

ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

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**COMPLEX SECURITY PROBLEMS IN LIBERIA FOCUSING
ON LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE RESTORATION PROCESS**

**PhD dissertation
Author's summary**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Liberia, Africa's oldest republic can be considered as a special African state because of the following reasons.

Liberia has followed an individual historical evolution, which is different from that of other African states. The history of Liberia is a history of a state, which was consciously established by immigrants with external assistance, so it has no traditional national history at all. The country has always depended heavily on foreign assistance, primarily on the support of the United States of America.

Other difference in Liberian history is that no colonization has occurred in its traditional sense compared to that of other African states. Although, the social and political system established by the American immigrant slaves is similar to the colonial societies, it is not the result of the deliberate colonization politics of European powers.

Liberia is among the first in other senses as well. In 2005, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the first African female president was elected in the country's first free, fair and democratic elections. However, Liberia is the first African country whose previous president, Charles Taylor was charged by an international court with committing war crimes and other serious violations of the international humanitarian law.

These are the main characteristics of Liberia, which will be fully examined in the thesis. If these features are able to promote the operation of a democratic state, Liberia could become a model state not only in the Western African regions, but also in the whole continent. So it is worth paying attention to Liberia's modern history

Nowadays, all kinds of problems having security relevance are present in Liberia. Briefly, let us think of the operating UN mission, the security sector reform (SSR) activity of other international organizations, the presence and policymaking activity of multinational companies or other security issues derived from the environmental degradation. Additionally, the country has a special status as it has special relations with one of the leading powers of the world, the United States of America. Beside the historical ties, we also have to keep in mind the fact that Liberia is one of the fields of the American "empire building policy", and Liberia's strategic importance and its abundance in raw materials can also be the basis for further assistance.

The thesis lies on the borderline of two scientific fields: the security studies and the legal studies. Its structure follows the theoretical system of the security studies while examining if the law is able to regulate the security fields and if so, to which extent, and if there are existing legal documents, which are observed. The problematic is evaluated in *five relevant fields*. Using the UN security notion created in 1982, I am proving by examples the established hypothesis in the sectors of political, military, economic, environmental and human security.

2. GOALS OF THE STUDY

Working on the thesis, I have kept the **following goals** in mind:

- to analyze all the aspects affecting Liberian security based on the country's history ;
- to assess recent events based on the Liberian *political* system and the new political institutions established after the 2005 elections;
- to present the process of the civil wars in its *military* sense and to analyze the most important military components of the restoration process;

- to present the already achieved results of the *economic* restoration by sectors after the civil war destruction focusing on the importance of agriculture as the leading;
- to explore the potential given by renewable energies that can be the basis of the Liberian *environmental* security;
- to analyze the whole process of creating *human* security in relation with the establishment of fundamental rights.

3. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

During my research, I have set the following five hypotheses while analyzing its content in the five security sectors:

1. In the political security sector

Despite the democratic regime change, the Liberian political system is still divided horizontally and not vertically. The concentration of power has resulted in patrimonialism, which has led to clientism and negative sovereignty of the country.

Even though there was no colonization and decolonization process in Liberia in the traditional sense of these words, the historical examination of state and society reveal *similar characteristics* with states, who had been under colonial rule, then endured an independence procedure there from, finally often experiencing takeover by dictatorship.

Twenty-two ministries were established in Liberia as a result of the democratic changes following the civil wars. Despite these, the executive power is overcentralized and the president has a disproportionately wide range of decision-making powers.

Since illiteracy is significant and the educational level is low among the inhabitants, the political elite is forced to take back to power in the government the prominent characters of the previous elite. This again allows setting up patrimonialism.

Liberia is a sovereign state in the legal sense. However, it only partially matches the conditions for the definition of state in the empiric sense. Even though it is accepted as a state within the international system and is considered to be separate and independent, it is not able to complete its internal state functions independently and efficiently. Therefore, its sovereignty is either negative or belongs to the legal category.

2. In the military security sector

In Liberia, military security can only be created on a full scale if the ruling political elite is able to guarantee economic and human security for the population – besides inventing in and leading the armed forces, and throughout these factors it can legitimate its power.

Peace operations can only be successful if the intervening organization operates impartially and does not become a party to the conflict. If any of these principles becomes defective, the intervening organization will become a catalyst to the conflict. A typical example for this is the Liberian operation of ECOMOG¹.

