reform programs donors ever designed to improve governance in Liberia, not just the public sector, were never implemented. The first program was proposed by a US Presidential Commission in 1908. The second governance reform program that was never implemented was the League of Nations' "Plan of Assistance to Liberia". Both programs were comprehensive and realistic; their recommendations addressed most of Liberia's governance deficits, including the divided polity, interior marginalization, and power centralization. Both programs proposed a policy framework to

improve agricultural productivity, military assistance to improve border security and policies to diversify the economy, focusing the country's natural resources.

How do we identify desirable strings? Acknowledge primary governance deficits including prevalent political culture, governance structure, rule of law, and history of efficiency of public resource utilization. The last step in the process would adopt s William Easterly's terminology of searchers and reject the mentality of planners. A demonstrable commitment to improving governance would, in 2008, for example, prevent single sourcing of goods and services by the Executive Mansion of goods (US$450,000 worth of vehicles) and services (renovation of the Mansion) in violation of competitive bidding, suggest compliance with the law that established the PPCC in the breach. Strings to be holistic: commitment to building an African nation, not an outpost of western civilization. With no strings attached, corruption would be more than the three times the Auditor General documented. Unless desirable strings are identified and put in place, misuse of resources—by Liberians and donors; reflecting on greed and grievance theories of conflict, return to conflict likely in shorter period than a generation after UNMIL departs.

Without strings, PFM in Liberia is unlikely to be aligned with the Paris Declaration On Aid Effectiveness and related conventions. With strings, Liberia is corrupt and waste in government is grows with resources. But waste is not due exclusively to Liberian action. Certain types of strings are needed because there is Waste in Development: "[If] you can eliminate even five percent of the waste in the development business across the donor community, you can save ten billion dollars. Now that ten billion dollars can go to the poor and that is what they should expect of us." J. Brian Atwood, a former USAID Administrator, in 2008.

Strings must be carefully selected then interlaced for strength to simultaneously lighten the black man's and white man's burdens. For countries like Liberia that have substantial governance deficits: prevalent illiberal political culture; dysfunctional governance structure; virtual absence of rule of law; severely limited human and financial resources, whether or not donor funding should be conditioned elicit less insightful responses than those of the genre requesting specification of type of strings that enable committed pursuit of objectives of developing capacity to improve governance to lead to building a nation.

Strings or No strings: Summary Considerations

The Pros	The Cons
1. Recipient owns/ directs program, not projects; strings to assist nation-building, not punitive	1. Risk that corruption in dysfunctional governance structure stymies national priorities
2. Aid demand, not supply, driven	2. Projects ignorant of culture and history sustain politics as usual: exclusion and non participation
3. Programs and component projects demand driven	3. Projects fail to meet international standards or best practices
4. Strings aims at achieving long-term objectives	4. Projects generally short-term, promoting donors' foreign policy or geo-political interests
5. Strings to pursue governance reform objectives, intended to build a nation, not merely to borrow then neglect adapting concepts	5. Projects tend to strengthen executive branch vis-à-vis legislature and executive branches of government
6. Recipient to assume total responsibility for success and failures and learn from experience	6. With executive power predominant and given governance structure, project politicized to continue politics as usual

Jordan Ryan
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Let me start with a few prefatory remarks. I presume that the term "no strings" label applies selectively. Aid always needs some strings. The key question is whether it will be the "right" strings and whether they have been decided through a legitimate and transparent process. In Liberia, the overall framework is provided by the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy. It is important that both national authorities <u>and</u> international partners adhere to the Paris principles for development assistance – there is a tendency among international partners to send mixed messages when host governments are asked to be open, transparent and accountable, while not always applying the same standards to themselves. I also presume that the funds available for "no strings" allocation are "large enough" to make a difference yet not so large that they distort the local economic system. Many needs in Liberia call out for urgent funding. But some areas traditionally receive more attention from donors than others, and Liberia is no exception. Primary education, health and gender empowerment are examples of sectors which are often relatively well funded, whereas other areas are less visible, but not less crucial. It is important to see the PRS as a comprehensive plan, where the various components are interlinked – and with "no strings attached" it would be possible to support the "forgotten" or "overlooked" sectors.

One area, where it traditionally has been difficult to attract donor funding, is security sector reforms. For many years, donors were reluctant to use development assistance for this purpose, but in a post-conflict society there can be no development without peace, and no peace without development. Liberia has been fortunate to have a number of international partners that have been willing to engage in this area, not least the United States. This area is in need of a more "up front" solution, as a country returns to peace.

