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EXERCISE BENIN 2004

SPECIAL REPORT



Tri-borders Area

'PARTI INDEPENDANTISTE VERT' (PIVERT)

06 Mai 2004

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CAVEATS

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Table Of Contents

SPECIAL REPORT	1
CAVEATS.....	ii
Table Of Contents	iii
Green Region.....	1
General Situation.....	1
Background.....	2
Oil question	2
A specific tribe.....	3
Control of tribes.....	3
Or Uncontrolled ?.....	3
Geography	3
Cultural Site	4
Climate.....	4
Demography	4
Sociology	4
Religion.....	4
Ethnic Composition	4
Languages	4
THE PIVERT	5
FORCE DE LIBERTE (FL).....	5
Organisation	5
Authority	5
Tactical Command.....	6
Group Locations and Forces	6
Resistance Support	6
Forces Assessments.....	6
Military Overview	6
Military Doctrine.....	7
Sustainment and Logistics.....	7
Weapons	7
Type of Items	8

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Green Region Parti Independantiste Vert (PIVERT) Special Report

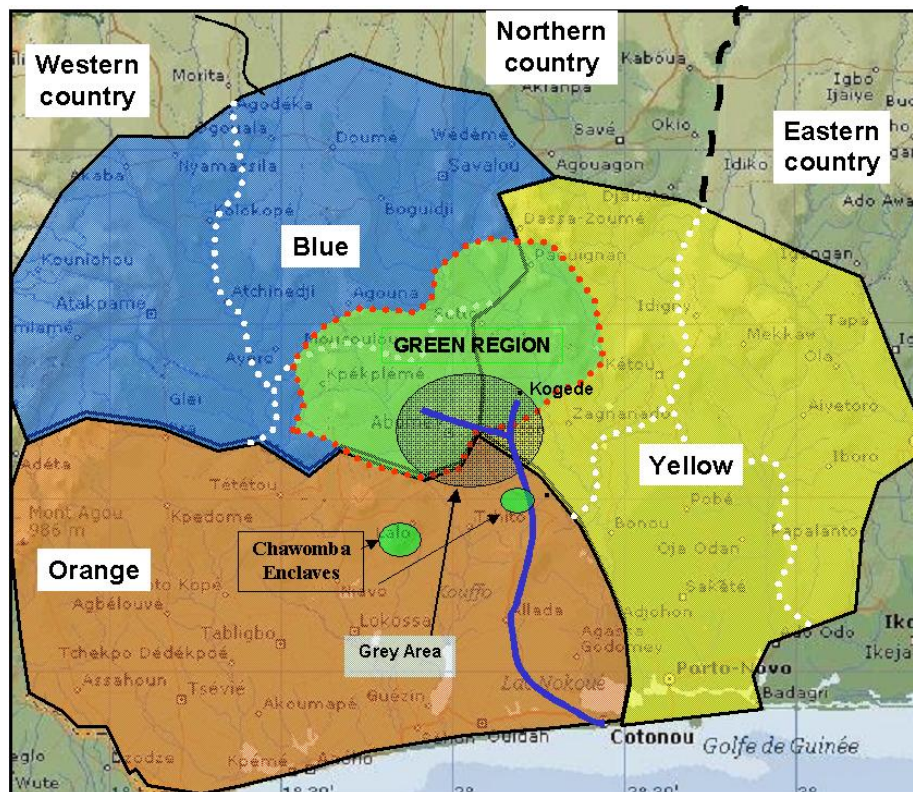
This document focuses on the inhabitants of the GREEN region, and describes what differentiates them from their neighbours in the tri-border areas of BLUE, YELLOW and ORANGE. The report considers the specific characteristics of the extremist PIVERT members and their 'military' operational capabilities.

General Situation

The region of concern is contained within an area that was formally a French colony and that has always strongly opposed the colonial administration. That region was the centre of a kingdom that has deliberately been portioned into several administrative regions following a rebellion in 1932.

After the French withdrawal in 1960, the country split into three independent States based upon the former administrative regions. The three countries are called BLUE, YELLOW and ORANGE. Initially, these three countries were happy to co-exist peacefully.

BLUE and YELLOW have fragile political structures, and both countries remain economically dependent on Western donor countries for economic assistance. ORANGE is a more developed and stable State, and with its access to the sea and a deep-water port, is able to remain fully independent.



