

BUILDING A SECURE FUTURE

International Investment in the Reconstruction of the Republic of the Congo

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ABSTRACT

This essay is a snapshot of the Republic of the Congo and its ongoing reconstruction programs. Due to the actions taken by their political leaders and the subsequent civil war, the citizens of the RoC have unfairly endured the burdens of the power struggle. Through the efforts of the international donor community and the current political regime, the RoC is now reconstructing their political, economic, and social frameworks to run according to international standards in order to build a more secure platform for current and future development initiatives to take hold.

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I. BUILDING A SECURE FUTURE

Introduction¹

The Republic of the Congo (RoC) is an African nation located on the West Coast, south of the Sub-Saharan region bordering Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Gabon. It is slightly smaller in area than Japan with a population roughly 3% the size of Japan's.

Seventy percent of its 3.9 million citizens live within the southern region in or near the capital Brazzaville, the port city of Pointe Noire, and along the train route that connects the two cities. The RoC's citizens are considerably young with 47% of the population being under the age of 14. The population has been slightly impacted by HIV/AIDS affecting 4.9% of the population relative to Botswana and Swaziland who suffer from a 38% prevalence rate.

The official language is French though there are several local languages – Kikongo being the most widespread. Based on the UN's 2005 Human Development Index the Republic of the Congo is considered to be a Medium Developed Nation ranking 142 out of 177, ranking near Sudan and Togo. With a literacy rate of 84% it far exceeds nations such as Niger at 14% and Afghanistan at 38%.

Like many colonized nations this former French colony gained its independence in 1960 for self-determination to define its own destiny. As with many post-colonial nations there came the burden of constructing a genuine independence within a global community.

After experimenting with over two decades of Marxism its newly democratic government was elected in 1992. Shortly after it was fraught with three civil wars 1993 - 1997. Now as a post conflict country emerging from major political unrest, the Republic of the Congo has been relatively stable, yet the RoC is still struggling to maintain its security precisely because there is a grave imbalance creating criminological asymmetries where citizens are continually left to survive on their own without state or economic support.

Yet beginning in 2000 the international donor community began again support to reinvigorate the RoC in several ways by filling the gaps that the Nation-State could not provide on its own. The RoC has a long list of challenges and dilemmas to deal with in order to build comprehensive security that includes: eradicating poverty by diversifying its comparative advantages (besides its continual high profit exploitation of its oil reserves); providing civil services that cater to the victims of the civil war especially the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs); and repatriating the rogue militias and child soldiers. Not only do the physical security frameworks need to be tended to, but also so does the economic and political systems that still suffer from a lack credibility, accountability, and transparency, which is a major factor in mortgaging trust between international creditors and donors.

The Civil War took its toll in the most crucial regions. As a result the basic infrastructure has suffered a severe breakdown, damaging schools, healthcare systems, energy grids, transportation routes and soft domestic economic networks, such as local marketplaces. The still fragile environment must undergo intensive and extensive reforms and reconstruction initiatives to ensure that the RoC, as a whole, can provide a stable platform for which those individuals who continue to hinder progress do not squander current investment through corruption, and where investment is not in vain due to ongoing physical attacks.

By investing in a secure future the RoC will become more attractive for future investment and hopefully turn the tide of its poor political, economic and social performance. The programs researched here amount to approximately three quarters of a billion USD to be paid out over several years. They range from grants and credits to fund specific programs, as well as impressive debt relief programs that allay the crippling pressure of repaying inordinate levels international debts and their domestic arrears that was compounded by poor economic performance during and subsequent to the Civil War.

International support does not substitute for a strong and secure nation-state. Therefore the reforms of these externally funded programs must be internalized and implemented by the Congolese Government and sustained long after international pressure, finance, and influence subsides. And more importantly ongoing reconstruction must be all encompassing and not specialized, catering to only

partisan interests. Solving the issues in the RoC requires that policy developers and implementers avoid myopically tending to the demands of static pre-determined solutions, but tend to the needs of the ever-evolving problems. Any other way would not build long-term security, and would only serve to exasperate the current situation.

Redefining Security

The Oxford American dictionary definition of ‘Security’² as a noun having several meanings and an adjective or verb function as ‘Secure.’ Its origins hail from late Middle English derived from old French and Latin meaning *‘free from care’* and is be defined as:

- A ‘state of feeling and/or being safe’ from danger
- The ‘state of safety’ a nation provides and the measures taken to ensure safety
- A thing used to guarantee repayment
- A physical force used to protect an object or subject

It is a common misconception to view the word security only in the terms of the last definition – where investment into security would take into account the armament of security forces to physically protect a nation, location, or personnel from external or internal threats. A nation-state building its defense forces may temporally provide ‘a state of being free from danger’ from internal threats, yet such action does not deal with the internal causality of domestic threats.

While it is crucial to reduce the vulnerabilities of subjects and objects through defensive measures, it is equally important to reduce the cause of threats. For example in the case of the RoC, investment in protecting the population from rogue armed individuals has been important, yet it has been more important to invest in programs for disarming and reintegrating those rogue armed individuals. Moreover, while it is important to deal with the overall physical internal security threats; it is just as important to address the political, social and economic issues such as corruption, lack of freedom and participation, lack of healthcare, lack of investment in education and poverty, that in and of themselves are threats if not attended to.

Creating a comprehensive domestic security would need policies to ensure against such threats of societal instability or even collapse of the political, social, economic systems, without which civil unrest occurs. In addition, such system wide threats make a developing nation-state unattractive to the international investment community, thereby hindering its economic development.

As a post conflict developing country, the Republic of the Congo receives funding for reconstruction from the World Bank Group and other multinational and bilateral programs. Such an investment in reconstruction serves to build a sustainable and authentically secure environment where future economic investments in development can take hold.

One major prerequisite of the UN’s programs for a developing nation is the presence of a multi-party democracy to receive funding for reconstruction initiatives. Since investment in reconstruction is based more on faith than past performance, the UN therefore requires a proper political framework to work within. In the case of the RoC, the Congolese government and its constituents, along with the international donor community, are investing in all three systems - the political, social and economic to build a secure platform, for future security.

II. INVESTING IN SECURITY

History

Since the end of WWII, reconstructing the political, economic and social frameworks of nation-states became a central concern of the international community rising out of humanitarian perspective and the common desire for international security.

From this need for reconstruction and development of these post-conflict regions, developed nations formed international finance institutions such as the World Bank and other multilateral Development Banks to provide the necessary financial investment funding and technical expertise.

Currently several UN agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Inter-Governmental Agencies provide the majority of the funding.

Reconstruction Programs

By targeting the political, economic and social frameworks, with each yielding different benefits, each requires unique solutions to deal with the complex interconnected issues.

