

PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN GUINEA

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PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN GUINEA

THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA AND GLOBAL HEALTH,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:03 p.m. in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Donald M. Payne (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. PAYNE. This meeting of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health is called to order. We are going to be interrupted soon for votes. However, we will see how far we get. We will at least get the opening statements and hopefully we can get to our first witnesses but let me first of all welcome everyone here, and thank you for joining us here at the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health hearing Prospects for Peace in Guinea.

The purpose of this hearing is to examine the current situation in Guinea, and the administration's policy response. Guinea is a Francophone West African coastal country about the size of Oregon, is rich in bauxite, diamonds and other natural resources but the majority of the people remain poor, the condition which along with a pattern of autocratic, semi-democratic governance has repeatedly spurred public dissatisfaction in that country.

Over the past decade and a half, Guinea has also suffered a variety of negative affects arising from armed conflicts in neighboring countries, including refugee influxes, cross-border raids, weapons, trafficking, and use of Guinea's territory by Liberian rebels, the latter with the tacit approval and sometimes the assistance of the Guinea Government.

Three of these countries, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, have settled their internal conflicts, and are pursuing international and politically supported socioeconomic post war rebuilding processes. There are also recent indications of a positive political process in Cote d'Ivoire, which has been internally divided since 2002 rebellion. That is positive.

Thus the range of external regional threats to Guinea's stability have decreased recently, or no longer exist. A former French colony, Guinea gained its independence in 1958 under the one-party socialist rule of President Ahmed Sekou Toure becoming the only African country to vote for independence rather than membership in the self-governing but neocolonial French community, an action that caused French to withdraw all aid and remove physical assets such as port equipment and other items.

After the break with France, Guinea aligned itself with the Soviet Union, which provided large amounts of aid and technical support for the fledgling government. Those of us who follow Africa closely are well aware of the role that Guinean President Lansana Conte has played in the Mano River region of West Africa, and though he is to be applauded for allowing people fleeing from wars in other countries in the region to take refuge in Guinea, his actions have too often been negative in character, whether it was his regime's support for the rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, or LURD, in Liberia, or the continued political suppression of his own people.

Guinea opened up its borders to Liberians. The government allowed refugees to set up schools and gave them food. I visited at the beginning of the civil war, pre-Charles Taylor, and saw for myself that Guinea did open its arms. However, the government really had a lot of problems.

General strikes and protests and the Guinean Government's violent response to them in January and February of this year caught the attention of the international community. However, the crisis in Guinea started at least 18 months ago if not earlier. Guinea has continually had problems but this is when it finally came to a head.

In the face of rising inflation, diminishing wages and increased costs of basic commodities and fuel, a coalition of the country's most powerful unions began demanding that the government take a number of actions including reducing fuel prices and the cost of rice, raising salaries and improving retirement benefits for civil servants. Several strikes last year prompted a deadly crackdown by government forces that resulted in dozens of civilians being killed.

The situation calmed down somewhat toward the end of last year but the government still refused to satisfy the demands of the unions for better pay and lower prices of basic commodities and tension remains. It is against that backdrop that the events of January and February unfolded. What is interesting about this year's general strikes is that in addition to economic demands, the coalition of trade unions and civil society began to advocate for political reform.

In reaction, Conte's personal intervention to prevent the prosecution of two key political allies for graft and corruption, the unions and civil service called for the President to dismiss the Presidential Affairs Minister, and after meeting President Conte attempted to get the head of the National Assembly to invoke Article 34 which allows the National Assembly head to replace the President if he is incapacitated.

Union and civil service leaders also demanded that President Conte name a prime minister and delegate some of the responsibilities of the office of President. Conte agreed to the demand to appoint a new prime minister at the end of January but failed to do so in a timely fashion. When he finally did so in February, he named a political crony who had held the position of Presidential Affairs Minister, a post he had just abolished in response to demands of the trade unions and members of civil society.

As a result, union members began to protest, some violently. A general strike was called, and 3 days later some of the participants called for Conte's resignation. The police responded with the dis-

proportionate use of force. Conte declared martial law and the soldiers enforced a curfew clamping down on protestors. Dozens of citizens died. Soldiers are accused of rape and other serious human rights abuses.

Because our time is going quickly, I will go through the remainder for the record but at this time so we can get our ranking member's comments in before a vote comes up, I yield to the ranking member.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. I thank the Chair for yielding and for his courtesy, and thank him for convening this very timely and I believe very important hearing, and to our witnesses for joining us today. With so many important and often vexing challenges competing for our attention throughout the world, it seems that the tendency of Congress' to focus our attention on a crisis only after it has evolved into an unmitigated disaster.

Fortunately this is not the case today. This hearing presents us with the opportunity to discuss not only our strategic, humanitarian, human rights and economic interest in Guinea—particularly as speculation about President Conte's political future and potential for an even greater conflict mounts—but also to consider how the United States Government has positioned itself to respond to threats and mitigate crises before they have spun out of control. Clearly the stakes are high.

Western Africa historically has been beset by political instability and violence, where conflict in one country spills across borders and threatens the region as a whole. This has led to massive displacements, refugee flows, a proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the perpetuation of some of the most heinous human rights atrocities known to man. If we fail to capitalize on the opportunity to address transformative stabilization and reconstruction needs in support of a democratic transition in Guinea today, I fear that we may be headed for a much wider regional crisis down the road.

Experts have been warning for years that the ground was quaking in Guinea. Widespread dissatisfaction with the autocratic rule of an aged and ailing Conte coupled with economic decline, high inflation, political cronyism and corruption has led to periodic episodes of unrest. However, union led strikes of December 2006 through February of this year took on a new dimension for the first time since the country obtained independence in 1958, Guineans across the nation have taken to the streets en masse demanding change and refusing to accept half measures.

Through solidarity, the unions, opposition parties, and civil society gained strength, and in the end they succeeded in extracting critical concessions from the government. While this symbolizes a significant victory, the hardest part is yet to come. While the naming of a new consensus prime minister on February 27 is a significant step forward, the office of the prime minister is not constitutionally protected, and Conte has a record of breaking agreements. In addition, substantial resources are urgently needed for economic and social programs that will address the root causes of social unrest and shore up popular support for the prime minister.

History has shown that Conte is unlikely to share power in a meaningful way, and the longer he keeps his hand on the tiller in

his authoritarian style the more likely renewed and destructive political crisis will emerge. That said, it is widely speculated one way or another that the prime minister will not finish his term in office. His health is extremely poor, and his power appears to be waning. Even the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, which typically shy away from criticizing one of their own in public, have condemned Conte's violent response to protests and have suggested that this may be the appropriate time for him to step down.

Experts are no longer talking about if he will leave office but when and under what conditions he will leave. Still, he has not designated a successor, and in fact has sidelined a number of individuals who appeared poised to succeed him. The President of the National Assembly who would be the successor to the President under the terms of the constitution is widely unpopular.

It has been widely suggested that a military takeover may be the only option for a soft landing, should he die or retire to his farm. However, I would strongly contend that a military takeover in Guinea, no matter how temporary it is intended to be, should not be considered an option. The military is divided along generational and ethnic lines. Neither the people of Guinea nor the international community could assume that the military is a cohesive group or willing to deliver a smooth transition to a democratic civilian led government.

While the responsibility for fostering an environment of peace and security in Guinea rests with the Guineans, the United States is in a unique position to help facilitate a nonviolent democratic resolution to the crisis. Guineans remember the fact that it was the United States who came to their aid when Guinea was attacked by the Revolutionary United Front, rebels from Sierra Leone, with the support of former Liberian President Charles Taylor. We have also invested heavily in peace in Liberia and have credibility in the region.

Guinea is predominantly a Muslim country which is favorably disposed to the United States. The time to help is now before the crisis spirals out of control. Again I commend you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this very timely hearing. Yield back.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Ms. Woolsey.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I have nothing.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Tancredo.

Mr. TANCREDO. No, sir, thank you.

Mr. PAYNE. We will begin with our first panel, and it is my pleasure to introduce the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of African Affairs, Linda Thomas-Greenfield. Prior to Ms. Thomas-Greenfield's appointment to her current post, she was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for West Africa and Economic Affairs.

We are also pleased to be joined by Walter North, who is the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Africa Bureau of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). We are so glad that you are able to join us, Mr. North, on such short notice, and we are interested in the work of USAID in Guinea. So with that, we will start with you.

**STATEMENT OF MS. LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD, PRINCIPAL
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AF-
FAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Good afternoon and thank you very much, Chairman Payne and Ranking Member Smith, for calling this hearing on Guinea. It is really my pleasure and my honor to represent the Department of State to highlight our efforts to promote peace and democratic change in Guinea.

Our efforts in Guinea have been guided by the principal of transformational diplomacy. That is to say, "America's diplomatic power to help foreign citizens better their own lives and to build their own nations and to transform their own futures." People of Guinea are doing just that, and we strongly are supporting them on that journey.

Recent developments represent a new and hopefully more democratic chapter in Guinea's history. The general strike and public demonstrations mark the first time since Guinea's independence in 1958 that the people have organized by taking to the streets en masse to demand political change from the nation's ailing leadership. United States diplomacy and assistance have played a key role in encouraging Guinea's democratic opening, and since 2001 the United States mission in Guinea supported a series of constructive national level dialogues which have assembled the main stakeholders to discuss the major issues of governance, political reform, including media liberalization, electoral processes and civil military relations.

During the January general strike and the February state of siege, the United States publicly deplored the violence. Dismayed by the loss of life and the many injuries, we put the Guinea chief of defense staff on notice that he and the men under his command would be held accountable for their actions, including grave human rights violations.

Reiterating United States policy against coups and other extra-constitutional changes of government, we urge Guinea's senior officials, including the military, to use constitutional means at their disposal and to initiate a transparent and inclusive political transition. We met with Guinean leaders from all sectors to seek a resolution to this crisis. We urge Guinea's military leadership to ensure the safety of the union leaders so that negotiations could restart in a secure context.

Along with ECOWAS and other regional leaders, we also reached out to union leaders and encouraged them to give negotiations another chance. In the end, the Government of Guinea accepted the sage advice of African leaders and ECOWAS' delegation and the United States that dialogue and negotiation were the best ways of ending the political crisis and strengthening Guinea's consensus building process.

After 2 months of historic nationwide grassroots mobilization, violent unrest and political stalemate, we are cautiously optimistic about the viability of the political settlement reached by Guinea's labor unions, civil society, political parties and the government. For the first time in Guinea's history, the National Assembly unanimously rejected one of President Conte's initiatives. Albeit small, this was a victory for democracy in Guinea.

Lansana Kouyate's appointment as the new consensus prime minister and head of government may represent Guinea's best chance to move toward greater transparency and democratic governance and, most importantly, to a smooth transition. Prime Minister Kouyate possesses very strong qualifications to confront the challenges that he will face. He has over 20 years of diplomatic and political experience with the Government of Guinea, the U.N., ECOWAS and other governmental organizations.

But equally importantly, the Guinean people have invested their trust and confidence and their hopes in him. Kouyate's name appeared on all the lists submitted to mediators as an acceptable choice for prime minister. Prime Minister Kouyate has already initiated the process of forming a new government, consulting widely with all sectors of Guinean society. He is attempting to take control of government spending and to prevent further embezzlement or mismanagement of funds.

He persuaded President Conte to allow him a significant restructuring of the government, reducing the number of ministers from 32 to 19. However, it remains uncertain whether Conte has heard and understood the demands of the people. President Conte has not yet signed a draft decree dissolving the current government nor has he named a new government of consensus.

If Conte and the old guard continue to refuse to share power and fail to respond to the demands of Guineans, unfortunately we are likely to see a new round of political unrest and violence, and this time we may see the end of Conte's regime. We and others in the international community are warning Conte of these dire consequences and encouraging him to act now.

President Conte's acceptance of ECOWAS' mediation represents an important first for Guinea. While we do not expect the ongoing situation to spark imminent regional stability, we are concerned about the long-term possibility of a spillover. Several of the regional leaders in Africa have made this point to us.

Today Guinea stands at a crossroads. If Kouyate succeeds in naming an entirely new broad-based government, Guineans can hope for a brighter future. If this occurs, we will quickly reach out to the government and offer assistance. As a friend of Guinea, the United States can help the new government as it strives to meet the demands of the people. We will continue to encourage the Guinean citizens to employ constitutional means to change the system that they have that caters to a few and one that represents and delivers services to all.