The civil war can only be concluded if the party having the decisive greater power is able to obtain and legitimize the full power over the country. If there is an international power against the party having greater power, the pressure for legitimating is more forcefully present.

The case of Charles Taylor and ECOMOG is an example of this: Taylor initially decided not to negotiate with ECOMOG about restoration, as he did not know what the reaction of the international community would be. Therefore, he continued to fight with armed forces against not only his inner rivals but also against ECOMOG powers.

¹ ECOWAS Monitoring Group

Consequentially, he was unable to legitimize his power and the pressure for legitimating caused further bloodshed. The intervention of ECOMOG has become the cause of the maintenance of the state of conflicts.

3. In the economic security sector

In Liberia, economic security can only be created if the ruling political elite is able to develop agriculture to the adequate level and to contract with international multinational companies corresponding with long-term governmental strategies that can defend the country from abuses aiming at maximizing profit.

The base of Liberia's economic security was the support of the United States before the end of the cold war. Following the end of the bi-polar world system, the country has partly lost the trust of the United States because the president of the state committed serious atrocities against the inhabitants in the erupting civil war. The Liberian economy was destroyed completely by the opposing parties in the course of the civil war. Restoration has only begun following the conclusion of the second civil war. As part of this restoration, multinational companies were established in certain economic sectors.

4. In the environmental security sector

Basic conditions of environmental security are to create adequate legal regulations and the democratic constitutional state shall work continuously and be stable.

During the course of dictatorships, the legislative regulation was not effective in Liberia's history and there was no conscious environmental strategy to speak of. However, at this point the lack of conscious strategy has not caused irreversible environmental damages. Environmental security has ceased to exist during the civil wars simultaneously with the collapse of state.

Nowadays, at the time of democratic rearrangement, economic realities often overwrite the texts of legislative acts and the political stability and security are sacrificed for economic realities out of necessity. The notions of security can thus be seen as a unit. The resources available in Liberia could provide for many uses pursuant to conscious strategies in the field agriculture, forestry, tourism or industry. Both the land and the agricultural land are of essential importance from the aspect of human survival and economic development, because both provide for different functions in the field of supporting the ecosystem, sustenance, and food safety.

5. In the human security sector

The Liberian state has never been able to completely guarantee human security for her citizens, that has existed only in its seeds and has been available only for a narrow social layer not only in the past but in the present as well.

The individual feels safe if the essential goods are accessible to him/her and his/her personal safety is not in danger. A well-operating state can guarantee these rights to its citizens by way of the system of primary rights. In failed states, however, human rights do not completely prevail.

If the individual feels safe, then a social safety can also be established. This is a next step, which presupposes development in other areas as well.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE THESIS

Collecting data (quantitatively) I have made research in and studied the Hungarian and foreign bibliography. During my research, I have mainly used foreign professional

documentations, partly the available and actual printed books, articles and official documents. A significant part of the bibliography is available at the Washington-based Congressional Library where I have made research during my one-year research scholarship in 2007. I have widely used internet sources as well such as articles and studies of official bodies and research centers and the officially accepted documents of the Sirleaf-administration (political guidelines, strategies, white papers and other documents). Beside the foreign literature I have studied the topic-related studies of national origin, mainly that of the Hungarian Foreign Institute and formerly published library-based scientific works.

The essence of the applied methodology is to answer the goals of the thesis by analyzing documents, evaluating researches and making forecasts. I have widely used the methods of analysis and induction, the reason of which is the descriptive and analytical character of the thesis. For the elaboration of the research and the analysis of the collected information I have consulted experts of the field and I met Liberians living in the United States who made me valuable information available. Among them I namely mention Fatu Tara Jowey Kamara who was only ten years old when the first Liberian civil war erupted, however she sharply remembered the bloody events. Having left her home country during the civil war, she currently works for the US State Department.

5. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The thesis – according to the goals and hypotheses of the thesis – consists of an introductory and five main chapters as mentioned above.

The *first chapter* based on the notions of security studies and legal studies reviews the legal problematic of statehood – and the connecting questions of sovereignty and inorganic social evolution – in relation of Liberia. It also explores the content of the five main security sectors and the basis of the Liberian security concept. After that, the thesis examines the integration patterns and the balances of powers developed in the West African region.

The *second chapter* examines Liberia's security from the *political aspect*, and focuses on the main characteristics of the political system set up after the 2005 elections. It explores the whole process of the elections and analyses the baselines of the politics of the Sirleaf administration, its efforts made to build a democratic system and the already achieved results. I also study Liberia's membership in international organizations because these canals of pulls are specifically important in relation of small countries such as Liberia.