- **Political reconstruction** helps ensure that leadership, political party members, oppositional groups, and constituents cooperate in a democratic system, building trust; thereby increasing the probability of regional and global political stability.
- **Economic reconstruction** helps ensure that fiscal systems remain stable with transparency; thereby maximizing the chance of greater economic growth and capital accumulation by ensuring the proper distribution of funds.
- **Social reconstruction** helps ensure that citizens have the opportunity to be educated, well fed, healthy, and have opportunities to develop properly; thereby improving the lives of its citizens through the reduction of suffering and reducing civil unrest.

Oversight

In assisting newly forming nation-state democracies, the level of intervention is not direct governance, but an intervention system having a financial and, at times, technical supportive role that bases continued investment upon performance of the recipient by reaching agreed benchmarks with active monitoring called oversight by the donor agencies.³

Sources & Type of Financial Donors

The multilateral donors and bilateral partners share in the financial responsibility of offering loans/credits/grants primarily through the UN agencies, Development Banks, Inter Governmental Organizations, Partner Nation States, and NGOs.

- **Low-Interest Concessional Loans** – Designed to be paid back at a later date based on the current value given.
- **Interest-Free Concessional Loans** (called Credits).
- **Grants** – A sum of money given by an organization free of commitments of repayment.

There are six main sources of donor funds and technical expertise that have the capability of providing the necessary effort, energy and money to support the Republic of Congo in its current political, economic and social reconstruction efforts to upgrade their internal mechanisms.

The major funding source for reconstruction and development is the United Nation system's specialized agencies: World Bank Group's International Development Agency (IDA) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD); International Monetary Fund (IMF); and World Trade Organizations; and the other agencies running programs such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The other sources are Inter-Governmental Agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, Development Banks, Partner Nation-States and Private Enterprise.

1. **United Nations System:** The UN Programs and specialized agencies fulfill a role in the Republic of the Congo by providing funding and supervisory monitoring, which is important being that the UN is still the best agency for nation building due to its universal methodologies and attention to humanitarian needs. At the moment the RoC has welcomed UN support.
2. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** - The IMF has provided Debt Relief, Direct Cash Transfers for emergency funding, and several tailored Low-Interest Concessional Loans in phases under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) to assist in repairing the 'balance of payment' problems, so the Congolese Government can continue to maintain conditions for economic security and transparency.
3. **World Bank Group** – The RoC lost its IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) status and 'reverse graduated' to IDA status (International Development

Association). It has been approved for 34 credits in the form of Interest-Free Concessional Loans. Current open grants equate to approximately US \$128 million and have been instrumental in providing the necessary funding to help the RoC escape its ‘*conflict trap*’.⁴

4. **Inter-Governmental Agencies (IGA):** IGAs, such as the International Emergency Agency (IEA), are instrumental to the Republic of the Congo and have provided technical expertise; and have provided a forum for discourse, monitoring national policies, and administered agreements. International Energy Agency (IEA) – Monitoring Support mission is committed to maintaining energy security worldwide. Its role is to pick up any remaining intellectual research slack in a region. In the view of the IEA, energy security is closely linked with economic development and the environment, which they call the three “Es”. Africa’s lack of energy security in their view feeds into the cycle of poverty, hindering economic development due to the lack of access to ample, reliable, and affordable sources of energy.⁵
5. **Non-Governmental Organizations:** NGOs provide supplemental services such as healthcare support, human rights monitoring, and specialized research. Some organizations have field operations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, Doctors without Borders (MSF), and Human Rights Watch, while some provide online information services.
6. **Development Banks:** Development Banks such as the African Development Bank (ADB) provide loans and credits for development programs. It set up the African Development Fund (ADF) to work with the World Bank. The ADB has been involved with the Congo since 1972 and has committed a total of \$404.66 million in 27 operations, which range from policy reform programs normalizing relations with partner nations, reconstruction and development programs, and arrears clearance programs.⁶
7. **Partner Nation-States:** Partner Nation-States offer a variety of programs ranging from providing financial support to influencing policy. China and the U.S. have offered financial assistance to the RoC to help in their reconstruction efforts, while France has been a major contributor to the RoC’s domestic agenda.
8. **Private Enterprise:** Several corporations have provided reconstruction services to rebuild the basic infrastructure of the RoC, though the international donor community subsidizes them. One such corporation is SOCOFRAN – a French owned construction company.⁷

These main sources of donor funds indirectly and directly affect the future stability of the RoC by providing financial capital, resource capital, and human and intellectual capital. The programs shown in section V. *Reconstruction Programs* are several key programs currently being implemented to reconstruction its political, economic and social frameworks.

Repayment

The Congolese economy is primarily based on the exploitation of its natural resource, mainly its oil and secondly its timber. Congo Brazzaville is the fourth largest producer of petroleum crude south of the Sahara, after Nigeria, Angola and Equatorial Guinea, yielding 267,100 bbl/day (2005 estimates). According to an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative EITI report the oil sector accounts for over 60% percent of RoC's GDP, almost 80% of the governments budget, and about 95% of its export earnings.⁸

According to the CIA’s Factbook the RoC has revenues of US\$1.328 billion with estimated expenditures of 1.065 billion in 2005.⁹ Therefore access to additional oil reserves and other exploitative natural resources will play a major role in ensuring the RoC can continue to repay its debts and ensure continued growth.

Oil-Sector Growth

Several government programs are in process to expand oil field ownership and exploration. One is an agreement with Angola, signed in 2002, to jointly administer certain Congo-Cabinida border areas since the highly rich N’Kossa resides right on the border of Haute Mer and Block 14, see attached map.

Though the offshore industry is dominated by TotalFinaElf, Agip, and the Exxon Mobil Corporations, who have contracts to operate in the region, the Congolese Government is signing new Production Sharing Agreements with other corporations, one being Murphy Oil allowing them to explore 800,000 acres of deepwater sites through 2014, with Murphy Oil sharing 85% of the production costs.¹⁰

According to Mindy West of Investor/Media Relations at Murphy Oil, she stated in my personal interview with her that five sites to date have been drilled; yielding four dry hits and one site that is expected to yield 93.5 million bbl. She also stated the expected production per day and profit share is still being negotiated with the Societe Nationale Petroles du Congo. As the largest principal investor Murphy Oil will reap the greatest return.¹¹

Corruption

Many of the domestic programs are subsidized by, and their credit repayments are backed by the oil profits from its state owned oil sector - Société Nationale des Pétroles du Congo. The RoC joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in 2004, and has built confidence with the World Bank Group because of their initiatives to improve its administrative policies and procedures particularly in that sector.