Guinea is a country that is rich in resources, and these need to be harnessed for the people. We and the broad international community stand ready to support the efforts of the prime minister and the Guinean people to establish a more representative and democratic government. Thank you. I have submitted a longer version of my remarks for the record, sir. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Thomas-Greenfield follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon and thank you, Chairman Payne and Ranking Member Smith for calling a hearing on the west African nation of Guinea. This is a timely and important issue. I am pleased to represent the Department of State and to highlight our ongoing efforts in pursuit of peace and democratic change in Guinea. Our efforts in Guinea are a prime example of Transformational Diplomacy as we are using "America's diplomatic power to help others better their own lives and to build their own nations and to transform their own futures." The people of Guinea are doing just that, and we are supporting them on that journey.

After two months of historic grassroots mobilization, sometimes violent unrest, and political stalemate throughout Guinea, political, labor union and civil society leaders reached a settlement with the government at the end of February. We are cautiously optimistic about the viability of this agreement. Lansana Kouyaté's appointment as the new consensus prime minister and head of government may represent Guinea's best chance to move forward toward greater transparency and democratic governance. Failure on the part of Guinea's leadership to implement the accord or to meet the legitimate demands of the Guinean people for positive change would signal the final loss of the leadership's credibility and would prove a sad legacy for President Lansana Conté.

The United States Government deplores the violence and destruction that took place during the general strike and the subsequent state of siege declared by President Conté. We are saddened by the loss of life and the many injuries. We have publicly demanded that the perpetrators be held accountable through a credible investigation.

We welcome the progress evidenced by the January 27 and February 25 accords. Prime Minister Kouyaté possesses strong qualifications to confront the challenges at hand: 20-plus years of diplomatic and political experience with the Government of Guinea, the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), *La Francophonie*, and other governmental organizations. Equally important, Kouyaté's name appeared on all lists submitted to mediators as acceptable choices for consensus Prime Minister. The Guinean people have invested their trust, confidence, and hopes in him.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The recent developments represent a new chapter in Guinea's history. The general strike and public demonstrations mark the first time since Guinea gained independence in 1958 that the people have taken to the streets en masse to demand political change from the nation's leadership. It was the culmination of a series of political and social advances over the last 18 months that awakened civil society, mobilized union leaders, and empowered citizens to give voice to their concerns. U.S. Government programs and initiatives have played a key role in encouraging these developments by bringing together the relevant stakeholders and encouraging dialogue among civil society, political parties and the military.

President Conté's acceptance of ECOWAS' mediation represents an important first for Guinea. While we do not expect that the ongoing situation to have an immediate, deleterious effect on regional stability, the long-term possibility remains. Several regional leaders have privately and publicly expressed their concerns about Guinea. We are working closely with regional leaders and institutions to ensure the long-term stability of this volatile sub-region. We welcome the energetic efforts of ECOWAS, in addressing regional security problems and will continue to support their initiatives.

The United States has always stood firmly with the people of Guinea in their quest for stability, greater democracy, improved governance and more responsible management of Guinea's vast natural resources. The assistance we provided to help Guinea protect its borders during the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts has placed the United States in a unique position of influence among Guinea's friends in the international community. We will continue to use that position to advocate for democracy and good governance in Guinea, in keeping with our policy in the region and throughout the world.

SUPPORT FOR GUINEA'S POPULAR MOVEMENT

Throughout the January and February crises in Guinea, the United States actively sought a peaceful, negotiated resolution that would move Guinea toward improved democratic governance. There has been a severe lack of transparent or ac-

countable resource management. That, coupled with poor overall economic governance, has been a primary source of fragility within Guinea. In almost 50 years since independence, no government has succeeded in transforming Guinea's great potential into a minimally acceptable standard of living for the vast majority of the population.

The United States has sought to combat corruption, promote civic participation, and build civil society's capacity to advocate for, and insist upon, government accountability. Since 2001, the U.S. Mission in Guinea has supported a series of constructive national level dialogues, which have assembled the main stakeholders to discuss the major issues of governance and political reform, including media liberalization, electoral processes, and civil-military relations.

Several events precipitated the general strike in January; Guinea's third such strike in less than a year's time. In December, President Conté personally released from prison two of his close associates, Mamadou Sylla and Fodé Soumah, who had been under investigation for embezzling funds from Guinea's Central Bank. Later that month, Conté—just days after dismissing Ibrahima Keira, the Minister of Transportation, who was allegedly connected to the central bank controversy—reversed the decision and reinstated Keira, reportedly because of family pressure.

The union confederation, which through 2006 had been fighting for improved labor conditions, reacted with dismay. Already concerned that the government was not meeting earlier commitments, labor leaders stopped ongoing dialogue and called for the general strike, suspended since last June, to recommence on January 10. For the labor unions and, indeed, most Guineans, President Conté's actions highlighted his autocratic style and his complete disregard for the separation of powers. The unions charged that the Government of Guinea was no longer a credible interlocutor.

Whereas the unions' demands during the March and June 2006 strikes were primarily economic, the January strike began with a political tone. In addition to their economic agenda for improved wages and retirement benefits, the unions demanded that the two prisoners be returned to jail and that Conté rescind his decision to reinstate the Minister of Transportation.

When the unions met President Conté face-to-face on January 16, they provided him with a written list of demands and called for his retirement. By the next day, the security situation began to deteriorate rapidly, as protesters barricaded roads, threw rocks, burned tires and skirmished with police. On January 17, President Conté publicly dismissed the unions' political demands for change. In response, the unions and civil society organizations called for increased public protests.

On January 22, the Guinean people demonstrated that they had had enough of corrupt governance. Tens—if not hundreds—of thousands of ordinary Guineans poured into the streets calling for change. The military, especially the “red beret” presidential guard, reacted, opening fire on the peaceful crowds and killing dozens in Conakry and throughout Guinea. Security forces arrested union leaders, who were released later that evening, but only after the U.S. Ambassador and others protested, emphasizing that the eyes of the international community were on Guinea. President Conté denied authorizing the arrests.

On January 27, union, business and government representatives signed a tripartite agreement to suspend the strike. President Conté agreed to name a new “consensus” prime minister, with delegated executive powers. For the first time, the new prime minister of Guinea would carry the title of “head of government” and exercise certain powers previously held by the President of the Republic. The Government of Guinea also agreed to new price controls for rice and fuel, as well as a one-year ban on the exportation of food and fuel. President Conté signed the accord on January 31.

On February 9, President Conté announced the selection of Eugène Camara as Guinea's new prime minister. Within hours, the announcement sparked another wave of violence and protests. A longtime member of the government and currently serving as Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Camara's loyal service to Conté over the preceding 10 years disqualified him in the eyes of the unions and general public, who viewed his selection as a provocation and a rejection of the January 27th agreement. Throughout Guinea, the people rose, targeting government offices and the properties of government officials. Governors, prefects, subprefects, and other centrally appointed government representatives were driven out of many towns, leaving large areas of Guinea without governance, except that provided by local elected officials and traditional leaders.

On February 12, President Conté declared a “state of siege,” which conferred broad powers on the military, and implemented a strict curfew. According to media reports, the following days saw military and police forces scour Conakry and towns in the hinterlands where they committed serious human rights abuses.

The declaration of the state of siege sent shockwaves across Guinea, as it reminded many people of the brutal repression of the Sékou Touré regime. The strict military curfew and the presence of armed soldiers in the streets effectively ended negotiations as the unions and civil society, the objects of threats and intimidation by Conté supporters, feared for their lives.

On February 14, through the U.S. Ambassador in Conakry, we put the Guinea Chief of Defense Staff, General Kerfalla Camara, on notice that he and the men under his command would be held accountable for their actions, including grave violations of human rights. We urged the immediate lifting of the state of siege and the resumption of political dialogue.

On February 16, we issued a strongly worded public statement condemning the state of siege, the use of lethal force against the civilian population, the abrogation of basic freedoms, and the roll-back of the democratic process. The statement called for restraint and reaffirmed that Guinean armed forces, security forces, and civilian officials involving in abuses against the civilian population must be held accountable. It stated that the disorder that plagues Guinea reflects widespread popular discontent caused by decades of poor governance. We called for the lifting of the state of siege, the return of the military to their barracks, the restoration of basic freedoms, the resumption of political dialogue, and the restoration of civilian rule. Most importantly, the statement called on all Guineans to use constructive dialogue and the constitutional means at their disposal to bring about the changes necessary to resolve the crisis and to establish effective, democratic governance.

Behind the scenes, the U.S. Mission intervened to support the political process. The U.S. Ambassador successfully urged Guinea's military leadership to ensure for the safety of the union leaders so that negotiations could recommence in a secure context. We also reached out to union leaders and encouraged them to give negotiations another chance.

From February 14 through February 22, we intervened with Prime Minister Eugène Camara, Foreign Minister Mamady Condé, National Assembly President Aboubacar Somparé, Supreme Court President Lamine Sidimé, Chief of Defense Staff Kerfalla Camara, and other generals of the military command. The U.S. Ambassador expressed our concerns and urged these top Guinean leaders to face the reality that the country was teetering on the edge of chaos due partially to a leadership vacuum at the top. Reiterating U.S. policy against coups and other extra-constitutional changes of government, we sought to persuade these senior officials that it was time for them to use the constitutional means at their disposal to initiate a political transition that would address Guinea's need for strong, democratic leadership.

On February 23, the National Assembly rejected a Conté initiative for the first time ever by refusing to extend the "state of siege" declaration. That rebuke by the National Assembly clarified that the popular protests had widespread support, even among leaders of the PUP, Conté's own majority party. Concurrently, an ECOWAS delegation led by former Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida and ECOWAS Secretariat President Ibn Chambas arrived to mediate.

Two days later, ECOWAS special envoy and former Nigerian President Babangida announced that President Conté had agreed to name a new consensus prime minister from lists of acceptable candidates submitted by the unions and civil society. Lansana Kouyaté arrived in Conakry on February 27, just hours after being announced as the new Prime Minister and head of the government.

IMPACT OF REGIONAL INTERVENTION

Throughout the crisis, regional leaders continued to express their concern about the situation in Guinea and the possibility that unrest might unsettle the peace-building efforts elsewhere in the fragile sub-region. Despite President Conté's twice refusing ECOWAS delegations led by Senegalese President Wade and Nigerian President Obasanjo, ECOWAS mediation, under former Nigerian President Babangida proved key to resolving the crisis.

Both during and after the crisis, the Bush Administration has continued to work with ECOWAS. We have cooperated in our effort to identify the best means of encouraging a democratic, peaceful, constitutional, and civilian-led political transition within Guinea.

In addition to the Babangida-led ECOWAS mediation, several of the sub-regional governments have sent representatives to visit Guinea and express their support for the negotiated settlement to the crisis. Presidents Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone met with Conté and other officials on February 20. In speaking with regional leaders, the Department of State has repeatedly heard the refrain that President Conté's time has passed and Guinea must

begin its transition to a post-Conté environment. However, despite the nearly unanimous consensus among these regional leaders—excluding notably African Union leader Alpha Konaré—many of these same leaders are hesitant to call publicly for Conté to retire.

PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

While Prime Minister Kouyaté's appointment has significantly eased tension within Guinea, the underlying sources of instability remain, because a clear process of political transition is still lacking. Kouyaté has initiated the process of forming a new government, consulting widely with all sectors of Guinean society. He has taken control of government spending to prevent further embezzlement or mismanagement of funds. He succeeded in persuading President Conté to allow a significant restructuring of the government, reducing the number of ministers from 32 to 19.

That said, President Conté has not yet signed a draft decree dissolving the current government nor has he named a new government of consensus. Whether Conté and the old-guard political elite allow Kouyaté to form a new consensus government will determine whether the current calm is fleeting or sustainable. If Conté and the old guard continue to refuse to share power and fail to respond to the demands of Guineans, we are likely to see a new round of political unrest and violence. And this time, we may see the end of the Conté regime.

We are now studying how the United States Government can best assist a new Kouyaté-led government, once it is named, and continue to demonstrate our desire for improved governance and transparency in Guinea. If Kouyaté succeeds in naming an entirely new, broad-based government, we will quickly reach out to that government and offer significant assistance for the legislative elections, independent media, and nationwide political dialogue. We encourage the government to lead a national effort to involve all Guineans in a process to envision and plan for the future of the country. Long-term resolution of Guinea's conflict will require the participation and contributions of all citizens in the country and in the diaspora in creating a new roadmap for progress and reform.

CONCLUSION

Today, Guinea stands at a crossroads. It is incumbent upon President Conté and his inner circle to demonstrate that they are heeding the people's demand for political change. In fact, this is almost certainly their last chance. Prime Minister Kouyaté must demonstrate concretely and publicly that he has heard the people and will bring positive, free, and open political change to Guinea. The United States has an ongoing role to play, as a friend, in helping the new government succeed in these efforts.

Through diplomatic persuasion, the United States and African leaders have succeeded in promoting dialogue and negotiation as the best way to end the political crisis and strengthen the consensus-building process in Guinea. Before, during, and after the crisis, U.S. engagement has consistently focused on building Guinea's capacity to work its way through this tough political transition. We will continue to encourage Guinea's citizens to employ constitutional means to change the system from one that caters to a few to one that represents and delivers services to all Guineans.

