MANAGING PRESSURE POINTS IN MOMENTS OF POLITICAL HICCUPS: THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

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I: INTRODUCTION

• THE PROBLEM
WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR THE OCCURRENCE OF THE WARS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL STRIFE THAT DOT THE AFRICAN LANDSCAPE?
I: INTRODUCTION (Cont’d)

• **MY THESIS:** THE MYRIAD CAUSES OF INSTABILITY IN AFRICA ARE ROOTED IN ‘NATION-BUILDING’, BUT CENTRAL TO THEM IS THAT ORDINARILY OCCURRING POLITICAL HICCUPS ARE ALLOWED TO FESTER AND SNOWBALL INTO PROTRACTED CONFLICTS
I: INTRODUCTION (Cont’d)

• THE SOLUTION: SUSTAIN AND DEEPEN AFRICAN DEMOCRACIES BY EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND ALLEVIATION OF POLITICAL PRESSURE POINTS

• COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE

• 1). Missed Opportunities: Congo, Nigeria in 1960s and Rwanda in 1990s

• 2). Teachable Moments: Apartheid South Africa, MDGs, Taylor’s Liberia and Abacha’s Nigeria
II: DEMOCRACY AND NATION-BUILDING IN AFRICA

• ‘DEMOCRACY’ AND ‘NATION-BUILDING’: THE AFRICAN CONTEXT
• ‘A MAN OF THE PEOPLE’: CULTURE OR ECONOMICS IN DETERMINING THE SURVIVAL OF DEMOCRACY
• DEMOCRACY AS A SOCIAL COMMITMENT AND INVESTMENT--

Winston Churchill got it right!
II: DEMOCRACY AND NATION-BUILDING (Cont’d)

• THE CONSTITUTIVE FACTOR: ‘E Pluribus Unum’! Max Weber, Anthony Marx and the challenge of nation-building

• HIGH TRANSACTION COSTS

• TELEFISHBOWL: Making sausage in the age of ‘international society’ and media!
III: EXPLAINING CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

1. ENDOGENOUS FACTORS
   a). Ethno-Religious Cleavages: The Berlin Map and the Burden of *Uti Possidetis*
   b). The ‘Economy of Affection’ and its Political Correlates (PwA)
   c). The Primacy of Politics over Efficiency of Government
III: EXPLAINING CONFLICTS IN AFRICA (Cont’d)

• d). Generalized Disrespect for Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law
• e). Profiteering and other Negative Incentives
• f). Pervasive absence of a Social Safety Net
• g). Administrative over-centralization
III: EXPLAINING CONFLICTS IN AFRICA (Cont’d)

2. EXOGENOUS FACTORS

a). Predatory Geo-politics
b). Benign Neglect by Major Powers
c). Condescending Paternalism
d). Inconsistent and half-hearted International Interventions
e). Lopsided Global economic system
IV: TOWARDS A SOLUTION

1. IDENTIFYING POLITICAL HICCUPS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:
   i). Electoral Arrangements and Disputes
   ii). Unconstitutional Change of Power
   iii). Suppression of the media, civil society groups and political opponents
• iv). Outbreak of ‘Low Intensity Conflicts’
• v). Dispute among key political actors, even when they are ‘personal’
• vi). Dispute over the interpretation and implementation of negotiated (peace) agreements
IV: TOWARDS A SOLUTION (Cont’d)

- vii). Sudden drop in government revenue and the resulting observable scarcity of essential commodities
- viii). Sudden loss of civility in the public discourses of political actors and their allies
IV: TOWARDS A SOLUTION
(Cont’d)

2. QUICK INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF OBSERVABLE POLITICAL HICCUPS THROUGH:
   i). Deterrent Presence
   ii). Empathy
   iii). Mediation
   iv). Conciliation
V: LESSONS FROM HISTORY

1. MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

A). International Complicity in Lumumba’s Congo and its aftermath

B). The Domino Effect of International Non-response to the collapse of Nigeria’s First Republic and the ‘Pogrom’ that followed

C). Watching the Rwandan Genocide
V: LESSONS FROM HISTORY
(Cont’d)

2. TEACHABLE MOMENTS
A). The global coalition against apartheid South Africa and the movement for the Global Compact
VI: CONCLUSIONS

- DEMOCRACY IS AN ANTIDOTE TO ‘FAILED STATES’ IN AFRICA
- SUSTAINING DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA REQUIRES MORE THAN INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL
- NATION-BUILDING IS A CONTINUOUS (AND NOT ALWAYS A PLEASANT) SOCIAL EXPERIMENT