After the arrest by the Congolese government of two reporters from the London based Publish What You Pay (PWYP) coalition in April 2006, some donor eyebrows were raised after hearing of allegations raised by this coalition. They reported that the corruption in the oil-sector is systematic and ongoing, even though the mechanisms surrounding its transactions were required to keep up with international standards and were supposedly monitored by the UN agencies.¹²

Allegations of scandal surrounding the oil-sector appear to be even worse depending upon the sources of the information. Though the majority of the international actors, who have a vested interest in the oil-sector, present a clean picture – critics of the Congolese paint a different picture. According to a Global Witness press release in 2005 Denis Gokana, head of the Societe Nationale Petroles du Congo, has been secretly selling approximately \$400 million worth of oil to shell companies, he personally owned, at a market rate of \$31 when at the time the international market rate was between \$45 - \$50 per barrel.¹³ And supposedly Gokana received kickbacks from the deal and never officially acknowledged the transaction or paid the proceeds into the nation's treasury.

The corruption allegations surrounding the mismanaged oil sector only hampers the sincerity of the Congolese Government's commitments to dealing with its overwhelming poverty, and certainly hurts its chances at receiving future debt relief.

The international donor community is certainly interested in the growth and proper management of the oil sector in the RoC, yet it is equally interested in how the RoC intends to allocate its export revenues. Proper budget allocation will build confidence among the international donor community and ensure international investment is not being wasted on selfish domestic interests. The IMF has made its concerns clear stating that the RoC should spend more of its increased oil revenues on reducing poverty, providing student scholarships, paying good salaries, and ensuring stable pensions. Assistant head of the African Division of the IMF Dan Ghura stated that the Congolese Government "owes its citizens" and should work out a reasonable timetable to repay all of its arrears.¹⁴

Non-Oil Sector Growth

Yet with the RoC investing in expansion of its oil sector, there still remains the questionable future of it as a sustainable and supportive economic sector over the long term. This places pressure on the Congo to seek continuous investments for development in non-oil sectors, which in turn will require further investment in land-based initiatives that will reconstitute economic and civil stability particularly in the southern region.

As a resource rich nation it can trade with its timber, potash, lead, zinc, uranium, copper, phosphates, gold, magnesium, natural gas, and hydropower. In addition it can export agricultural products such as cassava (tapioca), sugar, rice, corn, peanuts, vegetables, coffee, and cocoa.¹⁵ Yet to

have access, production, and light manufacturing to take advantages of such resources still requires considerable investment, ergo the need for a stable environment from which it could take hold.

III. HISTORY OF POLITICAL STRIFE¹⁶

To understand the present it is important to understand the past. The RoC's unique history may shed some light on the challenges and dilemmas it faces today. From its independence in 1960 onward to 1977 the Republic of the Congo experienced several changes of leadership some by elections, and some by multiple military coups and one assassination, each as a result of significant political differences.

1959 - Partial Self Rule

Directly before its formal independence in August 1960, at the beginning of partial self – government rule after the French Equatorial Africa (AEF) was dissolved, ethnic rivalries produced struggles among the emerging Congolese political parties sparking severe riots in Brazzaville in 1959. Thus began the Congo's long struggle to form a multiparty democracy.

1969 - From Multi-Party to Single Party

Within a decade of independence the leadership took another route from a multi-party system to claim it had become Africa's first "people's republic" by creating a one party government to be led by the Congolese Labor Party (PCT), a Marxist based regime.

1979 - 1992 - Transition to a Multi-Party Democracy

It was in 1979 when the Central Committee of the PCT designated then Vice President and Defense Minister Col. Denis Sassou-Nguesso as interim President. Then after 20 years of one party rule and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Congolese gradually under Sassou leadership moderated their economic and political views to the point that in 1992 the RoC completed its transition to multi-party democracy and called for elections.

1992 - Regime Change

Sassou's rule ended when Prof. Pascal Lissouba defeated him in the 1992 democratic elections.

1993 - Civil Unrest

Within a few months of his election then President Pascal Lissouba dissolved the National Assembly in November 1992, calling for new elections in May 1993. The results of those elections were disputed, touching off violent civil unrest in June and November of 1993.

1997 - Civil War

In 1997 with new presidential elections coming, political tensions over the off shore oil wealth mounted between then President Lissouba and past president Sassou, who was seeking election. Because of their differences President Lissouba sent government forces to Sassou's compound in Brazzaville, in which Sassou's private Cobra militia resisted touching off a 4-month civil war. The civil war destroyed much of the city leading to the deaths of several thousand people in Brazzaville with over 1/3 of the population of the country became internal displaced persons or refugees.

Angolan troops invaded the Congo to support Sassou while the UNITA Angolan rebels fought for Lissouba. According to statements made by Lissouba, he alleged that the French Oil company Elf-Aquitaine (TotalFinaElf) gave Sassou US\$150 million to take control of Pointe-Noire, the oil capital of the country and to retake the country.¹⁷

With Sassou's victory, the government's army split along ethnic lines with the northern officers joining Sassou and the southern officers joined the Lissouba's rebels. The oppositional rebel forces continued to fight for several years using small arms. As in most African Nations small arms trafficking has had a profound effect on rebuilding a secure environment. According to Gideon Burrows in his short but comprehensive book "The No Nonsense Guide to the Arms Trade", he states that "the

availability of small arms, makes conflict much more likely to occur, more deadly, and harder to resolve when groups seek revenge.”¹⁸

Soft targets like social networks, but also hard targets such as economic networks, transportation routes, communication lines, local businesses, and agricultural regions are decimated by such conflict. After Lissouba was sent into exile he and his supporters formed what came to be known as the Ninjas that continued armed opposition against Sassou’s government.

1999 – Reconciliation

Even though in 1998 Sassou regime held a National Forum for Reconciliation to consider holding elections in 3 years, fighting erupted between Sassou’s government forces and the pro-Lissouba rebel opposition. This new violence closed the economically vital Brazzaville-Pointe Noire railroad, caused extensive destruction, and loss of life in Brazzaville and in the Pool, Bouenza, and Niari regions, and displaced hundreds of thousands of persons. One year later Sassou’s government, through a mediator, signed agreements with representatives of many, though not all, of the rebel groups.¹⁹

2001 – Shifting Power

During 2001 the Transitional Parliament developed and drafted a new constitution and prepared for new presidential and parliamentary elections. The IMF at this time begins its 3-year review to consider the RoC for debt relief. Also during this time 15,000 militia disarmed through a cash for weapons program; and President Lissouba was convicted on treason and corruption charges, and sentenced by the High Court of Brazzaville to 30 years hard labor.²⁰

2002 – Chronic Unrest

After 80% voters agreed to the constitutional referendum and approved the amendment that consolidated the presidential powers, Sassou won the presidential elections unopposed, since he barred the main rivals from the election. Subsequent to this in the southern surrounding region of the city of Brazzaville, the RoC experienced persistent clashes between Ninjas and the Northern Congolese Army, which proved to be a serious hurdle.