The United States and the broader international community stand ready to support the efforts of Guinea's population to establish more representative, democratic, and transparent governance. President Conté appointed a new consensus Prime Minister with delegated powers as head of government, but it remains uncertain whether Conté has heard and understood the demands of his people and will allow democratic change to take root in earnest.

Thank you again, Chairman Payne and Ranking Member Smith, for calling today's hearing. I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Mr. North.

STATEMENT OF WALTER NORTH, J.D., SENIOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE AFRICA BUREAU, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. NORTH. Thank you very much. Good afternoon. I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member Smith for calling this hearing on Guinea, a country where the United States has

strong and multifaceted interests. I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss our foreign assistance strategy in Guinea and more specifically programs being implemented by USAID.

I would like to start by discussing the challenges and conclude by focusing on the opportunities that lend themselves to improvement through development assistance. Guinea is, as you said, Mr. Chairman, about the size of the state of Oregon and has a population of probably about 8 million or so. Surrounded by a number of countries that have been beset by civil wars, it has played host to a sizable number of refugees who have left Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, and even Senegal's southern Casamance region for the relative calm and security of Guinea's border regions.

Despite these imported pressures, Guinea until recently has enjoyed internal stability. Its continued stability is important to support the peace and rebuilding efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Since independence in 1958, Guinea has confronted consistent poverty. Quality of life of the average Guinean is considered among the lowest in the world. They rank 160 out of 177 on the United Nations development program human development index.

Most families—probably 80 percent of the population—live in impoverished conditions and public services are not provided at a level commensurate with Guinea's natural wealth, and those services have been further constrained by the recent events. Due to poor governance, weak economic policies and poor infrastructure, troubling social conditions persist despite the fact that the country has a rich mix of natural resources, including over 25 percent of the world's known reserves of bauxite, along with diamonds, gold, iron ore and other metals.

For some time we have expected a political transition in Guinea while remaining uncertain as to how the events will unfold. With this in mind in the spring of 2005, USAID in partnership with our colleagues in the State Department and others undertook an assessment of USAID Guinea's program with the view to evaluate the effectiveness of that program, what impact we were achieving and how the program could be revised to target the sources of vulnerability in Guinea's precarious political situation.

The conclusion was that developing a viable strategy for Guinea meant targeting the sources of vulnerability, lack of democratic processes and institutions, widespread corruption and a large cohort of unemployed youth. In order to have an impact, we determined that USAID's programs must adopt a multisectoral approach to democratic reform, given democracy's central role in supporting economic opportunity and increasing social sector services.

After the assessment, we refocused our activities on a conflict minimization strategy to strengthen good governance across all sectors with a focus on transparency, anticorruption and citizen participation. There are certain obstacles to progress in Guinea that we simply cannot change. Therefore, it is imperative that we strategically focus resources on the opportunities for positive impact that do exist.

The administration's 2008 request for Guinea is based on a well-coordinated U.S. Government focus on Guinea's upcoming political transition. The request is a 42 percent increase in governing justly

and democratically funded resources from 2006 levels. The requested increase in fiscal year 2008 funds will support local government and decentralization programs to enable local governments to govern effectively, transparently and democratically, and to improve service delivery.

U.S. assistance will aim to increase citizen awareness and strengthen civil society to participate more actively in governance and public affairs, taking advantage of the burgeoning civil society movement. Legislative elections are currently scheduled for June 2007, although that date may slip. To ensure that the mechanisms to guarantee transparency and fairness are in place, USAID assistance this year and in 2008 can also strengthen the government in the immediate aftermath of those elections. Activities would include multi-stakeholder dialogues, institutional development assistance for executive, legislative, judicial and independent institutions and funding for civil society groups to conduct consensus building forums and uphold democratic processes related to the transition.

The United States' mission will continue to promote anticorruption and good governance in other sectors, such as security, education, health and natural resource management. This integrated approach is designed to achieve the maximum impact from U.S. Government assistance and supports our goal of transformational diplomacy: Guinea's eventual transition from a developing to a transforming country under the strategic framework for foreign assistance.

The recent nationwide strike, violent protests, state of siege and curfew put acute stress on Guinea's delivery systems for health, food and protection, particularly the situation of vulnerable women. As health centers and transport systems start up again and international donors reenergize their operations, we are assessing the impact these events have had on civilians and looking at ways that we may be able to assist. At the same time, we are cognizant that we need to be prepared for future crises and anticipate ways that we can mitigate humanitarian consequences in the future.

There is recognition, I believe, that this is only the beginning of Guinea's political transition. The United States stands ready to support the Guinean people as they express their desire for a representative government that reflects their need and aspirations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. North follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WALTER NORTH, J.D., SENIOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE AFRICA BUREAU, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Good afternoon. I would like to thank Chairman Payne and Ranking Member Smith for calling this hearing on Guinea—a country where the United States has strong and multi-faceted interests. I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss our foreign assistance strategy in Guinea and more specifically, the programs being implemented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

I would like to start by discussing the challenges and conclude by focusing on the opportunities that lend themselves to improvement through development assistance. Guinea is about the size of the state of Oregon and has a population of 5.5 million people. Surrounded by five countries that have been beset by civil wars, it still plays host to a sizeable number of refugees who have left Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, and even Senegal's southern Casamance region for the relative calm and security of Guinea's border regions. Despite these "imported" pres-

tures, Guinea until recently has enjoyed internal stability. Its continued stability is important to support the peace and rebuilding efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Since independence in 1958, Guinea has confronted consistent poverty. The quality of life for the average Guinean is considered among the lowest in the world, 160 out of 177 on the United Nations Development Programme human development index. Most families live in impoverished conditions and public services are not provided at a level commensurate with Guinea's natural wealth. Due to poor governance, weak economic policies, and poor infrastructures, troubling social conditions persist despite that fact that the country has a rich mix of natural resources, including over 25% of the world's known reserves of bauxite, along with diamonds, gold, iron ore, and other metals.

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There is recognition, I believe, that this is only the beginning of Guinea's political transition. The United States stands ready to support the Guinean people as they express their desire for a representative government that reflects their needs and aspirations.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much for your testimony. Ms. Thomas-Greenfield, if Guinea imploded, given the close links between the Mano River countries, what kind of regional impact do you think it would have on the region in general?

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you for that question. Our concern about the situation in Guinea is just that. It is not just the impact of Guinea imploding on the people of Guinea but it is the impact in the region. Guinea is not in a particularly stable neighborhood. It is getting better but with Liberia only 1 year into a newly elected government, Sierra Leone in the process of having elections, Cote d'Ivoire hopefully improving but still pretty fragile, we are concerned that if the situation continues to deteriorate in Guinea, and it does implode, that it would have a dramatic impact on the region.

I think Guinea is for that reason that most of the leaders in the region try to give advice to Conte on how to deal with the situation. We understand that President Sirleaf and President Kabbah were in Guinea. President Wade from Senegal also went in to impress upon Conte the importance of dealing with the situation in the country. We were very pleased that ECOWAS, the regional organization, took it upon themselves to go in and help Conte move toward this negotiated settlement and the appointment of Kouyate.

Mr. PAYNE. Has there been any move, to your knowledge, on the part of any of the ECOWAS countries, or the AU in general, or NEPAD, or even the U.S. Government to ask the President to consider retiring or resigning?

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. We have not specifically asked him to retire. We see this as a process that the Guineans have to take control of, and that the leadership in the region should take control of. We were told that President Kabbah, in a conversation with Conte, very specifically suggested to him that it was time for him to retire. I understand others raised that issue with him as well.

Mr. PAYNE. In the area of the elections that would be coming up, is there any real engagement by the National Endowment for Democracy or the IRI or NDI there currently, and have they been welcomed or have they had an opportunity to really participate in Guinea, Mr. North?

Mr. NORTH. Sir, it is my understanding that neither of those organizations is actively engaged currently. Our major partner in providing services has been IFES, and there are three pieces of legislation which we anticipate will be passed by the Parliament in order to facilitate the process of holding freer and more open elections. This includes recognition of opposition parties and establishing an independent elections commission. We anticipate being able to work with them on the machinery for conducting an open and fair electoral process.

Mr. PAYNE. One of the parts of the National Endowment for Democracy—it has four major components as you know—it has the IRI and the NDI sort of counterbalancing each other, it has the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and also the AFL-CIO. Since it seems that labor unions have had a significant role in Guinea—and either one of you might want to tackle this question—do you have any knowledge regarding whether the NED has any kind of activity with organized labor that is a part of the NED structure since it seems like labor unions are a very strong part of civil society, even probably more so than in practically all the other countries? Has there been any—to your knowledge—movement in that direction?

Mr. NORTH. Congressman, that is a very good question. I am not aware of it, and I would like to check on that and get back to you and provide you with details. We make a block grant, as you may know, to the AFL-CIO for their very important work in these kinds of contexts, and oftentimes they will be doing things under that grant in a particular country but we might not hear about it until later.

Mr. PAYNE. I will yield to the gentleman. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you very much. Thank you. I am sorry I had to step out. There was a crisis on the Senate side with some people that I had been working with. Let me ask a question with regards to the military's role in the recent crackdown. What role did they play? I read our Embassy statement of January 26 where we condemned the use of violence by the security forces against the civilian population. Has there been any attempt to try to discover who committed the atrocities and who gave the orders? To what extent were atrocities committed?

In 2002, it is my understanding we trained a ranger unit, and my question would be there: Did they have any role in that? Were they part of restraint or were they part of abuse? I remember so well hearings that we held in the 1990s when Kopassus in Indonesia and apparently with United States training were part of committing widespread human rights violations, and the question would be: Did those rangers or anybody that we trained engage themselves in any of those atrocities?

If I could ask with regards to—this frankly would be to you, Mr. North—the status of the health infrastructure in Guinea. Whether or not basic, for example, obstetrical services are available? We all know that maternal mortality can be largely mitigated if not eradicated if we provide sufficient numbers of midwives, safe blood and other humanitarian assists, especially if a woman has an obstructed delivery, and I am wondering what the status currently is in Guinea for those women.

And finally, President Johnson-Sirleaf's amazing transformation of Liberia and when she was here most recently—as she has been here many times—was greeted with hosannas for the great work that she is doing, knowing that she has got many challenges ahead. But has that optimism spilled into Guinea? Has that captured the imagination of the people?

And we know that the media was stifled during martial law, and that would be my final question. Has that been lifted? Are they free to report in an unfettered way in Guinea?

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Let me start with your first question. Thank you very much. We have asked, along with others, in the international community that there be an investigation of the activities of the military. They were involved in the attacks on the population. We do not know if any of those that we trained were involved. Our hope would be that, if they were involved, they would have been involved in trying to encourage restraint but, if they were involved in committing the atrocities, and we are made aware of that, we will make sure that they do not participate in any future U.S. training nor on any peacekeeping forces that we are involved in.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Pardon the interruption but we have asked that question?

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. We have asked that question. On the question of you know whether the Johnson-Sirleaf success in Liberia is having any impact on Guinea, I would think so. There are a lot of Guineans who are in Liberia, and a lot of Liberians who were in Guinea, and I think the Guineans were watching the situation in Liberia very, very closely, and I think it probably did have an impact on the willingness of people to go to the streets for the first time since Guinea gained independent in 1958. And you did ask about the media.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. The media, yes.

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. The media played a very, very interesting role. The government did try to thwart the efforts of the media but a lot of the news got out as the media was able to get around the restrictions. I do not think it has been lifted. I do not know the answer to that. I will check but the media was able—despite all of the government's efforts during this state of siege—to actually get information about to the population.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Before Mr. North answers, are there any prisoners being held that we might construe to be political prisoners especially as it relates to the crackdown?

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. I am not aware but I will check that for you.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM MS. LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

To our knowledge, the Government of Guinea is not currently detaining anyone we would consider a political prisoner. With regard to the security forces' response to the January and February protests, security forces did arrest union leaders and youth associated with the union movement on two separate occasions in January and February. However, by the end of February, all of those arrested for their peaceful participation in political protests were released. There are still persons being detained for property and other crimes with cases pending. Prime Minister Kouyate's government has recently announced that it plans to establish a new investigatory commission to look into the security forces response to the recent protests. We expect that the commission will address the question of unlawful and irregular detention among other issues.

Mr. NORTH. Thank you very much, Congressman. Let me if I could just add a word or two about the military. We have been having a very active program of encouraging civilian military consultations. That has worked very well, and in fact it was recognized in a recent report that was done by the International Crisis Group as one of the major contributors to the process of political dialogue that took place recently. So I think that that has been one of our more successful opportunities to try and create some dialogue between these communities and increase and enhance respect for human rights on the part of the military, and also respect within the military for the proper role of the military in terms of governance issues.