However, in this short paper let me advance four additional items that I believe would benefit from "no strings" aid. If I had a pot of gold, here is where I would put it:

One: Expanded connectivity for leaders and senior officials.
Two: Management training at all levels of the system.
Three: A sharp expansion of infrastructure construction (water, sanitation, roads, bridges, ports) combined with the simultaneous creation of the organizational and institutional infrastructure to ensure the newly constructed/repaired infrastructure is maintained.
Four: A pilot program to provide cash grants to the ultra poor.

Let me explain.

Connectivity for Leaders: Liberia is a poor country that has major logistical problems – internal and external. It also has limited leadership capacity. Its leaders have much to accomplish and little time in which to do it. Time is not on their side. Their capacity to manage and connect with those they manage would be greatly enhanced by technology that enables them to remain in real-time contact without having to travel so extensively. A

video/telecommunications set up that allows face-to-face communication between Monrovia, the capital, and the Counties would support real time discussions with individuals or groups. Corporations and international agencies do this all the time. Information moves, people don't. It is both efficient and effective. The same technology would support international connections helping reduce the times that senior officials spend traveling to and from foreign destinations at the expense of effectively running the country.

Liberia's future hinges on inclusiveness. Increasing the connectedness of senior officials both locally and internationally would save travel time and costs; it would foster inclusiveness and engagement; and it would free up the scarce time of the country's leaders to raise the quality of management at all levels of the economy and society.

Management Training: An enduring irony of poor countries is the existence of scarcity on the one hand and waste on the other. An example: roads (and other forms of public capital) are built at considerable expense and due to poor maintenance are allowed to deteriorate. This undermines national productivity. Another example: government officials are sent abroad for training and when they return their productivity remains low because where they work remains poorly organized.

A major reason for scarcity coupled with waste, in my experience, is the general weakness of management throughout the system. I would use "no strings" funds to identify areas of management and organization that could benefit from improvements. The effort would use locals (assisted by management specialists) to work the central and County officials to upgrade their management skills. It would give priority to areas where the greatest inefficiency is occurring first, particularly key government departments responsible for works, education, security, and health. The program would not seek to provide comprehensive management training. It would be "cafeteria" style with administration and management competencies being built up through regular repeat training sessions combined with work experience. Once underway, the managers themselves would be able to identify areas where they need assistance and given the "no strings" support have the opportunity to seek additional support. A spin-off of this effort would be the strengthening of local capacity to train managers and administrators so that, over time, Liberia would be self-supporting in this area. (Some of this is already underway in Liberia through the County Support Team project of the UN system…but more funding is needed to expand its coverage and impact.)

Infrastructure: The widely heralded County Consultations, held during the formulation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, identified three priorities – infrastructure, health and education. The effective provision of health and education services depends on having an efficient infrastructure (roads, ports, storage, bridges, sanitation, potable water). To accelerate the economic recovery, I would use "no strings" aid in two ways. One is to accelerate the rate of infrastructure reconstruction and extension. The second is to create simultaneously the capacity to maintain that infrastructure. The intention is to avoid major source of simultaneous scarcity and waste, namely the few good roads (and physical facilities) in the country deteriorating due to poor maintenance.

In both of the construction and the maintenance activities the emphasis should be on support for the training and employment of youth and young adults. If these activities are supported by improvements in management, the country will get a double bang for its "no strings" buck or euro. As the newly-trained youth gain experience in construction and maintenance they could begin to collaborate (or incorporate) and form their own construction and maintenance enterprises. Their training and work experience may also induce them to shift to other activities. Again the country would benefit.

Cash Grants for the Ultra Poor: Milton Friedman is a hero to those on the right of the political spectrum and a villain to many on the left. (Many blame his extreme advocacy of "market-based" solutions for some of the current mess in global financial markets.) Hero or villain, some of his ideas made sense. For instance, he advocated a negative income tax to help the poor. The idea was simple. People with incomes below a pre-determined level (a "poverty line") would receive a subsidy (cash grant) from the state to bring their income up to that level. Friedman (true to his conservative convictions) did not believe that the state should dictate how the poor used their resources (hence his opposition to commodity grants such as food stamps) and again (true to his conservative views) he did not believe that the state bureaucracy was efficient or effective enough to deliver the services such as health, education, housing (hence his advocacy as vouchers). The negative income tax would put cash in the hands of the poor and they alone determine how to allocate the resources. Because the grant was a negative income tax, the general laws applicable to misstating or cheating on taxes applied. No new legislation or bureaucracy would be needed to implement the program.