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Background

The so-called Three-Borders is the geographical and sentimental home of a group of tribes called the CHAWOMBAS. They are fiercely independent and were very annoyed when, in 1960, the split into the 3 new countries did not specifically recognise the Chawomba and their aspirations for a separate autonomous region.

They are politically regrouped in an organization known as the Parti Independantiste Vert (PIVERT). The PIVERT is seeking international recognition for an autonomous region called GREEN. The GREEN region shown on the map covers approximately 3,800² km. Within this region were around 100,000 BLUE and 60,000 YELLOW inhabitants; some 80% of these belong to the Chawomba Tribes.

To support the PIVERT leadership, a small, extreme group of former members of the Blue and Yellow armed forces has established itself as a guerrilla force known as the Force de Liberte (FL).

These extremists are seeking to 'ethnically cleanse' their homelands of other tribes, to keep the current Chawomba leadership in power, and to gain exclusive access to the oil production of BLUE and YELLOW.

The use of terror, including assassination and rape, and the general abuse of human rights, have become regular occurrences.

The core group numbers no more than 200 fighters. They are lightly armed and communicate via short-wave radios employing frequency-hopping technology. In Abomey, stolen pay-as-you-go mobile phones are used as a means of communication between the FL and the Chawomba leadership.

Oil question

The discovery of oil deposits, firstly in YELLOW in 1975, and then north of Abomey in BLUE in 1990, caused a rift between ORANGE and its neighbours. BLUE and YELLOW invited foreign experts to develop the oil fields, but this development requires the continued support of the ORANGE government if the oil pipeline connecting the oil fields to the seaport at Cotonou in the south is to remain functional.

BLUE is able to export up to 10,000 barrels of oil per day, while YELLOW is already exporting 40,000 barrels of oil per day. Oil of that quality is currently selling at around 32 dollars per barrel. The total proven regional oil reserves have been calculated (at June 2003) at 900 million barrels. ORANGE has only some small offshore oil deposits near Cotonou

Although ORANGE gains considerable royalties for the oil pipeline, it is seeking ways of gaining access to foreign investments, to attract expatriated workers who have high standards of living. Ultimately, Orange wants to weaken BLUE and YELLOW states in order to reassert its regional predominance. One of the means that could be used to reach these objectives is to maintain in the oil fields vicinity an area with relative stability and adapted facilities while entertaining a troubled situation in the neighbouring countries.

A specific tribe

ORANGE is suspected of surreptitiously and secretly providing the PIVERT, and in particular the extremist element, with financial and logistical support in the form of money and military equipment.

International criminal groups have, for many years, used the Chawomba to assist in illegal contraband smuggling, gunrunning etc between inland regions and the southern coastal ports. These international groups are cruel and ruthless, and their *modus operandi* has percolated into Chawomba culture. Consequently, the Chawomba are generally lawless and oblivious to the norms of democratic society and accepted political practices. The neighbouring tribes hate them.

In order for the international oil consortiums to work constructively, BLUE and YELLOW governments are seeking ways to remove the troublesome PIVERT influence, and to control the Chawomba.

Control of tribes

Since July 2003, BLUE and YELLOW government forces have been permanently pressurising the PIVERT by military and police means to give up its claim for autonomy. Without the support and asylum provided by ORANGE, the PIVERT would be unable to resist the pressure being applied by the BLUE and YELLOW governments.

Nevertheless, many people have been killed in the troubles and the follow-on repression, and this has caused major mass migration of refugees from the BLUE and YELLOW areas of GREEN to ORANGE. Current reliable estimates show that some 60% of the populations in the BLUE and YELLOW areas of GREEN have fled towards the coastal region and around the town of Lalo (about 76,000 refugees). This has caused havoc in northern ORANGE that does not have the food, shelter, medical facilities and infrastructure to handle such a crisis.

Or Uncontrolled ?

To complicate the situation further in the GREEN region, groups of former army personnel from BLUE and YELLOW have regrouped in the GREEN area, and are acting independently. They are acerbating an already critical situation. Led by local tribal warlords, these rebel groups are free from any government control. The BLUE and YELLOW authorities have so far been unable (or unwanting) to arrest these renegade soldiers and prevent their actions. Although uncoordinated, they are targeting the Chawomba in an attempt to stop their drive for autonomy. They constitute an additional cause for refugee flows to safer enclaves in the ORANGE region of GREEN. ORANGE has sent one motorised rifle battalion to its northern province to protect its population and northern border. Additionally, ORANGE has increased its covert support for the PIVERT, and consequently to the FL, in an attempt to combat these renegade groups.

