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RELEASED IN PART
1.4(B),1.4(D)

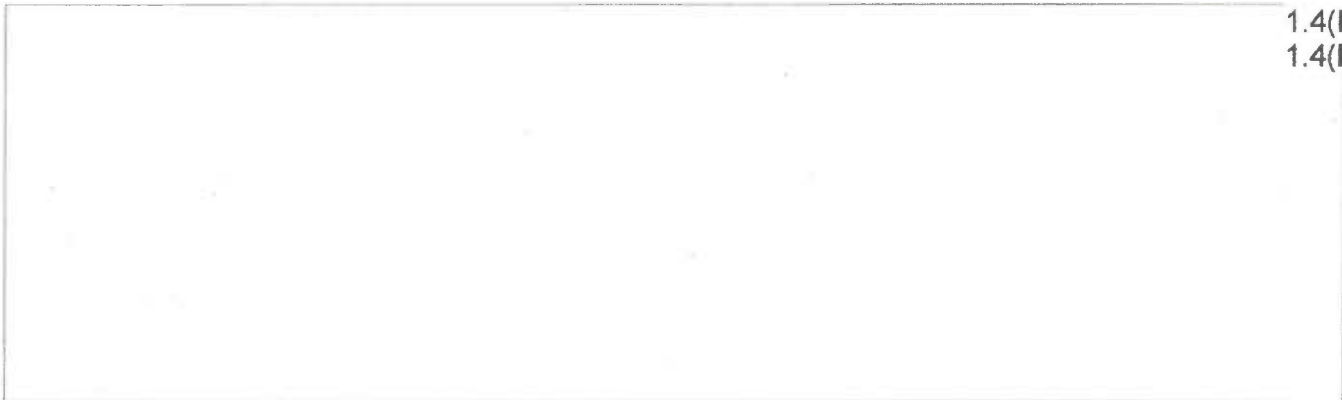
From: SMART Archive
Sent: 5/24/2013 4:04:03 AM
To: svcSMARTHBTSP0P7
Subject: Cameroon: MFA Conveys to DAS Akuetteh Views on Integration, Security, and Democratization

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: Archie Bolster, Senior Reviewer

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Reference: A) 13 YAOUNDE 95
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Subject: Cameroon: MFA Conveys to DAS Akuetteh Views on Integration, Security, and Democratization



1.4(B)
1.4(D)

2. (SBU) The Secretary General offered a warm reception and spoke openly; he led off by expressing sympathy for the victims of the Oklahoma tornado. Akuetteh pressed for Cameroonian recognition of Kosovo (Ref A); called for improvements to Cameroonian human trafficking legislation in order to bring it into conformity with the Palermo Convention; encouraged Cameroon to act quickly on Boeing's offer to move Cameroon's national carrier, Camair-Co, up the waiting list for two 787 Dreamliners; and suggested that the GRC find ways to end an investment dispute with an American company, Herakles Farms, which is developing a controversial palm oil plantation (Ref B) in Cameroon's Southwest Region. Mbayu responded that there is "nothing more important than increasing the number of U.S. firms in Cameroon." He said the GRC had made significant effort to improve the business climate and would not want these efforts to be tarnished by a legal dispute. Mbayu acknowledged, however, some problems related to the Herakles Farms' investment and pointed to broader civil society concerns, which his Government felt compelled to take into consideration.