Turning to the health side, we have just had someone from our Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance go in to look and make an assessment of what the situation was with a particular focus on health. In the wake of the recent situation they report some unfortunate byproducts of the long period of the stalemate. During the

period of the state of siege, for example, it was hard to get supplies out to hospitals and health centers, and many operations that were managed by NGOs and other partners actually stopped.

We have started and other organizations like Medecins San Frontieres and the ICRC are working very hard to try and get things running again in a better way to increase services. The underlying situation was never good to begin with but there were some services that were available that were damaged during the process of the political stalemate, and we are now working to get them up and running again. We have some requests for support that we have under consideration to try and facilitate that.

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. May I add? You had asked about the media. I was just passed a note that the media constraints have been lifted, particularly on the radio, and that they are operating.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Mr. Chairman, if I could ask one more?

Mr. PAYNE. Sure.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you. Mr. North, to the best of your knowledge, is there any effort to help women who might have obstetric fistulas in Guinea?

Mr. NORTH. I am not aware of any. I will check into that for you. I am not aware in particular if we are working on fistulas. I know that there is a lot of concern about violence against women, and we are trying to do some work to support counseling for rape victims in some of the medical facilities. Female genital mutilation is a serious issue. So I am sure that fistula problems do exist. I do not know that we are supporting targeted interventions to address that.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. If you could get back to us on that, that would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. NORTH. Yes.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM WALTER NORTH, J.D., TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OBSTETRIC FISTULAS IN GUINEA

Beginning in 2005, USAID has provided a total of \$900,000 for fistula prevention and repair in Guinea. The rapid expansion of fistula repair activities are constrained by the small number of fistula repair surgeons and trainers worldwide and the extensive time needed to train a surgeon to competence, among others. USAID/Guinea is addressing these constraints by strengthening the capacity of two centers to meet the high demand for fistula repair services. In addition, the mission is expanding its preventive activities, which are less constrained by absorptive capacity. This is being done through strengthening prevention of obstetric fistula at these centers, as well as through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in family planning and maternal health at the community level. The two facilities receiving support by USAID/Guinea are the Ignace Deen National Teaching Hospital in Conakry and the Kissidougou District Hospital in Kissidougou. Following are the accomplishments to date:

- Two surgeons from each site trained in simple fistula repair and three surgeons in Conakry trained in complex fistula repair
- Twenty nurses trained in pre-and post-operative care
- Twenty staff at two facilities trained in infection prevention and quality improvement
- Thirty-nine midwives and one physician trained in the use of the partograph (a tool that assesses the progress of labor)

- Nineteen midwives and one physician trained in Emergency Obstetric Care (EOC)
- Two hundred women have received fistula repair

USAID/Guinea also supports fistula prevention through through USAID/Guinea's family planning and maternal health portfolios. Family planning activities include working with communities to change norms about age at first birth, provide education and voluntary family planning to help young women avoid early pregnancy, improve women's access to family planning information and services, and provide post-repair family planning counseling and services as a means to reduce the chances of repeat fistula. The maternal health program raises awareness in communities about how to prevent fistula and by promoting birth preparedness and use of skilled birth attendants. It also improves access to emergency obstetric care, including cesarean-section to prevent fistula from prolonged and obstructed labor.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Yield back, and I thank the chairman.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Representative Woolsey?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, Mr. North, you referred to the vulnerable women. Are all women vulnerable or tell us who the vulnerable women are and what is being done to help them be less vulnerable? And along with the women, the human rights and abuses against children and child labor and child trafficking, what is being done to end these practices, and what more can the United States do, and what kind of bilateral programs would be the most effective?

Mr. NORTH. Thank you very much, Congresswoman Woolsey. It is my understanding that in a country like Guinea where per capita income is less than \$500 per person per year and where 80 percent of people are living in absolute poverty, the deck is stacked against women to begin with in a way so that the problems are pervasive. Look at female literacy rates for example. We do not have really great data from Guinea but we know that there is a differentiation in terms of the access that men have compared to women. So that is one issue.

I mentioned female genital mutilation. There also is exclusion in terms of the political arena. So part of what we do is to try and provide services to give people access to better health care, and the predominant users of those services tend to be women, particularly in seeking health care for their kids. But we also try to get them included in the political process through the kinds of dialogues that we have been supporting and the work with NGOs and others.

You asked about trafficking and vulnerable children. It is a serious issue. We have in the past been able to provide some modest support for addressing the trafficking issue in select parts of Guinea, and we do continue to watch with concern the situation of children more generally.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well are the families finding it necessary to actually sell their children so that the family then indeed will have some income for a short time or are their children being stolen from them?

Mr. NORTH. Congresswoman, thank you. It is not my understanding that there is a pervasive problem of that kind in Guinea.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Okay. Well for the women, is there a system to help them go into business with micro businesses or some support that would help them know how to help the family and help themselves become economically at least equal? Five hundred dollars a year; good grief. And what about birth control and family planning? How is that affecting the area?

Mr. NORTH. Congresswoman, thank you. We have not, to my understanding provided extensive assistance for microcredit or microenterprise in Guinea. We have, as I said, refocused our strategy to turn more attention on this political transition and try to put in place a process which would help to open things up so that economic opportunity would be more possible in the Guinean context. Currently if you look at things like the doing business indicators and other criteria we use to look at whether it is possible to succeed as an entrepreneur, it is a very difficult place to do business, and particularly in the informal sector which is where microcredit loans generally tend to be used most successfully.

On family planning and reproductive health services, it has been a major part of our program to provide those services through NGO partners in the past, and we expect to continue to do that. Again we have tried to embed within that approach much more attention to governance issues. Unfortunately in Guinea the health sector has historically been one of the areas that has been most prone to abuse by people taking supplies and using them inappropriately. So we try to work around that and try to create conditions for a better, more responsive, well-governed health sector in the future.

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. May I address your question on trafficking? This is one area—at least prior to the current situation—where Guinea had began to show some slight improvements. They have moved off Tier 2 watch list to a straight Tier 2, and they have actually prosecuted at least one trafficker, and gave this person time in prison, thus sending out the message that trafficking in persons will not be allowed to continue with impunity in the country. So, again, this is an area where we did see some improvements over the past year.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you. Mr. Tancredo.

Mr. TANCREDO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. North, I wish you could just explain a little more to me about the problems you see in the development of the microloan program, microenterprise. I did not really understand what you meant or how you described the situations as to make it more difficult there to implement than someplace else where they do exist. Well I guess we will start there. What did you mean by that? What actually are the obstacles?

Mr. NORTH. Thank you very much, Congressman. To be honest with you I have not seen the particulars of the doing business indicators assessment of Guinea. I have seen the results. Sort of the bottom line which suggested that in terms of things like “how many days it takes to start a business,” that in Guinea it is much, much longer than the average even in other developing countries, and so the World Bank publishes this assessment tool which looks at a variety of indicators, and Guinea does not come out very well.

And in terms of the informal sector, which is generally where people who are using and able to use microcredit loans most effectively live and operate, it is my understanding that the current climate is not particularly permissive. But I am sure that we could use microcredit loans and use them effectively even in Guinea because there are other situations with comparable kinds of restraints where people have been able to use it effectively. But we

have focused our program more on trying to deal with the democratic transition.

Mr. TANCREDO. Yes. Well it seems like that is exactly what we designed that program for was to actually deal with those informal situations. I mean I recognize the difficulty of starting a business in any of these countries in a formal process but that has in the past not prevented us from actually using this particular program. In fact, it is one of the things you look at and say, okay there is another way around that, and especially when we are talking about the group apparently most affected by the severe poverty in the area. It just seems to me that we should be putting more emphasis on that than what you have described to be the case. Just a suggestion.

Then the only other thing that has not been touched on that I would like you to comment on, either one if you will, and that is to what extent is there any hint of an sectarian or ethnic motivation for the violence that occurred earlier, and what are the prospects that that might crop up as being a problem in Guinea? Either one of those two things.

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Let me start. Thank you for that question. Interestingly, this protest was not based ethnically or in sectarianism. I think it was the result of people in Guinea being sick and tired of not having the fruits of good governance and being tired of Conte's rule. There was some reporting that people from Conte's ethnic group may have been leading some of the attacks on the population, and we did not see a basis for that rumor.

I think there was general, across-the-board among all ethnic groups, dissatisfaction with the situation, and they came together under the unions to protest.

Mr. TANCREDO. What are your observations with regard to the potential now that may exist for this, even if that was not the case for the original, if the country does implode as we keep talking or using the word here? Are the embers there that can flame up into some other sort of more serious and sectarian violence?

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. I think the potential exists. It is something that we need to watch closely. There are three main ethnic groups in the country. All of them are represented in the military but clearly Conte has been in a place where he could take care of his own. So I think it is something we need to be very, very watchful of and be prepared to deal with.

Mr. TANCREDO. Yes. Remember that if I am not mistaken a significant portion of the Sudanese military is made up of people from Darfur. That is a strange and depressing sort of statistic. Mr. North, if you have anything to add? If not, do not feel compelled to just because.

Mr. NORTH. We heartily concur with what Ms. Thomas-Greenfield said. Given the history of the region and the context, this is very clearly something that we have to keep a close watch on it. It is not necessarily a defining characteristic of the kind of civil society dialogue that we have been trying to encourage but it is obviously that kind of discussion that can help to alleviate the underlying pressure that leads to the friction.

Mr. TANCREDO. Well that is certainly the first thing that comes to mind when we talk about any potential collapse of the govern-

ment itself and without a clear understanding of exactly how a transition occurs and aligned and everybody sort of agrees will be followed and that sort of thing, the area, just as you say, with the history of the area with outside pressures that are bound to be there, I would think that this would be a significant problem for us or a potential problem. Thanks very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you. Mr. Smith, a second round.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Chairman, thank you. In February it was reported that the Liberians united for reconciliation and democracy. Militia members had arrived in the capitol to provide security for the President, and the former head of LURD, Aisha Conneh. Could you please comment on this report, and now that the war in Liberia is over, what is the current nature of the relationship between the President and LURD?

Secondly, just a few weeks ago Sheri Rickert and I were in Abuja and then we made our way down to Lagos, primarily focusing on human trafficking, and I have been working the trafficking issue since the mid 1990s and travel much of the world on that issue. I was struck by something that I did not appreciate until I actually saw it and talked to a number of the victims who were in shelters, and we saw this in Rome too where many of the—in this case Nigerian women—the lucky ones are actually in shelters but so many are still on the streets, and what keeps them there is not necessarily the fear of retaliation against their loved ones which is used. That is the modus operandi of the traffickers as we all know back in their country of origin.

But the use of voodoo, and that the juju men in Lagos and Benin City and elsewhere in Africa scare the living daylights out of these young women, these victims, and so many of them. I asked the TIP office in Abuja, “Is this occasionally happening? Is it commonplace?” And they said it was commonplace which was you know a revelation in essence to me.

And I am wondering if in Guinea if it is also with the trafficking issue one of the repressive tools used to intimidate, coerce and continue the subjugation of these women and young girls?

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. I have not heard that but I am not surprised to hear that it exists, and I would imagine if you saw that in Nigeria it probably does exist in Guinea. On the question of LURD and the relationship of Aisha Conneh, she has a very, very close relationship with the President, and we did hear rumors that LURD may have been in Conakry and providing support to the President. We saw no concrete evidence of that but the fact that Aisha is there I think is something to give us reason for pause.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. If you could look into that further. My request to the TIP office here is that they go back to our Embassies, and as we do those data calls to look a lot closer at that because that is, like I said, another repressive tool, and I was struck by its pervasiveness. I can understand occasionally if it happened. I was told it was commonplace, and that was new to me.

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. And in fact, we have heard that Conte gets all of his advice from those people as well. So I would not be surprised.

Mr. PAYNE. Let me just ask a final question or two. You know if Conte, whose health is bad, moves off the scene, what do you think might happen? Is there enough of an institution there to prevent bloodshed, et cetera? Do you think ECOWAS could move in to head off violence? I know it is a little outside your line but give me your thoughts about that prospect.

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. There is a constitutional process for transition should this happen, and that is that the President of the National Assembly would assume the presidency, and that an election would take place within 60 to 90 days. What we have been hearing for the past year from everybody—the unions, the opposition parties, people on the street—is they would be comfortable with a military takeover at this point, and we have discouraged them because we tell them they do not know what they are asking for, and they do not know what they will get if such a thing were to take place.

So we, in all of our conversations with the military and with government officials, are encouraging them to follow the transition that is laid out for them in their constitution. There is a provision that will allow the courts to extend the 60- to 90-day period, and that may be necessary but I think it remains to be seen what in fact will actually happen because we have never experienced this. Guinea has had one transition in its entire history, and this would be the second.