The *third chapter* is an analysis of *military* related questions. It is essential to present the civil wars that recently took place in the country because the effects of the conflict still influence the everyday life of the Liberians. After that, I construe and assess the DDDR and SSR activity of the administration, that play a key role in securing Liberia's military security.

In the *fourth chapter* the characteristics of the agricultural sector as the main field in creating *economic security* are presented first, and continuing in the economic sectors I explore the contract (and their pledges on inspiring the economy) made by multinational companies in the second sector. Finally, the fields of the slow development in the third sector are discussed.

The natural resources and the abundance of the flora and fauna of Liberia have a huge, partially unexploited potential. The wide-range use of renewable energy sources has a similarly large potential, which are indispensable for warranting *environmental security*. The *fifth chapter* focuses on these issues.

I basically use the legal approach in the *sixth chapter* while presenting and analyzing the process of creating *human security* through the different generations of human rights. I do so because law is present in all parts of life and plays a regulatory role, and if it is able to

provide the members of the society the basic goods, Liberia may also be able to guarantee human security in the long run.

6. SUMMARIZED CONCLUSIONS

I described in detail and analyzed in each chapter the questions arising on the different areas of security pursuant to the goals set in the introductory part of the thesis and I established partial conclusions at the end of each chapter. I formulated my summarized conclusions based on these partial conclusions, which are as follows:

1. In Liberia's modern history a *special decolonization process* can be witnessed the result of which has been a proper society development pattern. The evolved social and political system could not be anything else but distorted, and the system itself has never existed in this own form, it has had either oligarchic or democratic features.

After the 2005 elections, the Sirleaf-administration has tried to create a democratic state system in its classic sense, which seemed to be a hard task in the shadow of the bloody and recent civil wars. During the last years, the administration has had to face numerous difficulties, which have all contributed to the *distortion of democratic patterns*. First of all, it worth mentioning the *strong presidential power, which almost incorporates the other powers*. Such a power is in one hand not regarding the principle of balances of powers and so powerful that it could be able to destroy the democracy itself. This is evidently the most solicitous feature of the democratic political system. However, the problem of having only a narrow layer of educated people has always caused huge difficulties. It follows from this that *it is inevitable to let the members of the former systems' political elite creep back into the political life*. This fact also weakens the Liberian democracy.

The country's dependence on foreign assistance is further added to the above difficulties. It can be stated that *Liberia alone itself is unable to eliminate the consequences of civil war destruction and to consolidate socio-political relations*. That is why *its sovereignty is negative* even though it is an equal member of the international community: Liberia needs external support to be able to operate its internal state functions.

2. The military security chapter of the thesis explored thoroughly first the ECOWAS, then the UN peace operations. Concerning the ECOWAS mission called *ECOMOG*, it *ignored principles* such as impartiality and neutrality, contributing to the escalation of the conflict. It was followed by a more drastic settlement attempt, the UNMIL mission. It was not a traditional peacekeeping mission, but the blue helmet soldiers had the mandate to peace enforcement as well.

One of the prominent figures of the civil war era was Charles Taylor. After having gained power over most of Liberia, he tried to legitimate it. However, he made so only within the country because he was not willing to have talks with the international community as he could not calculate exactly their reaction. In this situation, Taylor had no other choice than having his already gained power accepted by the Liberian population. Facing intensified resistance Taylor had no alternative ways: he could not choose to negotiate but to pursue more and bloodier fights during the second civil war. The victims of these fights were the inhabitants.

One of the central questions of military security is the defense of state territory and population; it is the task of the professionally trained armed forces equipped with modern techniques in democratic frames. One of the main tasks of the Liberian restoration process is the *security sector reform* that the administration has already partly accomplished. The

reorganization of armed forces and the DDDR process are already completed so there is a way ahead to other tasks such as creating sea security or establishing special security services.

3. Liberia *should loosen its external dependence* in a significant extent to create security in its economic sense. The 'external assistance' means first of all the donor activity of the United States (and other numerous international organizations) and also Liberia's import dependence, which characterized Liberia before the civil wars as well.

The effects of globalization can be realized in the Liberian economy as well. Foreign multinational companies are present in all sectors of the economy, and Liberia should defend its interests vis-à-vis their politics aiming at maximalizing profit. It is especially true in the heavy industry where special knowledge and assets are not disposable in the small West African state, that is why Liberia is even more defenseless.