According to BBC world reports since April of 2002 there were three attacks on the rail line, and in June 2002 government troops battled the rebels within Brazzaville in which 100 were killed.²¹ Not only did non-combatant civilians pay the price of the unrest, but so did the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who had two staff members kidnapped in December. The ICRC at the time was assisting IDPs in the Bouenza District, which was not considered a dangerous region at the time.²²

2003 - Peace Accord / Disarmament & Reintegration

Over the next two years Sassou’s government conducted a national dialogue called the Dialogue Sans Exclusif, where the opposition parties and his government agreed to continue on the path to peace. Ex-President Lissouba and ex-Prime Minister Kolelas refused to agree to peace and Kolelas were exiled.

Revenge has certainly been a factor in creating an insecure environment during and after the civil war, but the leaders of oppositional group that was lead by Ex-president Frederic Lissouba eventually showed their desire for peace by working with the Peace Accord of March 17, 2003. Those militia rebels who supported Lissouba were granted amnesty, and many were provided micro-loans to aid their reinsertion into civil society, with the exception of a remnant group of the Ninjas in the southern region of Pool, where they maintain a low-level guerrilla war.

At least 2,300 militia rebels surrendered their weapons, a small number considering the total number of rebels reported to be 35,000 to 50,000. Nonetheless, commerce Minister Adelaide Moundele-Ngollo, who played a key role in negotiating the end of hostilities, congratulated the rebels for “choosing the path of peace.” Moreover in her view, the peace process was now “irreversible” since the government’s treatment of ex-combatants sought socioeconomic reintegration through promised micro-credit projects funded by international donors.²³

In 2006 another program was established by the UN - the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program (DDR) to address the ongoing need. During my stay in Washington, D.C. in March 2006 I had the opportunity to attend a lecture at Georgetown given by a visiting scholar Reverend Eugene Goussikindey, SJ from Nairobi, sponsored by the Security Studies Program. Fr. Goussikindey started the Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations. In a personal interview with him he answered my inquiry and agreed that the UN is absolutely necessary as a primary actor to introduce global social, political and economic methodologies, yet it is up to the people of Africa to internalize such processes, and the political and social actors must be willing to experience an internal transformation to ensure such programs remain sustainable.²⁴

The Congolese government has continued to advocate cooperation by placing former rebels within a special committee to establish peace in Pool, and pledged an increase in trust that will welcome more rebels out of the forests for further peace negotiations.²⁵

2004 – Current Status of Leadership

The requirements of good leader for the 21st century was captured in the publication of the 23rd Sinclair House Debates “The Courage to Lead – The Burdens of Freedom” an essay summarizing the participants discussions. A leader requires “a moral compass that establishes the goals for the exercise of power”, and requires courage to take risks and the ability to assess those risks. Such a leadership they believe should also imply “ambition” and “vision” – and must show a willingness to shape things considering long-term goals.²⁶

President Sassou by granting Prime Minister Kolelas amnesty in 2004, and by publicly condemning human rights abuse by swiftly arresting Jean-Baptiste Gatete, who was within the Congo’s borders and who was accused of perpetrating the 1994 genocide in Rwanda²⁷, showed publicly he is fulfilling a requirement of good leadership.

Since 2002 President Sassou has been voted as the president of the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC). And now the Congo, as a member of the CEEAC, has been a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council since it was founded in 2004, and is also a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council for 2006 and 2007. Under his leadership the government is seen as pursuing an active diplomacy to promote stabilization on the continent.

2005 - Rebels in Pool Remain

In early 2000 directly after the major fighting stopped the ICRC began airlifting humanitarian aid to civilians, yet in late 2005 and early 2006 security again became an issue where the Red Cross had to suspend until further notice. According to their recent news release, “In the ICRC's view, such incidents are not specifically aimed at it in its capacity as a humanitarian organization but are part of a general worsening of security conditions in Pool. Given their frequency, the organization believes that the situation is currently too dangerous for its staff to continue working in the department.”²⁸

2006 – International Support

President Sassou-Nguesso has gained international approval by after being elected on January 2006²⁹ as the new chairperson of the 53-nation African Union, which is involved with resolving conflicts on the continent. Sean McCormack a spokesman for U.S. Department of State stated, “The AU has sent a clear signal to the world [by voting in President Sassou] that it will uphold high standards for its organization”³⁰ Yet not all share the views of U.S.

According to the press release by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it welcomed the appointment of Congo’s President Denis Sassou Nguesso to take the lead at the African Union stating, “The Congo is pursuing an active diplomacy to promote stabilization on the continent and to strengthen regional integration.”³¹ It stated further that France and the European Union will continue to support regional integration in Africa, and will continue to maintain close and trustful relations with the African Union both in peacekeeping and with regard to the continent’s economic development.

IV. CURRENT STATUS

Leadership Quality

President Sassou and his family own a considerable amount of shares in domestic businesses and in several multinational corporations that have contracts with the government, which could be a conflict of interest. Since 1997 Sassou and his family have had their hands in over 64 companies in industries that range from Agriculture, Construction, Telecommunications, Banking, Hotels, Real estate, Hydropower, Electric power stations, Transport, and even slaughterhouses.³²

I admire such tenacity in his drive toward capital accumulation, yet the imbalance between his holdings and the needs of his citizens are rather polarized.

Employment

Like many developing nations heavy emphasis is placed on extractive industries, where exploitative resource market channels dominate the political agenda. An inordinate emphasis is placed on investing in and developing stronger and more efficient methods to attend to the needs of natural resource extraction industries for profitable export revenues, while other economic and employment sectors fall by the wayside. This situation is not entirely the fault of political leaders, since in a global market a country will naturally enhance its comparative advantages, and invest less into capital resources that have less quantitative value in the short term.

Though the Republic of the Congo has consecutively maintained a positive GDP in its post civil war environment with upwards to 90% of its GDP is its oil industry, its GDP as a measure of growth does not take into account the current unemployment rate of 70% and a HDI ranking of 142.³³ Of the 30% that are employed, two thirds are engaged in the agricultural sector, which continues to require reconstruction, especially in the region of Pool the considered breadbasket of the RoC.

Considering the RoC's prior performance, the civil war has had long-term effects. Prior to the civil war, real GDP growth in the non-oil sector began at 14.9 and dropped to a negative growth rate of -2.8 during to the civil wars, and currently it has indicated a modest return to only 9.6 (FY 2005).³⁴ The Congolese Government needs to continue investing into human capital for long-term sustained GDP growth, and its general humanitarian responsibilities for future domestic security.

Health

It is unfortunate that belligerent political parties cannot contain their differences within a civil discourse system, and chose to take their battle to the streets. With the intended goal of victory, such street warfare means of accomplishing victory had, and still has, a devastating effect on non-combatants and the system's ability to provide basic services.