Mr. PAYNE. Just finally we have not heard about HIV and AIDS and tuberculosis. Where do they stand as it relates to the problem there? Is it as high as in some other places or is it low?

Mr. NORTH. Thank you. We believe the prevalence rate is about 3.2 percent for sexually active adults 15 to 49 years old, and that is not as high as rates in eastern and southern Africa. It is comparable to other situations in other countries in West Africa, and we are trying to work to provide support there but Guinea is not one of the President's PEPFAR program countries.

Mr. PAYNE. Okay. Well Ambassador Watson just joined us, and I do not know if you would rather wait for the second panel which is getting ready to come. Great. Then let me thank both of you for your presentations. We are trying to look at problems before they occur, and that is one of the reasons for this hearing. I do not know if Guinea has been discussed seriously in years and years and years but I think that there are a few places that have not been on the radar screen, and we want to put it there so that we can work in a preventive mode rather than to see that something is happening and react to it.

So I do appreciate what you are doing and this panel will certainly be working closely with you. Thank you very much.

Ms. THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you.

Mr. NORTH. Thank you.

Mr. PAYNE. I will ask the second committee to come up. Dr. Kaba, Mrs. Challenor and Mr. Ward.

[Pause.]

Mr. PAYNE. Let me welcome the second panel. We are certainly honored to have with us—and they will be testifying in that order—Dr. Herschelle Challenor.

Dr. Challenor retired in October of last year from a long and distinguished career in public service and in education. Most recently she was the Director of Democracy and Governance programs at the U.S. Agency for International Development, the mission in Conakry, Guinea from 2004 to 2006, and prior to that she served as special assistant to former USAID Administrator Constance Barry Newman. Thank you, Dr. Challenor for your continued service, and I would even mention that I understand that you were on the staff of Congressman Diggs who did so much many years ago for Africa.

Also on our second panel is Mr. Haskell Sears Ward of Global Alumina. Mr. Ward served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State at the Office of Policy and Planning during the Carter administration, and has held a variety of jobs in Africa with the Peace Corps and with the Ford Foundation.

Our final witness will be Dr. Lansine Kaba, himself a Guinean by birth. He is the Madeleine Haas Russell Distinguished Visiting Professor at Brandeis University and former president of Africa Studies Association. He served as head of department of African/American Studies from 1986 to 1995 at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I would ask the panel to limit your remarks to 5 minutes if you would. The full written statement will appear in the record, and since we are going to look at the overview, we would switch the order and ask Mr. Kaba, Dr. Kaba, if he would go first, and then we will hear Dr. Challenor and then we will conclude with Mr. Ward.

STATEMENT OF LANSINE KABA, PH.D., MADELEINE HAAS RUSSELL DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSOR, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Mr. KABA. Thank you. Chairman Payne, Ranking Member, I think that, as the first panel just described the situation in Guinea, there is no question that the situation there calls for urgent actions to avoid a catastrophe, as Congressman Smith referred to it. I think it can be saved through pressure and diplomacy, with patience and determination, assistance and self-reliance of the Guinean people.

Major economic and humanitarian interests are at stake and require immediate action. The U.S. can do something about it, and should do something about it to begin improving the conditions. It would be useful to put at work what seems to me a good point in the doctrine of "Transformational Diplomacy" advocated by Secretary Condoleezza Rice. If my reading is correct, this doctrine requires that people in jeopardy of deprivation and tyranny help themselves first.

As you know, Guineans have died in great numbers for their struggle to end corruption and administrative lawlessness and to promote democracy. They believe that it is now incumbent upon the international community and especially the U.S. to do something. In my judgment, the U.S. leadership in this transformational project is paramount.

The United States can do something to avoid what happened in Liberia or what happened in Rwanda. The U.S. leadership is vital. Therefore it should include a clear and forceful statement about

what is unacceptable in Conte's regime. Within this perspective, the statement made by the U.S. Ambassador to Conakry about martial law in February was most appropriate and encouraging but such statements must be followed by concrete actions. President Conte insists on derailing the advance of good government, and he has the tradition of derailing good governance. He had a tradition of not sharing power with anyone.

I also think that the United States should initiate high level discussions with all the states interested in Guinea in order to develop a common position on issues of transfer of power, on the issue of how to give more legitimacy to the current government that is to be formed right now. In other words, I am trying to remind you of what you did years ago in the case of President Abacha of Nigeria. Sanctions and preventive actions are needed.

The U.S. Government should also get American corporations working in Guinea to become major players in good governance. I know that corporations refrain from involvement in political activities in their host countries. That is quite understandable but in their home countries they can do something with trade unions, with the civil society, with women organizations to make people more aware of what is taking place.

The United States should intensify its contact with the Guinean army. I insist upon that. It is clear from the many questions that were raised before the army in Guinea did commit crimes against the Guinean people in January and February, and the extent needs to be determined. The rangers were equipped with American guns, trained by Americans. Did they not contribute to create the berets rouges which is a Presidential guard in Guinea? And to what extent did these help the Liberians?

In other words, it is important for us to know to what extent the American weaponry, the American money were used by the army against Guinean people, and that is contrary with the law as you know very well. The departure of Conte and the vigilant involvement of the new generation of Guinean youth and their fight against embezzlement will reduce corruption I have to tell you. They are the new generation of Guineans now. The young people who were born under Mr. Conte do not want embezzlement and are determined to make it impossible for any new leader to do the kind of thing that Mr. Conte and his government ministers have been able to do.

Conte's decision on January 27, 2007, to delegate part of his power to a fully responsible consensus prime minister and his subsequent appointment of Ambassador Lansana Kouyate to this new office seemed to be a good sign. However, the crisis is far from over. It is far from being resolved because Conte opposes power sharing. Hence, for the sake of peace and security, the U.S. and the international community must use all their leverage to compel Conte to adopt an immediate and realistic plan that involves the different points I am going to tell you.

Establishment of constitutional guarantees that legitimize and turn the authority over to the prime minister as the true chief of government. A broad-based government of transition is necessary. The end of Conte's habit of interfering with activities of the government, the banks and the courts. Submission of army senior officers

to the prime minister. The introduction of major program of judicial and financial assistance to strengthen efficiency and integrity in the administration.

Prime Minister Kouyate's government should be encouraged also to organize and develop, through a kind of well-planned and open dialogue, a national consensus on the framework for the country's future, including the elections. I do not think the election of June will take place. I think June is too close. It has to be reported, but that is another matter. The national dialogue should include the elections, legislative and presidential, and all major developmental and security issues that will make Guinea a respected member of ECOWAS, the Gulf of Guinea countries and international community. For as Guineans like to say, it is imperative to establish the country's visibility and prestige in the world's arena.

All means, I will conclude, must be put in place to oblige President Conte to abide by these principles. If he persists in impeding the advance of democracy and development, he deserves—as other dictators—to be ousted. The survival of the country is far more important than that of an individual. I would like very much to submit the full document I have in the record later on, and by the way, the documents which you have was a draft one, and I spoke to Ms. Johnson. She will get the good one. Thank you very much. [The prepared statement of Mr. Kaba follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LANSINE KABA, PH.D., MADELEINE HAAS RUSSELL
DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSOR, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

PREVENTIVE ACTIONS AGAINST AUTOCRACY IN GUINEA

Chairman Tom Lantos and Distinguished Members of the Committee, I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to discuss with you about the events in the Republic of Guinea. The views being expressed here today represent mine alone, although they are shared by the vast majority of Guineans. Before making the recommendations that I consider urgent to improve the chances for democratic change in Guinea, I will present an introduction addressing the diverse questions that your staff sent to me.

INTRODUCTION

General Situation

Guinea under its current authoritarian, inept, and corrupt regime is disrupting the orderly conceived scheme of development and security involving the whole Gulf of Guinea region. The assets (natural and human resources) of this region import very much in global security terms. The general dissatisfaction of the youth, the civilian and business elites, the general strikes of January and February 2007, which were followed by a ruthless military crackdown, all these point to a deep crisis. In other words, Guinea under Lansana Conté has become another failed state with a leadership that has lost its legitimacy. It is in the U.S. national interest to take preventive measures to avert the worsening of the disaster.

After saying "No" to General De Gaulle in 1958 and opting for liberty, Guinea experienced a one-party state dictatorship under Marxist leaning President Sékou Touré, who cooperated, however, with the U.S. on strategic and investment issues. Guineans have lived under two forms of authoritarian rule. The first, led by Sékou Touré between 1958 and 1984, belonged to what may be labeled as a "totalitarianism of history." It was disciplined and brutal, rigid and visionary, for it obeyed an ethic of government. On the other hand, President Conté's rule is a "one man's authoritarianism." It relies on corruption with impunity, a coercive and disorderly administrative system with deregulation aimed at enriching the president and his acolytes.

Misuse of power, poverty, and danger of Islamic extremism

Misrule and theft have exacerbated poverty and lawlessness. Guinea, with its impoverished population living on less than two dollars a day ranks at the bottom of

the U.N. development index. Guineans have neither electricity nor running water. This is a paradox for a country that has immense agricultural and hydro-electric potential and West Africa's main sources of water.

Income disparity has resulted in a harsh social inequality that has fostered the climate of crime and insecurity that mars Guineans' daily life. Such conditions pose serious security risks in this region including important Muslim communities in war-recovering Liberia and Sierra Leone and civil-war divided Côte d'Ivoire. Impoverished young people may be easily indoctrinated to join terrorist organizations. Indeed young Muslims are responding to newer and more radical forms of Islam.

Like most former colonies, Guinea is an amalgamation of various pre-colonial entities. Sunni Islam appeared there in the middle of the 11th century, in its tolerant and peaceful form carried by traders and itinerant teachers. This pre-colonial integration has somehow contributed to the solidarity and unity of Guinean peoples, although every one is not a Muslim. This Islamic culture has been associated with the Sunni Maliki tradition that has been prevalent in West Africa; it has also involved the two Qadiri and Tijani brotherhoods. These two orders have long dominated the Muslim scene, with their vertical and horizontal structures linking the leaders and the disciples and seeking to serve the spiritual and material needs of their followers. Brotherhoods have been known for both their quietism and their capacity to involve their members into political activities. A newer Islamic doctrine imported from Egypt in the late 1940s radicalized the religious and political ideologies at the time of decolonization. After 1958, President Sékou Touré controlled both the traditional and radical trends by giving Islam an official status and by strengthening the ties with the international Muslim organizations. Touré, with the kings of Saudi Arabia and Morocco, was a co-founder of the Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC). Islam has played a vital role in Guinea.

Economic hardship under the existing regime has fostered a reawakening among some groups against the "corrupt and mixed Islam" associated with the government and against the "evils of modernity," as the unrest in Fouta Djallon in the 1990s indicated. Moreover, the influx of refugees from war-torn neighboring countries, including a sizable number of migrant Lebanese, Iranian and Indo-Pakistani traders who follow the Shi'a Islam, has led to the rise of a small and secretive group of new fundamentalists. These individuals are actively involved in proselytizing on the margins of the larger Muslim communities. It is difficult to predict whether this new trend. If the current crisis persists, there is no doubt that some members of these new radicals may be attracted to Islamic extremism and even to al-Qaida. It is equally thinkable that the teachers and students in the traditional Koranic schools may react against the corruption symbolized by Conté's regime by positively responding to the fundamentalists' call to revive the faith and build a more just society.

From a military council to autocracy

Conté and the senior officers who seized power in 1984 claimed their allegiance to liberalism and human rights. In reality, except for the sectors of trade and production, there was no liberalization, no freedom of expression and association. In 1984, Conté might not have been considered an autocrat. He impressed people by his inquisitiveness, his calm detachment as well as his eagerness to learn. He delegated authority to cabinet members and his aids, thereby making them responsible for their actions. Yet, he presided over a military council that displayed the problems inherent in regimes that are born out of coups d'état, notably, in-fighting amongst the officer-corps that is followed by arrests and summary trials.

The military regime's image drastically changed on July 4, 1985, with the announcement of the discovery of a coup attempt by Conté's foes among Mandinka officers. This maneuver enabled Conté and his cohorts to summarily execute their foes and the dignitaries of the previous regime. This amounted almost to the beginning of genocide. Since then, Colonel Conté, who got promoted to the rank of general, has assumed full power.

In 1989, President Conté he declared his intention to make Guinea a constitutional multiparty democracy, and such a new constitution was approved in December 1990. He ignored, however, the rules by flagrantly tampering with the presidential elections of December 18, 1993. Since then, Guinea has been known for its illegitimate institutions born out of a fraudulent voting system favorable to the president and his ruling party. The state, the judiciary, the army, the school and the health system, all is corrupt.