There has been too much resistance (farmers object since food stamps subsidize their output, and welfare agencies object because they need case loads to keep their jobs) for the idea to be applied in a rich country (especially the U.S.). Nonetheless, the principles apply. Cash grants to the ultra poor have many of the same advantages as a negative income tax. They get cash into the hands of the very poor who are typically by-passed by other social safety net programs. And, because the grant is in cash it allows the poor to decide how to use the resources in their own best interests.

Cash grant programs, however, are relatively rare in developing country situations. Some countries have "endowments" for all children and others have contingent transfers, i.e., the family gets a grant if their children attend school and get medical attention. That does not mean they should not be tried since there are few ways of reaching the ultra-poor with public services. With the 'no strings' aid, I would start a pilot program in the selected areas around the country to determine who has to do what, for whom, how, with whose support, and how often to test the feasibility of a modest cash grant program (say $50 per person twice a year) to begin to address the worst aspects of extreme poverty in Liberia. The focus should be on the most vulnerable.

With the other elements of the no strings aid – improved connectivity, enhanced management, and a focus on infrastructure, this element would complement the overall effort to accelerate growth and development in Liberia and help the country move beyond poverty and deprivation to a higher sustained growth path.

Stephen Smith
Duke University

My short answer is: nothing. Because there is nothing useful, or very little, that can be done with "easy money". A half-century of aid-giving, and the experience of (oil and other) 'rentier states' in Africa, attest to the fact that (aid and other) royalties have ruined rather than parlayed whatever potential for sustained development there was.

Foreign aid began as one thing and became another. The transfer, and often the gift, of public or private resources to aid agencies or the government of an "underdeveloped" country was initiated in the wake of World War II as an expedient of superpower rivalry. But foreign aid did not go away with the end of the Cold War. Always multi-purpose, i.e. a mix of diplomatic, commercial, relief, developmental and cultural objectives, it has over time evolved away from "realism" and toward "constructivism" (cf. David H. Lumsdaine, *Moral Vision in International Politics,* 1993). The geopolitical rent of the Cold War gave rise to a widely accepted norm that, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, has remained uncontested: the "aid-for-development norm".

In my view, there is nothing wrong about the idea that well-off nations ought to make funds available for the improvement of the human condition elsewhere. However, the disrepute into which the conditionality of aid has fallen deeply flaws the transfer of concessional resources at both ends: it fosters narcissism and undermines accountability on the donor side, and births a culture of entitlement, if not victimization, on the recipient side. At least three reasons account for the bad press conditional aid nowadays has: first, the aid-for-development norm emerged *contra* the "strings" of Cold War realism; second, post-Cold War attempts to link aid to exigencies of 'good governance' (such as Structural Adjustment Programs, externally driven agendas for democratization, the rule of law, etc.) have, overall, resulted in failure; third, political constituencies for "uninterested" aid have become influential in donor countries, thanks to growing media attention and, in the US, the sway gained by the Christian right. But these new constituencies are not necessarily unselfish with respect to their own vested interest in unconditional funding. Actually, the most obvious leverage to force recipient countries into compliance with "strings attached" to aid, i.e. the suspension of foreign funding, has not been an option because of corporatist concerns raised by both humanitarian organizations and state aid bureaucracies.

Rich nations may enjoy the privilege of throwing away their small change (currently about $100 billion a year, up from $8 billion in 1970, and roughly $ 2.5 trillion altogether since 1960). But poor countries can't afford the luxury of vitiating inchoate economies with unconditional aid. *"The hand that gives is always above the hand that receives",* a West African saying goes. To make foreign aid as much as possible an equal exchange, the interest of the donor must be as clearly spelt out as the recipient must have accepted the condition *sine qua non.* Therefore, "no strings attached" funding is not only of little help (except, arguably, for emergency relief). In fact, it's poison for the patient.

[25]

Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone are prime examples of countries "spoilt" by foreign aid. As the 'display window' of French postcolonial tutelage, independent Ivory Coast received over decades high levels of funding from Paris (though, per capita, less than Senegal and... Gabon). In the 1980s, the country was literally run by 50,000 French expatriates – twice as many as had ever lived there before 1960 - who re-colonized the state apparatus and an economy chiefly based on export crops. "Easy money" and political infantilization compounded to collective schizophrenia: a complex of superiority toward neighboring countries, namely the "poor cousins" of the northern Sahel region who came in droves to labor in cocoa and coffee plantations, and a complex of inferiority with regard to France, the abiding "master". Since the early 1990s, with outbursts of xenophobia and post-colonial resentment, this "model" has been in crisis.