The World Health Organization (WHO) put out a health sector needs assessment reporting that as of 2005 130,000 persons have returned to the Pool region only to find their livelihoods destroyed. Only 40% of the health facilities in the region of Pool and 50% in the Kinkala district are functioning today. The lack of medical equipment, drugs, blood banks, laboratories, health information systems and lack of qualified staff leave operations ineffective to deal with the post-civil war fallout.³⁵

Education

Not only are the citizens affected by the loss of the services their institutions provided, but they also have lost the valuable resources of those institutions. The loss of intellectual capital due to an ongoing insecure environment may have long-term disastrous effects on the ability for such services to rebound quick enough to prepare for the demands of future development.

For an example, according to the IMF HIPC report on secondary school enrollment it showed a lack of recovery - where prior to the civil war conflict performance indicators were at 75 and dropped to 54 at the height of the conflict, and in 2004 still have not recovered showing a rate of only 42. Adult literacy prior to civil war indicated 46, during indicated 30, and after civil war indicated only 19.³⁶

Disrupted Humanitarian Action

The current weakened and divided political structure of the RoC government has allowed for armed and uniformed groups to threaten NGO actors, including UN convoys in the region of Pool which forced the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Doctors Without Borders (MSF) to cease operations as recently as 2006.³⁷

The Red Cross provides healthcare services to over 60,000 citizens, and had to wait two months before reengaging the population with services. These political tensions threaten not just the lives and well being of international actors, it destabilizes the highly valuable commodity of trust it is trying to rebuild with its citizens and the international community.

Human Rights Abuses

Based on an IRIN news feed of February 2006 many of the infrastructures that supported the family unit had been “systematically targeted”³⁸ during the civil war fighting, leading to 1/3 of Republic of the Congo’s population being displaced with having thousands hiding in the woods in fear of murder or rape from belligerent groups.

According to the news report an IDP named Batantou explains how his town had to flee to the forest and had to stay constantly on the move. By day his family would hide in separate groups so they would not be captured all at once. As both government troops and oppositional militia forces constantly looted their local towns and destroyed local marketplaces, social networks ceased to exist making it impossible for security to take place in such an environment.

Such actions taken then on the part of the Congolese forces have come back to haunt them. As recently as 2005 the Criminal Court of Brazzaville absolved 15 high-ranking army and police officers (comprising inspector general of the Armed forces General Norbert Dabira, commander of the Brazzaville Military Region General Blaise Adoua and the Director General of the Police, Jean Francois Ndenguet) from their killing of 353 refugees who were returning home to the RoC in 1999.

President of the Court Charles Emile Apeesse stated that the defendants were not personally responsible for committing “war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity,” since the defenders were acting under the assumption that the returning refugees were supporters of the local oppositional militia the Ninjas. The family members of the missing 353 were outraged and saddened by the outcome. The state then decided to accept “civil responsibility” for the situation and subsequently awarded each family 10% of what the plaintiffs asked for previously which consisted of \$18,000 in compensation for each missing relative.³⁹

V. RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Program Funding Distribution & Challenges

Considering the budget distribution requirements for a nation-state’s sustainable development growth, the UN Millennium Project of 2015 recommends foreign assistance distribution be directed in developing nations to reconstruct their country, a healthy balance between political, economic and social components.

The model of distribution they propose is to have approximately 35% of the total funding assistance should go to the health sector, 35% to energy and road infrastructure, 15% to education, 2% to water and sanitation, and the remaining 13% to go towards other core components.⁴⁰ The following are the top challenges the RoC faces in rebuilding its structural components.

Political Challenges

1. Strengthening of government administration, financial management, and transparency
2. Enforcement of accountability among local police, gendarmerie, and military forces
3. Demobilization, disarmament, & reintegration of belligerent actors including child soldiers

Economic Challenges

1. Reduction of poverty, non-oil sector job growth, agriculture reconstruction
2. Continued increase in transparency and production in oil sector

3. International debt relief and settlement of domestic arrears
4. Reopening of local markets and market networks

Social Challenges

5. Reconstruction of education, healthcare, public and civil service systems
6. Reconstruction of water, sanitation, electricity, and transport systems
7. Repatriation of refugees, replacement of IDPs, and family reunification

The following programs are a few of the key programs currently implemented to deal with the political, economic, and social challenges of the RoC. Though only time will tell whether these programs will be effective, the international community has shown its commitment to reconstructing and reforming the RoC to improve its security.

International Monetary Fund

Approved in 2000 the IMF provided a Direct Cash Transfer (DCT) of \$10.6 million that allowed the Congolese Government to make progress toward restoring the country's social and economic stability within the framework of its “Nouvelle Esperance” (New Hope Program) funded by the *Emergency Post Conflict Assistance* program under the IMF's *Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative*.⁴¹

For the long-term reconstruction needs of the RoC, the IMF administration sought to deliver the Official Development Assistance (ODA) via Direct Foreign Assistance (DFA) – not Direct Cash Transfers (DCT) since DCT's do not require monitoring or benchmarks. Without such oversight, it may reduce the chances for the impoverished, dislocated, and disenfranchised to become more productive.

After the RoC presented their first “Letter of Intent” to the IMF in 3 November 2000, the RoC has applied for additional Direct Foreign Assistance. On 17th of November 2004 Rigobert Roger Andély, the Minister of Economy, Finance, and Budget stated in a final memorandum clarifying the economic and financial policies that the RoC intended to utilize the IMF loans for, “(1) improved transparency and good governance in the oil sector, (2) enhanced discipline in the area of fiscal management, and (3) promotion of the private sector with a view to stimulate the sustained economic growth necessary for poverty reduction.”⁴² On the 6th of December 2004 the Executive Board of the IMF agreed to grant approval under a three-year arrangement in the amount of US \$84.4 million. The IMF has not only provided low-interest concessional loans, but has been instrumental in alleviating the high levels of debt, which the RoC carries.

Debt relief is a major factor in escaping the poverty trap especially for the RoC, since according to the Paris Club the RoC as of December 2003 holds international debts upwards of \$8570 million, in which \$4694 million is due to the Paris Club as of September 2004⁴³ making it one of the world's most indebted developing country on a per capita basis.

On March 9, 2006 after intense discussions the World Bank's board of directors and Bank president Paul Wolfowitz, qualified the RoC for debt relief after the country reached the “decision point” under the HIPC initiative.⁴⁴ The HIPC deal was almost held up after reports came to the attention of the IMF from the Center for Global Development that Congo's President Denis Sassou-Nguesso spent \$300k at a New York hotel during his stay.⁴⁵ As an IDA-only country the Executive Board of the IMF concluded that the RoC will continue to need assistance from the international community to extend to 2023– a forecast based on the assumption that everything goes according to plan.⁴⁶

Along with its external debt the RoC carries a heavy internal debt stock (social debt – salaries and pensions) equating to 27% of GDP at CFAF 560 billion at the end of 2003. According to the IMF-HIPC 05/397 – 19 reports⁴⁷ the RoC's authorities are determined to settle ‘arrears’ by signing a ‘social truce’ with local labor unions and post their intentions on the Internet.