For President Conté, what is honorable is to act with distinction and to come to terms with the inevitable, that is, to honorably retire from political life. This is the only way to restore his dignity and to deserve a praiseworthy place in history. Guineans can then elaborate a national reconstruction plan under the government man-

dated by the revolution of January–February 2007. They will transform poverty into abundance, by transcending the sorrow of the past or the feelings of revenge. Guinea must not go the way of Rwanda and Liberia. From their spiritual and collective experiences, Guineans know that “the essence of a nation is that all the individuals have many things in common and that all have forgotten many things.” This view of Ernest Renan speaks to the power of dialogue and reconciliation that, acting like a catharsis, creates the energy to progress.

The current crisis and the role of the unions

Guineans have lived in the midst of an unprecedented poverty since 2000. Poverty has propelled them to challenge their government. Consistent with the history of Guinean decolonization, union protests and popular mobilization have galvanized the struggle and have driven Conté into a corner. Having become the impediment to progress, he should relinquish power.

Historically, the unions and the student groups have been the only forces to resist successfully the regime. Like elsewhere in autocratic regimes, “student dissidents have long been a fixture” in Guinean politics, while protest by unions have been periodic. When the two agitations coalesce to form a broad-based movement, the situation becomes critical. For example, in October 1990, civil servants and students challenged the government on social issues. The police wounded many students, and some died. In early December 1990, the army occupied the campus of the University of Conakry. From March until May 1991, a long strike by students and teachers, followed by a general strike, showed the unpopularity of the government. In October 1991, following agitation by students, the city of Kankan was placed on military curfew, and some civilians were killed. The unrest continued in the schools until the end of the year, with many acts of brutality by the security forces. In 2004 and 2005, the students of Conakry and Faranah led a strike that the army violently repressed.

President Conté’s refusal to meet with the opposition leaders, let alone to create a unity government, heightened the crisis. By January 2006, Guinea had entered a period of unrest associated with demands by the unions for greater wages and better social welfare. They also demanded payments of arrears of months of unpaid salaries and compensations. In June 2006, the strike paralyzed the country, and the police, the military, and the presidential guards used deadly force against the throngs of demonstrators. The government made many promises but failed to honor them.

In January 2007, the conditions were ripe for new unrest and even more violent protest. The unions launched a nationwide strike with the support of civil society, students and the whole nation. Their demands shifted from working conditions to political reform. The armed forces, including, it is alleged, Liberian and Bissau fighters, opened fire in war-type operations that made hundreds of victims. This brutal and bloody repression could not stop the protest. President Conté declared martial law, and the whole country was under siege for two weeks. When martial law was removed, the negotiations resumed. The government once again made promises; but it did not carry them out.

On February 9, 2007, the unrest resumed upon the nomination of a prime minister whom the whole nation unanimously rejected. By the intensity of the revolt and the level of the repression, this marked a turning point in the struggle. The entire country became the theater of massive riots, looting, and destruction of government buildings. Hundreds of unarmed civilians were killed and wounded. These events made international news. The union leaders demanded that the president relinquish power to a “consensus” prime minister who will lead the country with his own appointed government until the next presidential election in 2009. The future of Guinea under Conté remains bleak.

Recommendations

Therefore, the situation calls for urgent actions. Although catastrophic, it can be saved through pressure and diplomacy, mobilization and determination, assistance and self-reliance. Major economic and humanitarian interests are at stake and require immediate attention. Furthermore, the U.S., the European Union and their allies have a security interest in this region of West Africa. If Guinea ‘falls apart’, an unpredictable chaos will ensue. This has serious consequences for its people, its neighbors and its partners.

To begin improving the conditions, it will be useful to put at work the doctrine of “Transformational Diplomacy” advocated by Secretary Condoleezza Rice. If my reading is correct, this doctrine requires that people in jeopardy of privation and tyranny help themselves first. Guineans have died in great numbers for their struggle to end corruption and administrative lawlessness and to promote democracy and

development. They believe now that it is incumbent upon the international community, and especially the U.S., the European Union and other Guinea's partners and the Gulf of Guinea countries to assist them in their struggle against a despotic and unproductive regime.

1. In my judgment, the U.S. leadership in this transformational project is paramount. Guineans view the U.S. as a powerful partner in the struggle for good governance, democracy and economic growth. They know that the U.S. has trained hundreds of Guinean troops in counterinsurgency against Liberia's Charles Taylor, and therefore believe that Washington can put strong pressure on President Conté.

The U.S. leadership is vital. Its effort should include a clear and forceful statement about what is unacceptable in Conté's regime. Within this perspective, the American ambassador statement about martial law in February 2007 was most encouraging. Such statements must be followed by concrete actions if President Conté insists on derailing the advance of good governance and democracy. He should know that the U.S. thinks that it is time for him to relinquish power and to remove the military from the political arena.

I also think that the U.S. should initiate high level discussions with other states interested in Guinea in order to develop a common position on issue of transfer of power to democratically elected leaders and to embark on a program of isolation of the regime if Conté refuses to take the path of democracy.

The U.S. government should also get the American corporations working in Guinea to become players in good governance. I know that corporations refrain from open involvement in political matters in their host countries in order not to jeopardize their activities. In their home countries, however, they should apply all their leverage with the government and Congress to improve the climate in Guinea. They can also assist Guinean private sector, women, grassroots and other organizations through seminars and any other useful means. International donors can also affect the cause of change by working with non-governmental organizations that are active in Guinean productive and social arena.

2. The U.S. should intensify its contact with the Guinean army. Training Guinean armed forces in human rights, in civilian-soldiers relations and appreciation of international issues is imperative, given their role in the repression of the strikes in 2006 and 2007. Such projects will require extensive training in English, which may be achieved within the country.
3. In other words, a vigorous political will to change the regime in Guinea is mandatory. Guineans want it and are ready for it. Such an action need not be viewed as interference with Guinea's sovereignty. For Conté tampered with elections to accede to the presidency and to make his party the ruling party at the National Assembly. In the eyes of majority of Guineans he lacks legitimacy.
4. The departure of Conté and the vigilant involvement of the new generation in the fight against embezzlement will reduce corruption and will ensure more investments in Guinea's immense mineral deposits. Such funds will enhance the orderly growth of the economy, will boost Guinean entrepreneurial class and will give the people an opportunity to improve their livelihood. A stronger and more stable Guinea will be a reliable partner in securing peace and stability in the Gulf of Guinea region. Such an achievement will contribute to the multi-faceted war on terror, including drug smuggling, arms-trafficking and religious fanaticism that threaten the whole world.
5. Conté's decision on January 27, 2007 to delegate part of his powers to a fully responsible, 'consensus' prime minister and his subsequent appointment of Ambassador Lansana Kouyaté to this new office seem to be a good sign. However, the crisis is far from being resolved because Conté abhors power sharing. Hence, for the sake of peace and security, the U.S. and the international community must use all their leverage to compel him to adopt an immediate and realistic plan that involves:
 - The establishment of constitutional guarantees that legitimize and strengthen the authority of the prime minister as a true chief of government;
 - A broad based government of transition;
 - The end of Conté's habit of interfering with the activities of government, banks and the courts;

- The submission of army senior officers to the prime minister;
- The introduction of major program of juridical and financial assistance to strengthen efficiency and integrity in the administration.

Prime Minister Kouyaté and his government should be encouraged to organize a national consensus on a framework for future elections and major developmental and security issues that will make Guinea a respected partner in ECOWAS, the Gulf of Guinea countries and in the international community.

All means must be put in place to oblige President Conté to abide by these principles. If he persists in impeding the advance of democracy and development, he deserves, as other dictators, to be ousted. The survival of a country is more important than that of an individual.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Thank you. Dr. Challenor.

STATEMENT OF HERSCHELLE CHALLENGOR, PH.D., CONSULTANT ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS, FORMER DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE TO GUINEA, USAID

Ms. CHALLENGOR. Thank you very much, Chairman Payne, and it is a pleasure to come before this committee where I worked as the staff director for over 3 years. I am pleased to appear before you because of the very critical role this subcommittee has played over the years in providing guidance to U.S. foreign policy and U.S. economic assistance. As requested, my remarks will focus principally on the constraints to democracy in Guinea, and also to make several recommendations for Congressional and administration action.

But with you indulgence, Mr. Chairman, I would like to suggest that peace is not the main issue for Guinea. It has had peace for nearly 50 years but with repression. What Guinea needs instead is political and social justice combined with economic prosperity. In short, good political and economic governance.

In his testimony before the full Committee on Foreign Affairs on March 8, Ambassador Randall Tobias, Director of Foreign Assistance and Administrator for USAID, stated that “the single goal of U.S. foreign assistance is transformational diplomacy.” Specifically, he said, “it is to build sustained democratic, well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.”

In fact, the government of Lansana Conte has not achieved any of those objectives in the 23 years of his rule. On January 22, 2007, following 17 days of a nonviolent, successful national strike led by public and private labor unions, with the assistance of civil society and all segments of the population, Guineans marched peacefully in order to protest another act of duplicity by President Conte.

His response was to instruct security forces to fire mercilessly on the demonstrators. Since the atrocities of January 22 through the end of the President’s imposition of martial law, brutal defense and security forces led by the Presidential guard, the “berets rouges,” the red berets as Dr. Kaba has mentioned, killed at least 130 people, wounded thousands, and security forces have beaten and arrested hundreds of people throughout the country, looted homes, and raped women at will.

Yet unlike the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine or more recently after President Mugabe’s beating of 50 opposition leaders, there has been no condemnation of the Guinean Government by the Secretary of State or even by the Assistant Secretary for Africa.

No praise for the courageous and historic actions of the Guinean people, and perhaps no promise of additional assistance to the newly appointed consensus prime minister. I was pleased to hear Deputy Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield indicate—but with a caveat—that there would be additional support.

In fact, the events in Guinea have gone practically unnoticed here in the United States, and that is why I commend the chairman and the Minority Representative for convening this hearing. But I think it is important to the United States because it was largely the forceful and effective action of the Guinean people that had been supported and encouraged by United States foreign assistance out of the USAID mission in Guinea that really helped bring about these demonstrations. I will not say entirely, but certainly in large measure.

Over the past 2 months, Guinea has undergone—as has been stated—the most remarkable, yet tragic events in its 49-year history because of the national strike. I will skip over that section in the interest of time.

But it was through the will of and the almost 100 percent support of the Guinean people with union leadership, facilitated by mediation efforts of ECOWAS, that succeeded in convincing President Lansana Conte to invite Lansana Kouyate to serve as the consensus prime minister and chief of government. The victory was achieved at an intolerably high price.

But I think, as everyone else has said, it is certainly not over, and as you look at the history of President Conte's rule over the past 23 years it has really been one step forward and two step backwards, a history of renegeing on commitments, and there is no reason to believe that this pattern of action, which has been consistent, will stop. Nearly 1 month after the prime minister has been appointed, we still do not have members of the new cabinet, and one of the reasons was the one that Linda Thomas-Greenfield mentioned, President Conte has not signed the decree dissolving the incumbent cabinet.

This is a problem. It is a major problem. I checked the internet sources today, and they have to be from Guinea because we do not have good information in the United States, and the prime minister is saying, "The President is not blocking me," but in fact he is, and I think that this will be a continuing problem that I hope U.S. diplomacy and action will address.

Just very briefly and I think it is important to mention the reasons for the strike because they reveal what is outlined in the annex to my revised text: The problems that have been going on historically. The President's interference with judicial decisions by liberating—and he went to the prison himself and liberated two citizens—Mamadou Sylla and Fode Soumah, following their arrest for corruption.

The inability of the Central Bank to provide foreign reserves required by the commercial banks to operate and to conduct trade operations in the country. The demonstrated inability of the government to stop the depreciation of the Guinean franc leading to inflation and the dramatic decline of Guinean purchasing power.

The violation of Article 8 of the Guinea's constitution on respect for the independence of labor unions, and notable severe incapacity

of the President to govern, because of the increasing decline in his health. You know he has diabetes, leukemia, and after his recent trip to Switzerland he was diagnosed with a brain tumor and he has been unable to perform the duties conferred upon him. In fact, at one point during the strike when religious leaders and civil society organizations met with him, he said, "What strike? I did not know there was a strike." So he has been completely distant from most of the affairs of state.

The notorious indifference until a couple of weeks ago the National Assembly Supreme Court and the National Economic and Social Council in this calamitous situation, and the fact that the leaders no longer have viable officials to talk to because the tripartite accords from the strike that ended May 3, 2006 and the strike that ended in June 2006 have not been respected.

I suggest that the United States has a special responsibility, Mr. Chairman, to assist Guinea. It was largely as a result of the United States' refusal in 1959 to provide assistance to President Sekou Toure that Guinea became under the influence of the then Soviet Union. Sekou Toure created a Marxist state. It was a command economy. It was a system of informants down to the local level, and he instilled a climate of fear and intimidation. Over 5,000 people were killed or died because of starvation or torture in Camp Boiro, which I would consider the "gulag," if you will, of President Sekou Toure. Over 2 million people fled the country between 1961 and 1980.