Integration Taking Place

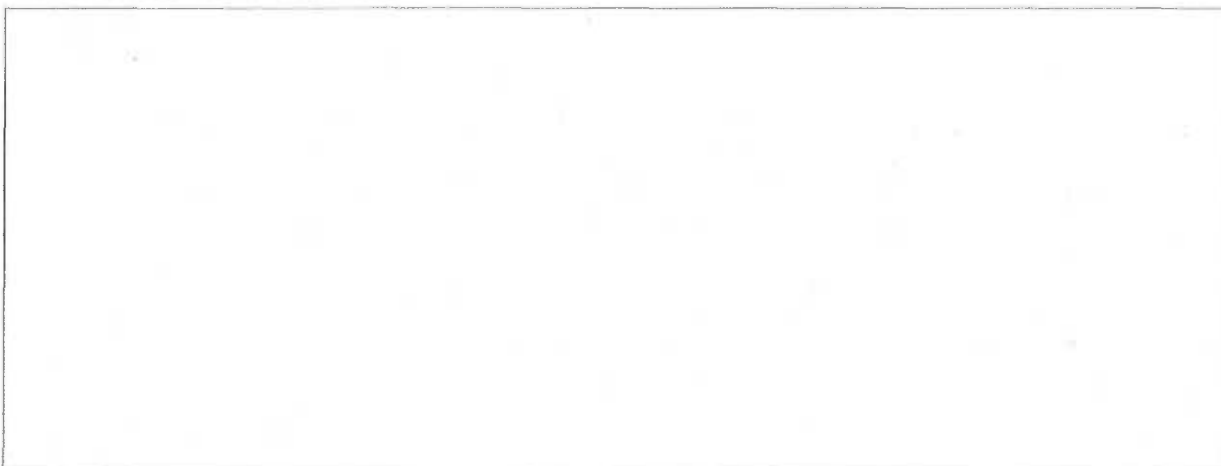
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3. (SBU) The Secretary General pointed to increasing levels of trade with Nigeria, noting that Nigeria is now the single largest source of Cameroonian imports. He added that the GRC would like to "show an example" to Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of Congo, which he said had not opened their borders sufficiently for the free movement of people within the sub-region. Mbayu conveyed his hope that these countries would see that Malians and Nigerians, who are permitted to enter Cameroon without visas (and who do so in large numbers), are law-abiding for the most part and do not pose a threat to domestic stability. He pointed to the establishment of road and maritime transportation routes between Cameroon and Nigeria in order to facilitate increased movement of people and goods, adding that "we are looking for the same thing with Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of Congo." Mbayu suggested that an agreement with Mali, dating to 1974, which provides for visa-free travel between Mali and Cameroon, presents some concern for Equatorial Guinea. The GRC, he said, is reviewing the agreement in order to find ways to allay these concerns. Mbayu agreed with Akuetteh's suggestion that sub-regional economic integration is an important step for African countries in order to take better advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Security Cooperation Improving



1.4(B)
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5. (SBU) Although concerned about the situation in CAR, Mbayu conveyed his opinion that the situation is improving. He said that the GRC would not offer sanctuary to individuals causing instability in neighboring countries, implying that Cameroon would not become a haven for CAR militants. He said that Cameroon had disarmed CAR combatants and is arranging their voluntary repatriation to CAR in coordination with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

6. (SBU) Mbayu also noted a multi-regional (West and Central Africa) heads of state Maritime Security Summit, slated to take place in Yaounde on June 24-25 and welcomed the possibility of a U.S. speaker.

Democratization

7. (SBU) In light of security problems in CAR and other parts of Central Africa, Mbayu opined that Cameroon is located in a "difficult neighborhood," which historically has been prone to frequent instability. He described the peace and security in Cameroon as something that should not be taken for granted; he also characterized it as the product of considerable leadership on the part of President Biya and the GRC. Given the multiplicity of languages, ethnicities, and religions, Mbayu suggested that democratic reform should take place incrementally, as a "balancing act." However, he pointed to several success stories, including the establishment of the Senate, the activities of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, improvements in prison conditions, the Criminal Procedure Code, reforms to the electoral process, and the proliferation of independent media outlets: "We are doing our best and one day will have something to be proud about." Mbayu confided that Biya had once told him that "he would like to be remembered as the person who brought democracy and development

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to Cameroon.”

Comment

8. (SBU) Mbayu's comments about regional security and integration were encouraging, although they do not necessarily track with the dearth of outward signs that the GRC considers either one an urgent priority. We are pleased about the GRC's willingness to host a maritime security event in Yaounde and hope to see additional leadership on regional security issues that Cameroon is well suited -- yet historically less inclined -- to provide. Mbayu is correct that Cameroon is making progress on democracy and human rights, but the GRC should accelerate the pace of reform. We consider it likely that there is extensive resistance to democratization from senior government and ruling party officials who favor preserving the status quo and maintaining a system that has brought them substantial wealth. **End Comment.**

9. (U) DAS Cynthia Akuetteh cleared this cable.

Signature: JACKSON

Classified By: Name: Gregory Thome, Title: Deputy Chief of Mission
Office: EXEC

Reason: 1.4 (b), (d)

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