Sebastian Mallaby Op-Ed Columnist for the Washington Post has had a very different perspective on the effectiveness of International Debt relief and humanitarian aid especially in the RoC, which he claims is “rotten with corruption”. Moreover he writes that if the World Bank and the IMF are not careful, then the RoC could create a similar fate for the UN, as did the oil-for-food scandal.⁴⁸

Mallaby discredits the IMF and the Bank for not dealing with the corruption problem when offering debt relief.

In conjunction with this debt relief program the World Bank has increase demands on internal controls and transparency within the state-owned oil industry to boost Société Nationale des Pétroles du Congo up to internationally recognized standards to prevent corruption and conflicts of interests.

UN Agencies

UNDP - New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

In July 2001 the Organization of African Unity (OAU) during their 37th Summit adopted the strategic framework proposed by the *New Partnership for Africa's Development*. The proposal was for the OAU to develop an integrated socio-economic development framework for the continent.

The Congolese Government has shown interest in participating in the NEPAD program. The mechanism's framework connects African nations through a peer review process that focuses on good governance with the aim of building peace and stability that is truly African centric. In my personal interview on February 10 with Ms. Bandora, the Senior Governance Advisor to NEPAD at the UN, she stated the Republic of the Congo has successfully installed the mechanisms necessary for proper monitoring and improved transparency – "so far so good."⁴⁹

Not only has NEPAD been provided technical expertise and political mechanisms to assist, it looks to develop programs for Africa as a whole. In NEPAD's *Infrastructure Short-Term Action Plan* (STAP) under the *Spatial Development Program* there are several projects underway to develop country-to-country connections such as the Fougamou-Doussala Road Project, Libreville-Lomie Project, and the Bas-Congo Development Corridor. **See Attached Map.** The Fougamou-Doussala Road Project is designed to connect Gabon and the southern region of the RoC to improve economic relations and access to capital resources, while the Bas-Congo Corridor is focused on harnessing energy development for Central Africa.⁵⁰

One of the more interesting programs is the Transaqua project designed to reroute the vast Congo rivers' water through the RoC and up through toward Saharan Africa for irrigation, with hopes to turn the desert into vast farming fields. Of course the project would have to cut through a dozen countries – this being said, it is unlikely that a project of this magnitude could be instituted in the current environment.

UNESCO - Education and Culture Support - 2006

The RoC has had a long relationship with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) beginning in the 1960's and harbors one field office in Brazzaville, which will remain to be open until October 2009. UNESCO is running several programs and seminars in the region to help promote cultural continuity.

The RoC's involvement in UNESCO's *Education for All Action Plan* is part of a larger global campaign for education that was adopted in 1990 with a goal to rally support for the growing problem of lackluster basic education programs worldwide. The initiative demands that rich and poor countries alike to ensure there are enough quality teachers to provide quality education to every child.

Based on the World Bank's reports the UN is expected to raise US\$18.5 billion by Q4 2006, yet still falls short of the required US \$50 billion required to meet the MDG of 2015.⁵¹ Based on a 2004 UNESCO report the RoC provides little to worry about since it already is comparable to the global average literacy rate of 80%, but could still benefit from increased financial support.

With almost 50% of the RoC's citizens under the age of 14, now is the time to place greater emphasis on education, especially in the more populated regions. Poor performance in providing quality education would have long-term effects, which the Congolese Government cannot afford.

World Bank – International Development Agency (IDA)

IDA - Transparency and Governance Project - 2002

Approved by the World Bank Group's International Development Association (IDA) in 2002 the *Transparency and Governance Project* has a closing date in the end of 2007. The loan's objective is to improve

governance and increase transparency and efficiency in the management of petroleum operations, with 80% of the \$8.84 million secured for Central Government Administration and 20% for oil and gas management.⁵²

According to the *Status of Projects in Execution FY05* report – the project is moving towards its goals and reports the results are encouraging, considering its past petroleum operations. As of June 30, 2005 roughly 50% of the grant has been disbursed, and the remaining funds designated can be used as long as projected targets and outcomes match agreed benchmarks, and are approved by the IDA's Monitoring and Evaluation Team. In the view of the World Bank, the Ministry of Finance of the RoC has successfully modernized debt, customs, and tax management tools, and has continued to yield results in building the capacity necessary for implementing the program.

Though this program has good intentions recent allegations of ongoing corruption present an ongoing challenge that may never be fully resolved, unless the Congolese Government finds it within their interest to continue to root out corruption and favor transparency.

IDA - Emergency Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project - 2002

Approved in 2002 with a closing date of 2007, the *Emergency Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project* loan's objective is to reestablish basic economic activities and social services by rebuilding "primary and secondary urban roads, railways, drainage, and school facilities." 33% of the \$46.98 million to be used for railway reconstruction, 30% for Roads and Highways, 27% for 'other social services', 5% for health programs, and the remaining 5% for general public administration.

According to the *Status of Projects in Execution FY05* report all the components have been implemented, and are in an advanced stage. With 73.7% of the funds disbursed as of June 30, 2005 the results are: over 15,000 children have returned to school in "more decent conditions", HIV/AIDS testing centers have reopened, the majority of rural and urban roads are in the advanced stage of implementation, and the much needed railway line between Pointe Noire and Brazzaville has improved its operations. Yet subsequent to the 4th quarter of 2004 there has been an increase in the utilization of grant money diverting from the agreed benchmarks, though the report states there is no concern for cancellation.⁵³

The 46.98 million set aside for this project should be enough to attend to the relatively small population of 3.9 million citizens within the RoC. With almost 50% of the population under the age of 15 now is the time to ensure child development takes place.

IDA - Emergency Recovery Community Support Project - 2003

Approved in 2003 with a closing date of 2007 the *Emergency Recovery Community Support Project* loan's objective is to assist the recovery of communities living in the smaller municipalities and rural areas where the remainder of the 30% of the population resides. 40% of the \$29.62 million was reserved for general water and sanitation and flood protection, 30% for general education, and the remainder 30% to be used for health programs.

According to the *Status of Projects in Execution FY05* report key results have been achieved on the local level, which has launched a "significant number of priority local investments." In addition financial support for community organizations, institutional construction, implementation of economic reforms, and decentralization of programs have been carried out according to plan. 64.5% of the grant has been disbursed as of June 30, 2005 and is 56% through its lending cycle. The summary note in the report states "attaining these goals would improve the Congo's chances of escaping 'the conflict trap' and assuage relations with external creditors and eliminate domestic arrears."⁵⁴

Though the RoC continues to require international support including debt relief, it is the responsibility of the Congolese Government to ultimately care for its citizens, and should continue to allocate greater export revenues towards community support.