Geography

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The Green region is divided into natural geographical regions. The first consists in a plateau zone called 'La terre de barre' made of iron clay with marshy dips. A silica clayey plateau with wooded savannah extends north of Abomey (GREEN's centre) to Savalou. The vegetation is mainly grassland with some sparse forests.

Cultural Site

The GREEN region includes the important and beautiful 'Royal City' of Abomey which kept that nickname from the time it was the capital of a former ancient kingdom.

Climate

The climate in GREEN is tropical with average daily temperatures reaching 28°C. The dry season is from December to April.

Demography

The population consists of approximately (August 2003) 162,000 inhabitants. Approximately 108,000 live in the BLUE area, and 54,000 live in the YELLOW area. 57% of the population are under 25 years of age. Prior to the present troubles, there were approximately 40,000 inhabitants in the main city of Abomey, but probably half have left due to fighting between BLUE / YELLOW government forces and the Chawomba in the last two months. The other main centres of population in this region are Bohicon and Hizan Kogede.

Sociology

Religion

GREEN is divided on tribal lines, which are grouped by various religious beliefs. Probably 90% of the ethnic population of GREEN is animist following traditional Voodoo beliefs. Voodooism is a polytheistic belief that sees a connection between the human and spirit worlds – the worship of the spirit in all things. The remaining 10% of the population is Christian or muslim.

Ethnic Composition

A 2002 report estimated that 85% of GREEN consisted of the Chawomba tribe. The remaining 15% are from a variety of other tribes that are centred in urban areas and the peripheral regions. The majority of the Chawomba tribe maintain cultural ties with fellow animists in ORANGE coastal areas and the two enclaves in the LALO region.

Languages

French is the official language although English is also widely taught in schools in the larger cities. The primary local language spoken in GREEN is Chawomba. Other tribal languages are spoken in peripheral regions.

THE PIVERT

Since 1960, the Chawomba have sought an autonomous, or better, independent region centred on Chawomba culture and the desire to benefit from the regional oil wealth. Whether the Chawomba would have given up their traditional illegal activities is unknown; however, it is generally believed that given recognition for their claim of autonomy and sufficient donor aid from G8 nations, the Chawomba could have been persuaded to become a democratic and peaceful institution. Such external assistance has not been forthcoming.

Within Chawombas tribes, the real power rests in the hands of the Council of the Elders. They meet together for any important issue when a majority of Elders had decided so. Decisions are never formally written but transmitted orally to all Chawombas: facts telling and conclusions, sometimes supplemented by songs. One of the Council meetings resulted in a decision to support PIVERT creation..

The PIVERT is a formal, visible and legal political wing that is split into three parts representing their views and aspirations in BLUE, YELLOW and ORANGE. They operate peacefully within the legal frameworks of those countries, and bring pressure to bear on those governments. They are:

Green Independence Party of BLUE (PIVERT(B)) – led by Jace VACILLY.

Green Independence Party of YELLOW (PIVERT(Y)) – led by Miki BLOTO.

Green Independence Party of ORANGE (PIVERT(O)) – led by Iano GERRET.

Each party leader reports to the head of the PIVERT - Jange VISSULU – who is based in Abomey. There is strong evidence suggesting that VISSULU is also one of the most influential leaders of the Chawomba tribe, but this has never been officially recognised, and VISSULU vehemently denies this connection.

FORCE DE LIBERTE (FL)

Organisation

A former BLUE army Sergeant called Chuchu Mamba leads the FL. Reports suggest that he held Marxist sympathies when in the BLUE army. He stands around 2m in height and weighs around 120kg – a formidable man. He has gathered around him a group of around 200 former trained army regulars who all share his extremist beliefs. A compartmentalized organization into light cells (10 to 12 people) ensures their immediate reactivity and a rapid concentration of the means. A small group of 5 to 6 persons constitutes the FL leader's personal guard and disseminates orders. FL fundings seem to remain under PIVERT's control.

Authority

Although the FL reports only to the Chawomba leadership, its operational leadership is vested solely in Chuchu Mamba and is ruthlessly applied. He is rumoured to have a second-in-command, but his identity is unknown. To disobey an order is to sign a death warrant. Chuchu Mamba's particular way of enforcing his authority is to slit the throat of any dissenter and to pull the dead person's tongue through the cut – a practice he refers to as 'Faire-un-Noeud-Papillon' – making a bowtie. Thus, his

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orders are followed through both fear and in a common belief in the right of their cause.