Guinea matters to the United States I would suggest for four reasons. First, because it has been an island of stability in this very volatile subregion of West Africa. I am skipping over my text. Secondly—and Haskell Ward will give you more information—because it possesses the world's largest supply of bauxite. I have heard it is more like 61 percent of the world's supply. It is said that when Australia, the second largest possessor of bauxite, runs out, Guinea will have bauxite for an additional 200 years.

Thirdly, 85 percent of Guinea's population is Muslim. Many of the younger clerics are studying in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and some of them return to Guinea with Wahaabist points of view. During the 2 years of my stay, there was a gradual increase of women who were wearing the burkas. I am not suggesting that there is an Islamist movement yet in Guinea, but I think if the United States fails to act, disappointment and alienation might be created so that such might be possible.

During the time I was there, I never felt—except once—any anti-American feeling at all but I think it is important to note that the commercial class is dominated by Lebanese. Many of them support Hezbollah, and they live and thrive through the protection of Mamadou Sylla and other allies of the Conte government, and some would argue—and I certainly would suggest—to the detriment of Guinean businessmen.

I think Guinea is important to the United States because it is the one Francophone country that looks first to the United States as a model and a friend and not to France, and I think we should capitalize on that. We have many distinguished Guineans, such as our co-panelist Dr. Lansine Kaba, who live in our country, and we all remember with some embarrassment that it was Amadou

Diallo, a Guinean, who was riddled by bullets, 50 I believe in New York and was killed as he was just trying to pull out the keys from his pocket.

Let me turn rapidly because of time to my views on the main constraints to democracy in Guinea, and I have listed seven. Poorly educated, unenlightened leadership with little commitment to address the concerns and needs of the Guinean people. Secondly, the prevalence of traditional beliefs and patterns of behavior that often are consistent with Western democratic values. Mr. Chairman, I think we as Americans forget that democracy is first a system of values, and it is those values that inform the institutions. Just imposing the institutions does not create a democracy as we have seen in many countries in Africa where elections have been distorted.

Thirdly, an absence of effective constraint on executive power. You have the institutions of Parliament and a Supreme Court. They do not do their jobs. They are controlled by the majority party. Fourthly, a history of a quiescent, mutually distrustful, repressed civil society fearful of confronting authority.

Mr. North mentioned the study that USAID conducted in Guinea in March 2005. I was one of the people who participated in that study, and one of the observations was that Guineans tended to use what is called a "turtle defense." When there is trouble, they retreat to their homes, they take cover, and adopt a low profile because that is what they had to do under Sekou Toure's rule.

Historical isolation in the subregion, particularly with respect to the flow of information. Abject poverty and underdevelopment. And then I devote a large part of my testimony to the nature of our foreign assistance, both the way we do it and what we fund. I will not go through those points, but they are in the testimony.

Finally, sir, with respect to the recommendations for Congress and the administration. It seems clear that Prime Minister Kouyate is committed to genuine reform. The question is whether or not he will be allowed to make those changes. But should he demonstrate that he is, Congress should approve a \$3 million to \$5 million supplemental assistance package to Guinea to support a political transition, and I list in the prepared statement some of the things that I think these funds could be used for.

Secondly, if the United States will not lead, it should at least support the efforts of the European Union and others in the international community to bring the perpetrators of the atrocities, beginning with the President, to justice. Thirdly, President Conte needs to be taken to another country, as was done with Idi Amin, President Aristide, Charles Taylor and others. His continuing presence is a constraint.

Fourthly, the United States should take the lead along with the other actors in the international community, particularly the World Bank, African Development Bank and the European Union, to provide reliable and affordable electricity to Guinea and train managers to properly administer and maintain these facilities. We need to stop funding only social development, Mr. Chairman. We need to really do serious economic development. If people had jobs, you would have more peace in Guinea.

Fifth, to use the second U.S./Guinea Binational Consultations, once it is clear that this is a fundamental change, to discuss concrete financial and technical assistance deliverables that the U.S. will provide to support a genuine transition in order to promote good political and economic governance. Finally, the Congress needs to rethink its foreign assistance programs.

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman. I was sitting where some of your staff members were sitting in the full House Committee on International Relations when former Congressman Steve Solarz recommended that \$20 million be given to India when Indira Gandhi made some democratic changes in the mid-1970s. No one blinked an eye. It was immediately entered into the bill, and I think that despite the situation that we all are concerned about in Iraq and Afghanistan, certainly more can be done for Guinea.

Let me conclude very quickly. I am convinced that the government of President Conte has no interest in good political or economic governance. Ministers are afraid to take initiatives because of fear of reprisals; the vacuum in political leadership and at the level of the Presidency has encouraged top officials to take all they can.

As you know, last year Transparency International declared Guinea to be the most corrupt country in Africa. If it has done nothing else, in response to your comments, Congressman Smith, I think the brutality of the military has convinced the Guinean people that they no longer have any taste for military rule. So I think that concern has now been handled.

My conversations with civil society leaders in Guinea during the strike make me believe that this has been a major turning point, and that they will continue to be vigilant in their quest for justice, improved economic well-being and good governance. They have shed their blood and now require the full support of the United States and others in the international community to prevent any recurrence of such events. Not to do so would make hypocrisy of the government's stated commitment to transformational diplomacy and democracy throughout the world. I thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Challenor follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HERSCHELLE CHALLENOR, PH.D., CONSULTANT ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS, FORMER DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE TO GUINEA, USAID

Mr. Chairman,
Members of the Subcommittee,

I am very pleased to appear before this important Subcommittee that has distinguished itself over the years by providing pivotal insights and policy guidance on U.S. foreign policy and economic assistance to Africa. As requested, my remarks this afternoon will focus on the challenges to democracy in Guinea and several policy recommendations to Congress and the administration to address this situation. However, with your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, I first want to suggest that the key issue for Guinea is not peace, it has experienced nearly a half of century of relative peace imposed by authoritarianism. What Guinea needs instead is political and social justice combined with economic prosperity, in short good political and economic governance.

Over the past two months, Guinea has undergone the most remarkable, yet tragic events in the 49 years of its independence. As a result the third national strike in Guinea begun January 10, 2007 led by the joint public and private USTG-CNTG labor union federations with the active support of Guinean civil society, the Guinean people assisted by the mediation of the Economic Commission for West Africa (ECOWAS) envoys, have succeeded in convincing President Lansana Conté to appoint a consensus Prime Minister and Chief of Government.

This victory was achieved at an intolerably high price of at least 130 reported deaths, thousands of wounded, and untold numbers of people arrested, beaten and women raped by of Guinean defense and security forces. President Conté and other persons responsible for these flagrant crimes against humanity should be brought to justice. President Conté's appointment of a consensus Prime Minister on February 27th hopefully will signal the beginning of the end of 23 years of his patrimonial, kleptocratic rule since 1984. The new Prime Minister, Lansana Kouyaté from Kouroussa is the former Representative to the Côte d'Ivoire of the intergovernmental Association of Francophone States and he has served in several ambassadorial posts abroad.

However, in view of the pattern of President Conté's "one step forward and two steps backwards" political actions over the period of his regime and especially during the past three years, it is difficult to believe he will relinquish all political power. Nearly one month has passed since Lansana Kouyaté's appointment and, although he announced last week that the new government will have only 19 instead of 33 ministers and that and that the incumbent cabinet members should resign, he still has not named the members of his cabinet. A Guinea Internet news service reported on March 20 that the Cabinet will be announced this week, but also noted that the President will have 3 ministers who report directly to him, the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister. Since President Conté's previous actions have demonstrated that he does not live up to his commitments and during the strike he told union leaders that he has "never lost a battle," that he "has killed before and will kill them," the crisis in Guinea had not ended. Therefore, this is a critical juncture in what could either lead to a decisive transition of power in Guinea, or more unrest, and even conflict that could create political instability in the neighboring states of Liberia and Sierra Leone that are trying to rebuild their societies after their own devastating civil wars.

An examination of the reasons the USTG-CNTG gave in announcing their national strike on January 10, 2007, which are listed below, reveal the failure of the Guinean government to respect its own commitments. Union leaders called this strike—the third one since the first union national strike February 27, 2006, because of the

- President's interference with judicial decisions by liberating in December 2 citizens, Mamadou Sylla, a businessman and Fodé Soumah,¹ following their arrest for corruption;
- Inability of the Central Bank to provide foreign reserves required by the commercial banks in Guinea for trade operations, which resulted in a large Guinea government (GoG) debt to the Central Bank, thereby increasing the cost of living for Guineans;
- Demonstrated inability of the GoG to stop the depreciation of the Guinean Franc, leading to inflation and the dramatic decline of Guineans' purchasing power;
- Violation of Article 18 of Guinea's Constitution and ILO Conventions Nos. 87, 98, which guarantee the independence of labor unions;
- Notable severe incapacity of the President [after seven years of increasing failing health and recent dementia] to correctly perform the duties conferred upon him by the Guinean people;
- Notorious indifference of the National Assembly, Supreme Court, and the National Economic and Social Council to this calamitous situation; and the
- Fact that the USTG-CNTG no longer have any credible leaders either from the government or the private sector (*Patronat*) [following Mamadou Sylla's arrest and removal as President of the *Patronat*] to meet with in order to ensure the full and comprehensive implementation of the tripartite accords (among the GoG, *Patronat*, and labor unions) agreed to on March 3 and June 16, 2006.

What is clear is that the labor union movement, as a result of its exceptional organization, broad appeal to issues that resonate with Guinean citizens, and the refusal of its two main leaders, Dr. Ibrahima Fofana and Ms. Rabiadou Serah Diallo,

¹Mamadou Sylla, President of the *Patronat* (association of businessmen in Guinea) is an intimate friend of President Conté, who stands accused of owing around \$32 million to Guinea's Central Bank BCGC and Fodé Soumah, former Minister of Youth and Sports, another close presidential ally, who was Vice President of the BCGC when Sylla borrowed the millions from the Bank and until he was fired in late 2006 was the Minister of Youth and Sports. The last Prime Minister Cellou Dalein Diallo and most recently the Minister of Presidential Affairs Fodé Bangoura, were fired for having tried to make Sylla repay the funds owed.

to use their success as a stepping stone to political power, have replaced the opposition political parties as the institution that commands the respect and full cooperation of the Guinean people.

The U.S. Special Responsibility to Assist Guinea

Regrettably the events in Guinea have been virtually noticed in the United States. Yet, it was in large measure America's refusal to aid the first President of Guinea, Sékou Touré, in 1959, after the French abruptly ended economic support in an effort to punish Guinea for opting for independence in 1958, that forced Touré to align himself with the Soviet Union and establish 26 years of brutal Marxist rule in that country. Touré instilled a climate of fear and intimidation from 1961 until his death in 1984. Camp Boiro in the capital city of Conakry was Guinea's "Gulag" where nearly 5,000 political detainees including the country's intellectual, military, commercial and political elite were killed from starvation, torture, or gunfire. Nearly 2 million people fled the country between 1961-1984. The military took over after Touré died in March 1986 in American hospital and then appointed General Lansana Conté as President. He has ruled with an iron hand ever since.

Guinea matters to the United States for at least four reasons. First, because this West African country of more than 9 million people has been the island of stability in the volatile sub-region of Africa that includes the neighboring states of Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea Bissau that have all experienced serious political tensions or civil wars over the past decade. Senegal and Mauritania have just had their elections, but Benin, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea have all scheduled important national elections this spring. Political instability in Guinea might derail the elections in Liberia and Sierra Leone and require the postponement of Guinea's legislative elections that were to take place in June 2007. Secondly, Guinea is important because it possesses the world largest supply of bauxite required for aluminum and also gold and diamonds. North America's Alcoa-Alcan consortium and Global Alumina are the largest investors in bauxite in Guinea. In addition, Hyperdynamics, an American company, recently received the concession to explore offshore oil in the Gulf of Guinea. Thirdly, eight-five percent of Guinea's population is Muslim and many of its younger clerics study in Saudi Arabia and Egypt and return to Guinea as proponents of the more conservative Wahaabi beliefs that inspired Al Qaeda. The Lebanese, many of whom support Hezbollah, dominate the middle class export-import sector. Fourthly, Guinea has been the one Francophone African country that looks first to the United States, rather than to France, as a friend and a model. In addition, the United States initiated the first U.S.-Guinea Binational Consultations in March 2006 and just invested in a modern multimillion dollar Embassy inaugurated in Guinea last summer. Moreover, many Guineans, such as our distinguished co-panelist Dr. Lansine Kaba and Cellou Dalein Diallo, the reformist former Prime Minister of Guinea fired by Lansana Conté in April 2006, have immigrated to or reside in the United States. And we should never forget Amadou Diallo, the innocent Guinean brutally riddled with bullets by New York city police a few years ago, when he reached in his pockets to get his keys.