Until the end of Samuel Doe's regime in 1990, Liberia was similarly pampered by the United States. The most favored recipient of US aid to Africa during the Cold War, the country founded by manumitted American slaves witnessed unprecedented interference in 1988, when Washington sent "executive agents" to Monrovia to take over direct control of state finances. All outlays by the Liberian Treasure had to be underwritten by them. Yet, contrary to France, the US immediately drew the consequences of the end of the Cold War consistently refraining from military involvement in the Liberian crisis, no matter the toll of African lives. Cynically speaking, or as an eidetic reduction, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's election in 2005 has restored the 'aid rentier state' as an alternative to the 'shadow state' (William Reno) managed by warlords since 1990.

Sierra Leone is an exemplar of post-conflict, and postcolonial, redemption. After an extended period of tutelary abstinence in Africa, which contrasted with France's enduring *"presence"* on the continent, London intervened in May 2000 in its former colony to end a bloodbath and to bail out an ill-fated UN peace-keeping operation. Since, Great Britain has burdened the lion share of $2 billion of foreign assistance provided to a country of 5 million inhabitants. This financial lifeline has subsidized the survivalism of the vast majority, and fed a - mostly corrupt - small elite, while the 50,000 well-trained Sierra Leoneans, who would have the competence to better administer the country, are living in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Against this backdrop, what difference has made the shift from *"a neo-colonial to a neoliberal logic"* in Euro-African relations? No offense to a library of academic writing, I think not that much of a difference. If neo-colonial presence there was in the region, it would be France in Ivory Coast. But there is little left. Since 2004, merely 8,000 French (dual) nationals remain in the former colony and, in July 2008, the French military base near Abidjan was officially, albeit discretely, handed over to the Ivorian army. The French *Licorne* contingent (now a 1.300 soldiers, down from 4,800) only uses the facility to secure, and accompany, the UN blue helmets on their way out. As for the neoliberal logic, it remains to be seen how much of it will survive the recent plunge of the world economy and the resurgence of strong state interventionism. If I had a guess to venture, I would predict if not the end at least the abeyance of "no strings attached"

donor funding. Now that a growing number in distress at home clamors for assistance, even those who do not share my view of "poisonous aid" will readily agree that financial hand-outs have evinced ineffectual to prompt development in poor countries.

George Wah Williams
Liberia Democracy Watch

An assessment of the lead question immediately suggest a couple of assumptions which must primarily be discussed, at least in passing but would give greater clarity to any response to the lead question.

The presenter will attempt to discuss the question from two perspectives, one as a civil society leader, whose programs immeasurably relies on donor funding and as a community leader who harbors visions of how he believes Liberia could emerge from its current socio-economic position to a more productive and developed society where its citizens are positioned to

Assumption I: That donor conditionalities often times, run contrary to institutional and national goals and as such generate negative outcomes for benefitting societies; This assumption is particularly true for projects and programs which are driven by donor and with little or no beneficiary participation. Such undertakings are generally aimed at using the field as a laboratory for actions to be applied in other areas of the world; While it might be a hard fact that " he who pays the piper, calls the tune" donors have often given monies for purposed other than those envisioned by the recipients. Aid conditionalities have served as an effective mechanism for greater endowed nations to effectively but subtly wield their influence over less resourced countries.

By setting conditions on what to fund, places both national programs and outcomes in jeopardy, For while donor might have a preference for particular projects/programs such programs might not immediately fall amongst institutional or national priorities.

This situation renders most institutions programmatically weak and non-accomplishing. This might lead to loss of institutional and national vision and generate negative long-term progress;

Likely Outcomes:
- *Greater Flexibility in Programming:*
- *Improvement and Expansion Roads:*

- *Creating sustainable employment promotions, especially for employable youths; etc.*

The mind can roam unrestricted about ways by which "Aid without Strings" can achieve. However, it must be stressed that accountability and responsibility MUST at all times serve as a hallmark for any kind of aid. Given the essential importance of salvaging developmental needs in underdeveloped countries, aid has become a buffer for shortfalls in national income and receipts needed to meet national demands.

How does a history of porous boundaries and regional movements impact contemporary experiences in the nation-state and the Mano River region? Can international institutions engage in locally relevant regional networks in a meaningful way?

