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g Tolcuws on-currentl issues

Global Insight covers areas of topical interest and is meant to provide the reader with an initiation to the subject and its policy implications. The analysis is meant to be simple yet elegant, and without sacrificing depth, useful to a broad policy community. We welcome and encourage comments and suggestions.

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PART II

Kenya, the Uhuru Candidacy and the Succession:
what are its prospects and implications for Kenya and
the region?

by

The succession issue in Kenya exploded in the open last August when president Moi hand-picked Uhuru Kenyatta and imposed him on the party as his preferred successor. This sidelined his long serving vice-president, George Saitoti, and the three other party vice-chairmen, Ronald Ngala, Kalonzo Musyoka, and Mudavadi. Since then in what has become known as â\200\230Project Uhurwâ\200\231, Mot has campaigned relentlessly, traversing the country on behalf of Uhuru even when it was patently evident that Project Uhuru was precipitating dangerous divisions within the party.

In response, the anti-Uhuru camp regrouped under the Rainbow Alliance in a belated attempt to forestall his installation as the partyâ\200\231s presidential candidate .

The Alliance comprised some of the most senior KANU politicians â\200\224 Vice President George Sattoti; Ratla Odinga, the Secretary-General, William Ntimana, the minister in the Office of the President; Kalonzo Musyoka, the Communication Minister and the one of the four party vice-chairs; Joseph Kamotho, Environment Minister and a former secretary-general of the ruling party; Deputy Minssters, Fred Gumo, Peter Odoyo, Sankori and Khaniri, and a host of equally senior MPs. The departure of the Rainbow Alliance from KANU now threatens the latter with loss of power for the first time in 39 years. Can Uhuru deliver the presidency? And if not, what next? Ly

Why Uhuru?

The question ls whether there is some logic in this madness. Why would President Moy, who has so far played such a skillful political chess game with the opposition over the last decade, deliberately oversee the disintegration of his ruling party just for the sake of Uhuru Kenyatta? Does Moi have a plan or has he fmally run out of ideas?

To appreciate Motâ\200\231s dilemma lt ls necessary to understand something about the maneuverings mside KANU during president Mofâ\200\231s last term of office. The succession issue has occupied the better part of Mofâ\200\231s second term. It started with his refusal to reappoint George Saitoti to the vice-presidency after the 1997 election, only to begrudgingly reappoint him 18 months later following a parliamentary censure. Saitotâ\200\231s predicament was an indication of President Mofâ\200\231s inner coalitionâ\200\231s uncertainty over their future and of Moiâ\200\231s succession.

It will be recalled that the 1997 election took place against a background of protracted political battles with the opposition. Apart from pressures for constitutional reform, from 1998, Moi had to contend with pressures from the donor community and the IFIs, particularly the IMF/WB who for the first time appeared more determined to institute action against rampant corruption and financial mismanagement. He began to sacrifice some close cronies to the Kenya Anti Corruption Authority (KACA), which had been established at the

populous of the Kalenjin confederacy. Seasoned election watchers now openly concede that if it comes to a Kibaki-Kenyatta contest, Kibaki is likely to be the runaway victor. Although there is no direct causal link between a NARC victory and further opening of democratic space, the departure of KANU could introduce some sense of a new beginning, and an environment within which it would be possible to begin cultivating an alternative culture of political tolerance and democratic institutions.

An Alternative Scenario

What could possibly happen if Project Moi/Uhuru collapses? The stakes are so high and particularly so with the recent release of the Akiwumi Report (Report of the Judicial Commission appointed to inquire into tribal clashes in Kenya), which has implicated so many in KANU. It is unlikely that this kleptocratic and predatory crowd will relinquish state power without a spirited battle.

The alternative could be quite ghastly. The ingredients of warlordism and civil war are already fairly discernible in the country. Since 1992, there has been a gradual encroachment of low-intensity warfare; 1500 have been killed and over 300,000 displaced in ethnic cleansing in the Rift valley and bordering regions between 1992-93 and 120 have been killed and more than 4000 displaced in Nakuru and Laikipia. Moreover, in the outlying areas on the borders of Sudan, Uganda and Somali, the Kenyan government has for all practical purposes ceded control to militias and warlords.

As long as this ruling elite continues to associate loss of state power with the threat to their material well-being and security, they will increasingly find it difficult to enter into meaningful negotiations about the transfer of

power. An opposition victory could therefore very well

lead to ethnic separatism (majimboism), which could mark the fuelling of low intensity conflict. The ruling coalition backyard, the Rift Valley Province, was the scene of ethnic cleansing in the run up to the first democratic elections in 1992 and again in 1993 and 1994. The Akiwumi Commission Report alleges that key members of the Moi's kitchen cabinet organised parts of this

these series of killings. The northern par

Province, bordering on Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia have been a theatre of conflict over the last quarter of a century. Guns and small arms are freely available.

The danger of this kind of violence is that it is unlikely to be confined to the borders of Kenya. The upper reaches of the East African region are for all practical purposes approaching the status of a rough neighbourhood. An arc of instability runs northwards

from Burundi and Rwanda through Uganda, southern Sudan and eastwards into Ethiopia and Somali. This zone is characterised by myriad forms of conflicts. A conflagration in Kenya could very easily exacerbate these conflicts and increasingly squeeze the region

towards economic and political disintegration.

What is to be done?

As the country approaches the next general elections, there are visible signals of dangers ahead. There are two sets of interventions: one at the electoral level, and the other, through political intervention with the incumbent regime. At the electoral level there would need to be some engagement to achieve two main objectives as follows:

- * Engagement with the government in order to level the playing field = If the perception obtains that opposition parties are unlikely to have a fair chance to canvass their political bases, there is potential for violent confrontation. o

- * Engagement with the government on the, electoral process. This is to provide effective monitoring of the elections to ensure that the process is transparent and legitimate. Ideally this ought to take place sooner rather than wait until election day.

At the political level, there is a need for some degree of

-constructive engagement from bi-lateral and multilateral

organizations, the donor community, and regional organisations, particularly the African Union, with the incumbent regime and the opposition to secure guarantees such as:

- * That the electoral campaign is conducted peacefully and in a non-provocative manner. This would no doubt go a long way towards preempting provocation of hostilities.

- * To secure commitment to respect the outcome of the elections, and that there be an orderly transfer of power to the victors. Kenya could be an interesting case for triggering the African Peer Review Mechanism.

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