IDA - Economic Recovery - 2004

Approved in 2004 with a closing date of 2006 the *Economic Recovery* loan's objective is to improve the Congo's chance at beating the conflict trap through improving debt management and fiscal

sustainability, public expenditure, financial management, and public procurement, as well as manage environmental and natural resources, install accountability and anti-corruption mechanisms, and employ strategy, analysis and monitoring systems to deal with poverty. 75% of the \$29.9 million USD is reserved for the central government administration, 15% for oil and gas, 6% for forestry, 2% for flood protection, and the remaining 2% for sewage management.

According to the *Status of Projects in Execution FY05* report, “attaining these goals would improve the Congo’s chances of escaping the conflict trap”, as well as improve relations with external creditors through early access to the HIPC program. With 58.7% disbursed as of June 30, 2005 improvements continue to take place according to plan and is proceeding well.⁵⁵

This is one of the most important programs to date, considering Africa’s long held blemish of practicing corrupt economic policies, and the lack of training and monitoring mechanisms in many of its past assistance. If African nations seek greater international relations, sound economic policy is an important step.

IDA - HIV/AIDS and Health Project - 2004

Approved in 2004 with a closing date of 2009 the *HIV/AIDS and Health Project* loan’s objective is to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS and strengthen care for those already living with HIV/AIDS. 46% of the \$18.68 million is to be used for social service programs, including institutional mechanism that provide services such as counseling, peer education, services to orphans and women victims of sexual violence. 24% is to be utilized for Health programs, 20% for Central Government Administration, and 10% for sub-national government administration.

According to the *Status of Projects in Execution FY05* report the project is expected to reach its objectives, though procurement of skills, equipment, drugs, vehicles and training services providers has been slow due to “the prevailing situation in the country.” In addition it reports that the Permanent Executive Secretariat of the National HIV/AIDS Council is on track, working with training institutions and non-governmental organizations setting up units in the 13 provinces. 23.5% of the Grant has been disbursed as of June 30, 2005 and with the exception of the health component, all project components have been installed.⁵⁶

Though the RoC does not suffer an inordinately high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate, dealing with its 4.9% prevalence rate early will ensure a more stable future for its citizens. Proper education and healthcare systems can greatly reduce the debilitating effects of HIV/AIDS.

IDA - Support Basic Education - 2004

Approved in 2004 with a closing date of 2008 the *Support Basic Education* loan’s objective is to improve the allocation and management of resources, ensure quality services and equal distribution. 40% of the \$20.14 million is to be used for primary education, 35% for secondary education, 10% for central government administration, 10% for sub-national administration, and the remaining 5% for participation and civic engagement.⁵⁷

According to the *Status of Projects in Execution FY05* report the project was declared effective March 25, 2005. Starting 3 Qtrs late as of June 30, 2005 it has utilized only 7% of the total available funds. The reports adds that the project has been received ‘enthusiastically’ by the RoC’s Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, and seems to be working well as a community driven rehabilitation program. Seminars and meetings between the Ministère de L’enseignement primaire et secondaire charge de l’alphabétisation (MEPSA) and the UNDP has been set up to ensure proper implementation.⁵⁸

The RoC cannot rely on its future limited oil-reserves to represent its greatness and competitiveness on the international stage. It must rely on the dependable ingenuity and resilience of its citizens, therefore nothing is more important than ensuring that the next generation are equipped to meet the demands of future challenges.

IDA - Multi-Country Demobilization & Reintegration Program (MDRP) - 2006

African countries like the Congo realize that demobilizing ex-combatants and reintegrating them into society will enhance stability and set the stage for post-conflict development and continued financial investment. The RoC will initiate its own program titled the *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)* program funded by the MDRP initiative.

According to an IRIN news feed of January 4, 2006 the World Bank and the Republic of the Congo have signed an agreement for a \$17 million grant to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate 30,000 former combatants in the country. According to the news feed the World Bank representative in the RoC Midou Ibrahim stated "the international community feels strongly that this program should attain its development objective for the greatest number of beneficiaries," affecting the country's southwestern districts most affected by the civil war.

Ex-combatants will undergo training to help them locate employment, and receive medical and social care. According to the MDRP figures there are 43,000 to 50,000 ex-combatants that require reforms under the DDR program including the police, gendarmerie and the military. In addition, weapons military fatigues have been banned in public as of February 2, 2006 as announced by President Denis Sassou-Nguesso. Government officials have denounced individuals who wore uniforms to take advantage of and scare citizens. Sassou stated one must "teach them (rogue military actors) ethics and the meaning of their job"⁵⁹

In March of 2006 the International Labor Organization (ILO) partnered with the Department of Labor of the United States donated \$312,000 to support the rehabilitation of approximately 5,000 former child soldiers in the country within the framework of the DDR program.⁶⁰

Though the current division of security forces is due to the aggressive actions taken by Sassou in the past, the southern army and the Ninjas would benefit in the long-term from unifying to stabilize the region for peace. I foresee one of the biggest hurdles currently is having oppositional forces pledge allegiance to a leader that is seemingly driven to satisfy his own economic interests.

Partner Nation-State Support**CHINA – Reconstruction Support**

The People's Republic of China in 2003 donated \$8.5 million USD to support the reconstruction efforts. \$5.7 million was designated to be used to rebuild infrastructure, and as well as the Chinese-constructed Palais du Parlement that was damaged during the civil wars. \$2.8 million was allocated to build athletic centers, and radio and television centers. The Chinese Government also gave an additional \$26,016 in response to a government appeal to help the 77,000 displaced people return home in the region of Pool.⁶¹

To date there are no reports of progress, yet by showing acts of goodwill the Chinese Government may benefit from improved relations with the RoC as the Congolese Government begins to gain access to inland resource capital. It is important for both states that the Chinese remain a top trade partner.

EUROPEAN UNION - Transportation Reconstruction

Approved in 2006 projects are currently underway in transportation reconstruction. With roughly 70%⁶² of the population living within and surrounding Brazzaville in the district of Pool and along the single train line connecting the highly populated urban city to Pointe-Noire along the coast, protecting the coastal population, the urban habitants in Brazzaville, and those that live along the transportation route is essential to securing the future back-bone of the Congolese economy when oil production will inevitably decline by 2020.

According to Planning Minister Pierre Moussa, the Congolese Government has awarded a contract to SOCOFRAN (a French Company) to rebuild 72 km of road from the capital of Brazzaville to Kinkala, which served as the main town road in Pool that ran parallel to the rail line from Brazzaville to Pointe Noire. This short section of road deteriorated during the civil war and has an expected cost of \$43 million USD, which is being financed by the European Union.