William P. Murphy
Northwestern University

Structural Contradictions, Clientelist Politics, and Legitimation Crisis

A good analogy for diagnosing a social crisis is the diagnosis of an illness. In some cultures, illness is diagnosed by identifying opposed forces acting within the body, such as heat and cold or wetness and dryness, which create bodily tension leading to illness. Regardless of the medical merits of this model, it exemplifies a useful technique for thinking about social crises, namely, examining the contradictory elements in social institutions that lead to a crisis.

This is an old technique in social analysis based on the concept of "social" or "structural" contradiction, which embodies the important insight (present in the folk wisdom of most societies) – namely, that different principles of social behavior operate together but may come into conflict, leading to conflict and crisis.

The ideas of "social contradiction" and "social crisis" raise comparative and systemic questions, which help us avoid exoticizing and particularizing what is often called the "Liberian crisis." Consider, as an analogy, the world financial crisis that has shaken the United States and the world. This crisis forces confrontation with sobering questions, which are often phrased in terms of "structural contradictions." What structural contradictions in financial institutional practices created this crisis? What are the best solutions for structuring and regulating those institutions in order to avoid or control the contradictions leading to crisis? Formulating the problem in this way provides a method for reflecting on potential fault lines in any institutional structure. It also provides a method for examining the exogenous forces on structures that exacerbate structural weaknesses. These general questions and methods provide a good entry point into analyzing the Liberian crisis.

The concepts of contradiction and crisis provide a heuristic for asking questions about any institutional structure that may be relevant to understanding the Liberian crisis of civil war and post-conflict reconstruction. The notion of crisis is often applied to the Liberian civil war through the explanatory formula that nation-state weakness arises from a crisis of neo-patrimonialism (defined as government resources used for patronage redistribution to loyal clients and followers rather than for general social services and public benefits). For various external (e.g., global economy) and internal reasons, the nation collapsed into civil war under the weight of structural weaknesses associated with neo-patrimonialism – e.g., factional conflicts, favoritism, underdevelopment, etc. Despite the broad generality of this explanatory formula, it provides a good model for thinking about the relationship between structural contradictions and crisis in the concrete dynamics of particular institutional forms.

This model also encourages us to consider structural contradictions related to the patronage and clientelist strategies of patrimonialism in the context of other institutions besides those of central government. Take, for example, local-level sociopolitical institutions of rural Liberian chieftaincies. What are the structural contradictions in these institutions that have the potential for creating conflict and crisis? Patrimonial and gerontocractic authority of the chiefs and elders – combined with privileged kinship ranking -- operate on the normative principle of serving the community with wisdom and justice (e.g., fair resolution of disputes). But a contravening principle valorizes the strategic use of chiefly and eldership authority to benefit the sectional interests of particular kin groups at the expense of other kin groups, especially low status kin groups (including low status youth). Many young Liberians, for example, complain that the chiefs used their judicial power as a strategy to impose heavy fines of labor and money on the youth.

Consider, in addition, the related institution of secret societies. Such associations in rural chieftaincies are structured by a similar contradiction: namely, one principle valorizes creating social solidarity and transmitting religious knowledge through secret associations, but a contravening principle places a value on the strategic use of the association for the particularistic interests of elders and kin groups controlling those associations. Again low status youth often find themselves vulnerable to strategies of gerontocratic power based on privileged knowledge.

The general (and comparative) point is to conceptualize patrimonial and gerontocratic power as a species of a wider logic of political and economic domination built on a strategy of creating clients through patronage exploitation of community resources, including privileged knowledge as a patronage resource. Such clientelist strategies (i.e., strategies for creating clients and social dependency) operate at both national and local-levels (and the strategic intersection of the two levels).

A key question about structural contradictions focuses on whether the exogenous inputs of resources (e.g., political, economic as well as ideological) into a community (local or national) either exacerbate contradictions in a way that leads to more sectional conflict in the community, or strengthens institutional mechanisms for regulating those structural tensions. For example, one hypothesis derived from this analytical model is that the economic variable of a resource-rich chieftaincy – say, for example, rich in diamonds, gold, timber, or nearby iron ore concessions – increases the likelihood that the local elites of chiefs, elders, and leaders of prominent kin groups will use their authority to monopolize local resources, especially when government elites at the national-level team up with local elites to control economic resources (and legitimate political control) for mutual local and national elite accumulation.