The dominant sector of the Liberian economy is traditionally the *agriculture*, which gives working possibilities for most of the population and also produces a significant proportion of GDP. However, contrary to its significance, it is more humbly present in political agenda and most of the investments are aimed primarily at other sectors. Even though the Sirleaf-administration has already accepted official governmental documents on the revitalization of the agriculture, their practical realization is expected only by a second Sirleaf administration.

4. Liberia is an illustrious example to prove how *close ties are between creating environmental security and having effective legal regulations*. During the Americo-Liberian regime, environmental regulations existed even though not in democratic frameworks, so there were no exaggerated exploitation of natural resources, so it did not lead to irreversible harmful processes. However, during the fourteen years of the civil war, the political elite subordinated the environment under its menial political aims and destroyed the environment in such an extent that led to partial extinction of flora and fauna. In these years, legal provisions were ignored the result of which was the cessation of environmental security.

Unfortunately, *the present Liberian system is not able to completely guarantee environmental security either*. Global economic interests are above in the priority order contrary to environmental considerations and ignore what a potential the soil or the renewable energies mean. However, to recognize its importance will be possible only if the political and economic background can be stabilized and the environmental security problems become at least as important as political, military or economic considerations.

5. *Legal definiteness of human security* has been considered a fact in the thesis from the beginning, and I have tried to prove it through the example of Liberia. *In order that the population of a country could feel safe and secure, certain goods must be produced and be available for everyone*. Therefore, the process is bidirectional. On one hand, the institutional and human background for the enjoyment of goods must be created, it mainly requires financial resources. If it is successful, the so produced 'products' must be available not only for the political and/or economic elite, but for the wide mass of the population. The individual can feel safe only in this case, and if the security of individuals is cumulated, societal security can be created.

Liberia is committed to create human security, however to realize it she has to face *numerous deficiencies*. Liberia is able to guarantee the fundamental human rights for her citizens, but not or not completely other goods (such as education), which would be inevitable for further development. If Liberia is able to take further steps in this way, it would significantly contribute to the country's stability and development.

6. *Interweaving of security sectors and their inseparable feature* are sharply present in the case of Liberia as well. A stable economy cannot be operated without stable political background, and environmental security can only be guaranteed by securing stable economic background. These are just examples of the complex connections between the sectors, however they show correctly the interdependence.

To summarize the *security of Liberia* it can be stated that the full-scale security can be achieved only in a stable democratic constitutional state. It is important for the country to be able act alone as a sovereign member of the international society and to secure economic welfare and the exercise of fundamental rights for its citizens. To do so, *Liberia has to move forward on the path where she has been since 2005*, and the newly elected party and president – according to the will of the population – have to continue the restoration based on the already achieved results. For this process, the optimism in the future, the faith and hope of the country's inhabitants gives immense strength, as Kimmie Weeks, a human right activist emphasized.

7. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

I consider the following as **new scientific results** based on the research in the chosen topic and the above conclusions:

1. I have analyzed the unique features, which characterize the modern Liberian statehood in relation of security, and I have proved by my researches that Liberian political security is not yet viable. To create security, the elite has to move realize further phases of democracy building.
2. I have proved by past and ongoing peace operations that after civil war destruction the institutional system as well organizational, management and guiding framework needed to guarantee military security are only under the way to be created.
3. Throughout the example of Liberia I have proved that the small state problematic influences all sectors of the economy because of globalization.
4. I have proved that guaranteeing human security – along proper political guidelines – without realizing fundamental human rights is impossible, so human security is legally determined.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS, PRACTICAL ADAPTABILITY

The thesis contributes to the understanding of the African conflicts, specifically to getting to know the specific features of Liberia and the West African region. I have explored the security links the knowing of which allows the political and military decision makers to make the right decisions in case of intervention and to resolve the conflict considering the local specialties. If peace operation is established either in Liberia or in the region, the errors committed in former missions and also described in the military security chapter can help find the right aims and assets. The thesis can also serve as a basic study for Hungarian peacekeepers serving in peace operations in the region.

The thesis can also serve as an information base for security policy researchers and those interested in the topic, and it can also be taught within university courses that concern regional security problems or analyze peace operations all around the world.

I recommend establishing an *African Security Research Center* within the ZMNDU Institute of Social and Security Studies while reforming the structure of the university. The

Center could combine the already achieved results and unite the researchers in collaboration with similar departments of other universities, and the concerned organizations of the State Department and the Military Intelligence Office. I do so because there is an increasing interest to Africa also among university students who write papers on topics such as The Black Africa, Child Soldiers in Africa or the complex analysis of a selected country.