Marc Lentini, a spokesman for SOCOFRAN stated that the personnel has already been mobilized and work is expected to begin immediately. Moussa who is also Minister of Planning, Development, and Economic Integration for the NEPAD program stated plans are underway to reconstruct the road from Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire, which the country considers a lifeline. The rail line is a major form of commerce transportation since it ensures a quick transport of goods from sea. Not since colonial times has there been an expansion of rail routes.

Leaders of the oppositional group – the Ninjas has also agreed to support the project, which would “help create favorable conditions for the road’s reconstruction.”⁶³ Since the 2003 peace agreement the region of Pool has been in a state of “limbo – neither at war nor peace” says Marius Mouambenga, Commissioner-General of the Follow-up Committee for the peace accords in Pool. In the same news feed it states that Pool may be excluded from voting in the 2007 legislative polls, due to the former rebel combatants who compromise security in the region, hampering the “free movement of goods and people.”⁶⁴

The reconstruction of the road is a fine idea; even so the continued insecurity in the region may render progress ineffective, especially if the former rebels are continually excluded from participating in free and fair elections. Sassou and his regime cannot afford continued systematic exclusion of oppositional parties and expect \$43 million worth of reconstructed roads to solve Brazzaville’s problems. The employees of SOCOFRAN risk attacks and the road risks being destroyed again, especially since President Sassou is a part owner in the company.

African Development Bank Group

ADB GROUP - Clearing Arrears - 2004

Approved in July 2004 the RoC became the second country to benefit from the African Development Bank (ADB) assistance to post-conflict countries (PCC). In December 2004 the RoC was formally cleared of 33% of its arrears totaling US \$150 million. The program not only alleviated the Congo’s partial debt, but also allowed for the resumption of international financial assistance through the ADB Group to the RoC, and the lifting of sanctions imposed by partner nation-states such as France and the European Commission.

It should be noted that according to the Congo’s Minister of Economy this operation was possible because of the “significant economic recovery achieved by the Congo” in terms of government reforms and its excellent transparency in its oil sector.⁶⁵

The RoC certainly benefits from the support of Development Banks in stabilizing relations domestically and internationally. By absolving the RoC of some of its financial commitments, the ADB Group has been able to unfreeze accounts related to crucial reconstruction programs. Though clearing arrears may be seen as a beneficial response to the RoC growing dilemma, it could also be seen as conveniently absolving the Congolese Government of dealing with its real responsibilities.

ADB GROUP - Socio-economic Reintegration Grant - 2006

Approved in March of 2006 the African Development Bank Group (ADB Group) granted US\$21 million funded by the African Development Fund (ADF) to finance the project - *Socio-economic Reintegration of Disadvantaged Groups in Congo*. There is an estimated start-up date of October FY 06 with duration of five years.

The program will rely on competitive domestic and international bidders and is expected to create 3,500 plus jobs in the construction sector. The goal is to provide the goods and services necessary to successfully enable 50,000 of the poorest communities to gain access to basic social services, including 13 health facilities. The budget also includes the paving and cleaning of gutters and public roads, as well as refuse collection in the Brazzaville’s most economically depressed neighborhoods. The grant also facilitates the development of agricultural, rehabilitation, and vocational centers. ADB Group hopes to reduce the poverty level in the most disadvantaged segments.⁶⁶

ABD Group has had a long track record of funding programs to allay threats such as economic balance of payment issues to dealing with health issues within Africa, and appears to be a credible creditor and donor. Though the \$21 million is a start, it is only projected to deal with 1% of the 70%

unemployed. The only way the RoC can reduce its unemployment rate is to gradually rebuild its domestic economic marketplace and integrate it into the global market. Continued investment is needed in human capital in this situation, which is their highest commodity, so the country could have greater options such as creating more opportunity and growth in the service and light manufacturing industries. Though caring for the 50,000 poorest of the poor citizens in the region Brazzaville is commendable, there still is a considerable amount of population living along the primary rail route unaffected by this program.

VI. CONCLUSION

Investing in programs that provide greater security in the Republic of the Congo certainly will have long-term benefits. If the programs funded by the international donor community are successfully implemented and sustained then Congolese Government and its citizens will see an increase in security internally and in the region. Beyond the investment in building a security force to combat internal threats the Congolese Government has sought to improve relations with the belligerent oppositional groups thereby reducing such threats. Moreover the Congolese Government has sought to improve its political, economic, and social frameworks, thereby stabilizing the country's platform and improving their chances that the current investment in reconstruction and future investment in development can take hold.

Ultimately via the efforts of the international donor community the RoC will benefit from: the strengthening of its government administration policies and processes; employing proper financial management and fiscal budgeting; and continued transparency in its state owned oil-sector. The RoC will also benefit greatly from the enforcement of accountability among local police, and military forces, as well as a tactful demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of belligerent actors, including the child soldiers.

The RoC will also benefit economically from the improved security provided by ongoing programs that: reduce poverty through non-oil sector job growth; re-invigorate local markets and market networks; and provide agriculture reconstruction. All of which will help in the settlement of domestic arrears.

Probably the most crucial element to providing a future that is secure and free from threats is the continual investment in: social programs that reconstruct education, healthcare, public and civil service systems; infrastructure programs to reconstruct water, sanitation, electricity, and transport systems; and comprehensive services that support the repatriation of refugees, the continual replacement of IDPs, and ones that promote family reunification.

Investing in security that is comprehensive and inclusive will greatly diminish such threats and the need to invest in security forces to defend against such imbalances. The reconstruction programs of the RoC funded by the international donor community need to be carefully monitored and critiqued on a program by program basis as they continue to improve the lives of the impoverished in developing nations. These funds currently provided by the programs listed seem like a drop in the bucket considering the reconstruction needs of the Republic of the Congo since so much more is needed.

Pope John Paul II puts it best in his social encyclical *Centesimus Annus* when he stated, "Development is the new name for Peace."⁶⁷ Peace can only be achieved when there is a secure environment. Sustained development can only be achieved in a secure environment and secure environment can only be achieved when individuals invest in reforming political, economic and social policies that ensure that the dignity of each human being is respected. To do otherwise would only welcome threats to security, thereby sparking a reaction to invest in violence, which will only to feed an on-going cycle of Cainism.

God gave us free will and the ability with His grace to control our selfishness. Mankind is capable of and benefits from living peacefully in solidarity with others. Yet sometimes we forget to live for others. I am certainly guilty of selfishness, and fight everyday to be at the service of others, for

personal and societal benefit.

I hope that the leaders in the RoC will ultimately see the benefit of investing in reconstructing a comprehensive security not just for themselves, but for the common good - for their citizens, their region, and the world; and that the citizens in the RoC will rest a bit easier knowing there is an international community looking to assist them in improving their dilemma, and those of us who pray for them, and will look to help.

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