This hypothesis draws attention to a conclusion found in the comparative literature on corruption, namely, that the use of local and national government resources for personal benefit is a strategy for integrating elites in a network of patron and client relations (e.g., a government minister as patron to a client chief in a wealthy, rural chieftaincy). Another conclusion is that exogenous inputs into a community – such as the

power and prestige of a government official shoring up the authority of a local-level client chief – provide resources for intensifying elite accumulation in that community.
This principle applies to national inputs into local communities as well as international inputs into national communities, including inputs generated regionally by neighboring countries or globally through far flung international political and economic ties (including ties with multinational corporations).

A final conclusion concerns the way such inputs from regional political and economic systems – i.e., the regional flow of goods (including military goods), services, money, credit, messages, symbols, and agreements in regional political and economic systems -- may either expand or contract the role of clientelist strategies in political institutions. The regional idiom of patrimonial and gerontocratic power, for example, is a symptom of clientelist strategies. Therefore, the key question becomes a more general one: whether regional inputs of wealth and coercive means increase the power of patrons as well as the political and economic dependency of clients (and impoverishment of those excluded from the patronage pie), thereby producing greater marginalization and alienation of wide segments of the national population.   The case of Charles Taylor's patronage of Foday Sankoh's political ambitions in Sierra Leone can be seen as an extreme case of this regional process, as well as an example of citizen alienation from clientelist strategies that produce social dependency through excessive coercive means.

This regional political scenario exhibits the consequences resulting from exogenous inputs shaping institutional forms of clientelism. The danger of post-conflict societies falling back into violent conflict is also shaped by the reproduction of social contradictions embodied in clientelist strategies of neo-patrimonial institutions. The crisis of clientelist strategies represents a legitimation crisis, namely, clientelist forms of social and political integration failing to meet the national needs of citizens. One solution, according to this analytical model, is to produce systemic inputs that limit incentives and create disincentives for clientelist strategies of elite wealth and power accumulation, including disincentives for accumulating power through violence (as well as disincentives for accumulating social and economic capital through violent means).

This solution, of course, is easier said than done but it raises important structural (and comparative) questions for regional bodies, such as the Mano River Union: namely, whether regional policies and alliances serve to expand or contract the structural contradictions of clientelist strategies in national political systems.   A crisis is also a learning process.

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A good deal of crime in the Mano River area is related to the way in which historically rooted patterns of behaviour have been criminalized, often by legislation enacted in colonial times or, in the case of Liberia, during the heyday of the True Whig Party. The demarcation of precise national borders in the early twentieth century cut across existing patterns of trade and social intercourse, sometimes leading people to take evasive measures. The imposition of tariffs and duties by the state could turn national borders into a resource, creating profitability by the passage from one jurisdiction to another.

Law avoidance and law-breaking have also become a political resource. Politicians have often pursued power within channels formally designated by law and by bureaucratic convention at the same time as they have sought power through unofficial networks. The latter may be illegal in nature. Examples include illegal economic activity (such as smuggling) and illicit associations (such as membership of initiation societies or use of initiation practices that have been banned).

Illicit networks and practices have been internationalized from an early period. According to a contemporary intelligence estimate, the smuggling of diamonds from Sierra Leone to Liberia was 'the greatest smuggling operation in the world' in the mid-1950s.[1] Thirty years later, large-scale diamond-smuggling in Sierra Leone was taken over by gangsters from the Soviet Union, some of them with connections to Israeli intelligence. Marat Balagula and others used Sierra Leone as a freeport facility, smuggling in diamonds from Russia and swapping them for heroin from Thailand for onward transmission to the USA. They also managed an election campaign for President Joseph Momoh.[2] There are many other examples of illicit activities that are rooted in local patterns of activity becoming integrated into international circuits.

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[1] Ian Fleming, *The Diamond Smugglers* (1957; Pan edn, London, 1960), p.126.
[2] Robert I. Friedman, *Red Mafiya: How the Russian mob has invaded America* (Little, Brown, Boston etc., 2000), pp.57-8.

Today, one of the most prominent developments in West Africa is the enhanced involvement of the region in the cocaine trade. Heroin has actually been traded through West Africa since as early as 1952, initially by Lebanese networks. The scale of cocaine trafficking by Latin American gangs, in association with West African networks, has increased enormously in the last ten years. This has major implications for the region. The profits of the cocaine trade are so great that they may become politically decisive, as has happened in Guinea-Bissau, where the army has major interests in the drug trade.