9. PUBLICATIONS

1. A nemzetközi büntető igazságszolgáltatás, mint a nemzetközi béke és biztonság integráns része – az államok szuverenitásának tükrében
Tudományos diákköri dolgozat, Intézményi TDK, December 7, 2004 – book prize
2. A nemzetközi büntető igazságszolgáltatás, mint a nemzetközi béke és biztonság integráns része – az államok szuverenitásának tükrében
Tudományos diákköri dolgozat, Országos TDK, April 20, 2005 – 3rd place
3. „A szabadság szeretete hozott minket ide.” Az amerikai pragmatista politika érvényesülése, különös tekintettel Libériára
Tudományos diákköri dolgozat, Intézményi TDK, November 30, 2005 – 1st place
4. Büntetőjog nemzetek felett
Hallgatói Közlemények, IX. évfolyam 1-2. szám, 2005., 51-77. oldal
5. A terrorizmussal kapcsolatos rendelkezések a Büntető Törvénykönyvben
Hallgatói Közlemények, IX. évfolyam 1-2. szám, 2005., 113-130. oldal
6. Terrorizmus elleni harc - amerikai szemmel
Nemzetvédelmi Egyetemi Fórum 2007. 3. szám
7. ECOMOG: The Example of a Viable Solution for African Conflicts
Aarms folyóirat, Vol. 7. No. 1 (2008) 55-61. oldal
8. US-Africa Security Relations 2000-2007
Aarms folyóirat, Vol. 7. No. 3 (2008) 453-467. oldal
9. Charles Taylor's trial: it has started
Aarms folyóirat, Vol. 8. No. 1 (2009) 83-89. oldal
10. Döntéshozatal az Európai Unió második pillérében
Európai Tükör 2009/2. szám, XIV. évf., 87-96. oldal (co-author: Ferenc Gazdag)
11. Négy pillér. AFRICOM a fekete kontinensen. Magyar Honvéd, 2009. 11. szám, 10-12. oldal (co-author: Zoltán Szenes)

Edited foreign language lecture:

12. Security Aspects of “Center-periphery” Through the Example of Liberia. Paris, November 30, 2008
French volume of essays and studies, under publication

10. CURRICULUM VITAE

WORK EXPERIENCE

ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY Budapest, Hungary
Teaching assistant, Security and Defense Policy Department August 1, 2010 – Present
Courses: Humanitarian Intervention, New Challenges in the 21st Century, The European Union,
CFSP, Security Policy, The UN and its Missions

ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY Budapest, Hungary
Delegated as teaching assistant to the Security and Defense Policy Department from the Strategic Defense Research Institute September 1, 2008 – July 31, 2010

- Teaching courses
- Managing other tasks in connection with the department's operation

ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY Budapest, Hungary
Legal executive, Rector's office December 3, 2007 – August 31, 2008

HUDSON INSTITUTE Washington, DC
Hungarian American Enterprise Scholarship Fund (HAESF) fellow December 1, 2006 – November 30, 2007

- Conducted research on a variety of foreign policy issues such as Siberia, Jihad, and US bases in Japan
- Attended briefings, conferences, and luncheons with policy experts and foreign guests

AFRICA SOCIETY OF THE NATIONAL SUMMIT ON AFRICA Washington, DC
Consultant Sept 2007 – Dec 2007

- Authored paper on U.S.-Africa relations detailing peace and security facets
- Organized Pittsburgh conference logistics for over 1,900 students on the Teach Africa program
- Participated in professional and social events concerning African affairs

EDUCATION

ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY Budapest, Hungary
PhD in military science September 2006 – Present

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION Washington, DC
National Capital Area program Sept 2007 – Dec 2007

ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY Budapest, Hungary
Master's degree in **Security and Defense Policy** September 2002 – July 2006

EÖTVÖS LÓRÁND UNIVERSITY Budapest, Hungary
Master's degree in **Law** September 2001 – July 2006

PANTHÉON-ASSAS (PARIS II) UNIVERSITY Paris, France
Degree in French and European law September 2004 – May 2006

LANGUAGES

- Language exam (written and oral part, designated as "C"), proficient level in **English** supplemented with military science material (Stanag 3.3.3.3., Arma)
- Language exam (written and oral part, designated as "C"), proficient level in **French**
- Native in **Hungarian**.