Tactical Command

Chuchu Mamba and his 2IC maintain TACOM. The troops are not consulted on operational matters but are just given orders that they execute.

Group Locations and Forces

The FL has no permanent military base but is located in and around the Djidja-Abomey-Bohicon area. Fighters remain integrated with their families for security, families are protected by clans traditions, and Chuchu Mamba enforces a strict code of silence. This dislocation policy is designed to make it difficult for the government forces of BLUE and YELLOW that seek the FL fighters.

Resistance Support

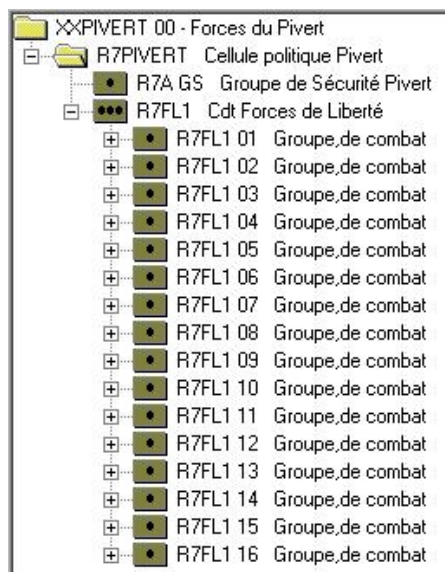
The PIVERT and its objectives enjoy wide local support from within the Chawomba community. Most families have some form of small arms, and it is probable that the Chawomba leadership could mobilise a more formal armed Resistance Movement at short notice. Such a movement would likely come under FL control giving them a much greater 'military' nuisance capability. This resistance movement could number as many as 6,000 armed fighters. until now, due to reasons linked to guerrilla policy and to avoid any important concentration that would be immediately neutralized by the BLUE or ORANGE much stronger military capabilities, that type of mass call has never been issued, but the potential remains.

Forces Assessments

Military Overview

The FL forces, concentrating on terrorism and guerrilla actions, are pro-active and dangerous. Intervention forces would have to be extremely re-active and would likely suffer heavy losses. Additionally, guerrilla targets would not be confined to opposing military forces, but against infrastructure and economy. The FL therefore presents a threat to an ECOWAS intervention force. If the Council of the Elders or the PIVERT leadership decided to mobilise the resistance forces, this threat would increase considerably.

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Military Doctrine

FL guerrilla actions rarely involve more than two combatant cells at any one time, although there is the potential for larger forces of up to possibly 100 to be applied if required. However, this rarely occurs. The FL would seek to avoid a direct force-on-force military confrontation with a superior regular army unit, and would quickly disengage and retreat to preserve assets. The FL is structured to act solely as a guerrilla force.

Sustainment and Logistics

The FL relies on its tribal ties for local sustainment, and to its auxiliaries for logistic support. These FL are frugal, tough and hardened. Logistic support is for military equipment and ammunition only. Service support is regarded as non-existent; it is the ORANGE government that secretly provides further 'strategic' logistic support, although it denies this to the international community.

Weapons

The FL have no known heavy weapons or weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The following weapon types are known to be available:

- Kalachnikov semi-automatic rifles
- Small hand weapons including pistols
- Anti-tank rocket propelled grenades – RPG-7
- Modified ZSU 23-4 guns mounted on Toyota Landcruisers
- Land mines

The actual numbers that the FL has of each weapon system is unknown; however, it is unlikely that they have more than four ZSU 23-4 systems available.

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Type of Items

AK 74 5.45X39.5	SMG-5.45X39.5
PKM-7.62*54 rimmed	SMG-7.62
Lance grenade Russe 30 mm	LSW-GRLA-AGS17
Lance Roquette RPG-7V	ATW-RPG-7V
Mine Anti personnels	MNE-AP-NOS
Mine Anti Tank	MNE-AT-NOS
Explosif SEMTEC	Explosive
Mortier démontable 37MM	LMR-37MM-NOS
Canon jumelé de 23MM	AAG-SP-23MM-NOS
Obus 23 mm pour ZSU 23	CRT-23
Cartouche 7.62X54	CRT-7.62X54-NO
PST-7.65-NOS	PST-7.65-NOS