Since it was U.S. government assistance, managed by the USAID Mission in Guinea, that supported civic education and civil society advocacy training that contributed to the new assertiveness and increased participation in the political process of the Guinean people, I contend that our nation has a responsibility to provide its full financial, technical and moral support to them. Civil society's peaceful initiatives to bring about political change are consistent with Guinea's Constitution. Article 19 of the Guinean Constitution provides that, "The Guinean people freely and with sovereign authority determine their institutions and the economic and social organization of the Nation."

On March 13, the Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice expressed U.S. concern about the 50 members of the opposition beaten in Zimbabwe as she should have. But, there has been no condemnation either by the Secretary or the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa of the atrocities in Guinea. That is why I commend the Subcommittee for inviting the representative of the State Department to make a statement this afternoon.

Prior to outlining recommendations for policy actions by the Congress and the Administration, I would like to share with you, as requested, my views about the main constraints to Democracy in Guinea.

Views on the Main Constraints to Democracy in Guinea

In response your main question about my observations on the biggest challenges to democracy in Guinea, I would list the following.

1. *Poorly educated, unenlightened leadership with little commitment to address the needs and concerns of Guinean citizens.* President Lansana Conte has been critically ill with diabetes and leukemia for at least 7 years. His health started deteriorating rapidly in 2005 such that he rarely attends Cabinet meetings, lapses into comas, and has demonstrated dementia over the past year. He spends most of his time on his farm about 10 minutes from Conakry and rarely attends Cabinet meetings
2. *The prevalence of traditional beliefs and patterns of behavior that often is inconsistent with western democratic values.* We Americans tend to forget that democracy is first a system of values and it is those values that inform the institutional framework of the political system. Without democratic values the functioning of regular multi-party elections and democratic institutions, as we have seen in many parts of the world will be flawed. In countries like Guinea, where there is a 44.2% literacy rate and most people live in rural areas, there is a tendency for people to act more like “subjects” than “citizens” with rights to question authority and engage in the political process. Many believe that the President serves at the will of God and they as mere mortals have little power to change that reality. Family and society pressure remain powerful forces that encourage conformity and one’s primordial identity to and responsibility for the well-being of the extended family and ethnic group remains sacred obligations.
3. *Absence of effective constraints on executive power.* Rather than serve as constraints to executive branch power, the National Assembly and the Supreme Court in Guinea have historically reinforced decisions taken by President Conté.
4. *The historically quiescent, mutually distrustful civil society fearful of confronting authority* because of the legacy of the First Republic in Guinea that required ideological conformity, and engaged in brutal repression, arbitrary arrests, detention, and torture. That is why the recent massive non-violent march in Guinea on January 22 is historic.
5. *Historical isolation within its sub-region and with respect to a free flow of diverse sources of information.* Not only do most Guineans know relatively little about the rest of the world, but also few people in the world know much about Guinea, hence, except since this January, there has little active pressure by international human rights NGOs and peace groups.
6. *Abject poverty and underdevelopment* which leave little time for active political participation, or resources to run for office or exert leverage on political leaders, establish independent newspapers or radio stations. It is costly for poor governments to fund elections
7. *Modalities and focus of U.S. foreign assistance policies*
 - *There is no Congressional earmark for D/G programs as there exists for education and health sector funding;* hence when funds are cut, D/G programs suffer most. In Guinea D/G funds historically accounted for less than 10% of the USAID Mission’s budget. In addition, while D/G funds have increased overall in recent years, the State Department administers the majority of these resources as ESF funds or special program in other regions of the world.
 - *Virtually no financial flexibility to respond quickly to important new developments, except for humanitarian assistance.* Congress did not grant authority to former USAID Administrator Andrew Natis to use quick disbursing transition assistance funds in fragile states, such as Guinea.
 - *Greater centralization of planning and budgeting authority in Washington, not the field,* particularly since the appointment of Ambassador Randall Tobias as the new Administrator and Director of Foreign Assistance.
There is a greater chance for economic development to occur when assistance is multisectoral and country specific.
 - *Inadequate understanding of the resources or time required to bring about behavioral change, which is the goal of development; and the unpredictability of funding levels*
 - *Possibility for “blowback” of D/G development activities if they are unbalanced or not sustained.* For example USAID/Guinea supported training for civil society activism knowing that there was widespread impunity for illegal actions by GoG officials, without doing anything to foster respect for the rule of law.

- *Prohibition or unwillingness to directly fund local NGOs.* The Congress insists that high percentage of U.S. economic assistance is implemented by American PVOs with the result that at least 70% of the aid funds go to American technical assistance or equipment. More than 40 years after beginning U.S. foreign aid to Africa, this policy should be revisited.
- *USAID does not really fund economic growth which is necessary to sustain democracy, but rather social development,* which instead increases citizen demands on fragile governments, without providing the income generation required to sustain the recurring costs of social development programs. The Millennium Challenge Corporation programs have the possibility of addressing some of these issues, but I understand they have been slow to disburse funds.

Recommendations for Congress and the Administration

Taking into account the current situation in Guinea and my observations about the constraints to democracy in that country, I would like to make the following recommendations.

1. *Once is it clear that Prime Minister Kouyaté is committed to genuine reform, Congress should provide to Guinea as soon as possible at least \$3 to \$5 million in emergency supplemental assistance to support its political transition.* These funds should be used to (1) support a policy planning process to develop and implement a plan for genuinely democratic economic, political and social governance; (2) fund a comprehensive training process to improve the management capacity of ministers and other top level government officials, including local government Prefects; (3) provide improved computer and internet capacity for labor union and civil society headquarters and provide funds for their programs; (4) strengthening the rule of law; and (5) expand technical training and equipment support for private radio and the press; and (6) provide additional resources to support free and fair elections, training for political parties, and technical training and logistical support if Guinea establishes an independent Electoral Commission.

Comprehensive Planning Process—The GoG has never undertaken a comprehensive planning process to find out how to establish genuinely democratic political governance, develop a free market economy, and invest in its people. This transition period presents a unique opportunity to do so. Among the priority areas that require attention are: how to mobilize and effectively use more local and international resources to improve and maintain infrastructure development e.g., reliable urban and rural electricity, potable water and establish a public works program that will create jobs; establishing a merit based recruitment and performance appraisal system in the national and local civil service; transforming the judicial system, especially the legal, regulatory and judicial framework for private investment; ending export and import monopolies that stifle competition; increasing agricultural productivity and raising produce standards to meet requirements of external export markets; strengthening educational accountability at all levels; fostering entrepreneurship; and creation of an institutional framework that can organize genuinely free and fair elections.

Management Training—Virtually all Guinean adults were socialized directly or indirectly via their parents, with whom many still live, by the authoritarian practices of Sékou Touré. Therefore, they resist taking initiatives and while many have good technical skills, they have inadequate management capability. Guinea needs a critical mass of officials to develop a new work ethic in support of the interests of the nation, rather than their personal, family, ethnic or regional identities. U.S. should support a comprehensive management training program that focuses on: management and planning techniques, leadership skills and ethics, budget planning and fiscal accountability, and computer skills. This should not be one-off training, but rather an intense, hands-on, one week training process in-country every quarter over a year—with assignments in between. Such training should take place over a three year period at least with a new cohort each year. The 2 to 4 best performers in the class should be included in an annual State Department Public Diplomacy International Visitors program on National Governance and Public Policy.

Technical Support for Labor Unions and Civil Society Organizations—Recent events have demonstrated that civil society organizations have “graduated” as a result of past USAID training efforts. The Unions and National Council of Civil Society Organizations now need better equipped office space with

computers and regular access to the internet as well as funds for town hall public affairs meetings.

Rule of Law—There is virtually no respect for the rule of law in Guinea. The U.S. should provide funds for law courses, such as Human Rights, Torts, and Commercial Law at both the Ministry of Justice in service training program and the Law Program at the university. A Ministry of Justice official told me last summer that of the approximately 250 judges in Guinea, none has been hired in the past 10 years. They will be recruiting new judges and this presents an opportunity for training in ethics and accountability. The courts are corrupt and government officials, police, and soldiers, constantly prey upon Guinean citizens with impunity. The average citizen has no reliable recourse to the law or protection from the predation of government officials and defense and security forces. I have personally witnessed police shakedowns of taxi drivers, transporters and average citizens in broad daylight, and have seen security forces strip naked, beat, then arrest youth in the streets for no apparent reason. It is not uncommon for Prefects to require farmers to give them cattle or farm produce, and persons unlawfully arrested have to pay funds to prison officials to get released.

Electoral Assistance—Guinea has never had a free and fair election since President Conté authorized multi-party elections in 1992. Training for political parties to develop successful campaign techniques and membership development is critical before the next legislative elections. Training and institutional support for an independent Electoral Commission as well as for national and international election observers. A more transparent electoral process will lead to a more politically diverse, independent, and better functioning National Assembly. Therefore the new legislators and their staff will require training on drafting legislation, National Assembly procedures, improving constituent services, and organizing town hall meetings in their districts.

2. *Expand Support for Private Media*—The GoG has historically controlled radio and television and restricted stringers for the international media. Consequently, Guineans know little about the rest of the world, are not given air time to comment on their government's policies, and while the EU countries are better informed, other people the world—particularly Americans—know virtually nothing about Guinea. It took at least 18 months after the GoG finally authorized private media in August 2005 for it to provide licenses to 3 private radio stations. During the recent strike, private radio stations and at least one of the private Guinea internet news sources were shut down, some of their equipment was destroyed, and both radio and print journalists were arrested. The U.S. government also should accelerate negotiations for Voice of America (VOA) FM radio transmissions in Guinea.
3. *Even if the U.S. will not lead, it should support efforts by the EU and others in the international community to bring the perpetrators of the atrocities in Guinea during the strike to justice.* Guineans, who have an extraordinary capacity to forgive, desperately need to have an in-depth conversation about government ordered past human rights abuses under President Sékou Touré and President Conté. More than 6 of USAID/Guinea's and undoubtedly at least as many, if not more, of the Embassy Foreign Service Nationals are wives, sons, daughters or other close relatives of Guineans who perished in Camp Boiro.
4. *Relocate President Conté to another country, as was done with Idi Amin, Aristide, and Charles Taylor and others, since Conté will remain a continuing constraint to democratic governance in Guinea*
5. *Take the lead in an international effort working through the World Bank and African Development Bank, in cooperation with the European Union, to provide reliable and affordable electricity in Guinea and train managers to properly administer and maintain these facilities.* Guinea is the watershed of West Africa. This will stimulate jobs; improve education and health care services, and have other tangible development impacts. One reason there are no whistle blowers in the Guinea government and high level officials do virtually anything to retain their positions is that there are no alternative private jobs with comparable pay. It should be noted that the average official salary for high level Guinean officials is around \$75–\$100 per month.
6. *Use the 2nd U.S.-Guinea Binational Consultations, once it is clear that Kouyaté is serious about fundamental change, to discuss concrete financial and technical assistance deliverables the U.S. can provide to support a gen-*

guine political transition and good political and economic governance in Guinea. The U.S. should make it clear that continued assistance will be based upon genuine improvements.

7. *Finally the Congress needs to rethink its foreign assistance programs in Africa.* Approximately thirty years ago that the House Committee on Foreign Affairs proposed a major restructuring of U.S. foreign economic assistance, that accorded priority to "Basic Human Needs." Times have changed. What the recent crisis in Guinea and virtually every other post independence conflict in Africa demonstrate is that underdevelopment, combined with poor governance, breeds instability and conflict. Continuing what has become a social development instead of an a genuine economic development program that generates additional resources for economic growth wastes taxpayers resources and fosters continued dependency of developing countries, or worse, as fragile states collapse under the pressure of a more activist population who demand more support for social programs.

Lest Members of the Subcommittee consider the recommended \$3 to \$5 million in supplemental transition assistance to be extravagant, I recall in the late seventies during a mark-up of the foreign aid bill, that Stephen Solarz proposed a \$20 million addition to India's foreign aid to send a signal of the U.S. appreciation of then Indira Gandhi's policies to implement more democratic governance following a particularly period of political restrictions. It sailed through without comment.

As can be seen in the table below, USAID funding for democracy and governance programs in Guinea that historically was only around 10% of the total budget has declined in recent years. I am pleased to see in the FY 08 CBJ an important increase in funding requested for Guinea D/G programs. Although funding levels are still far below the budget levels received by USAID/Guinea in the past. Moreover as the figures of an estimated \$13,500,000 in FY 2007 and a requested \$15,593,000 for FY 2008 are the amounts of the integrated budgets of USAID and the Department of State, it is difficult to know what amounts are requested for USAID alone.

Table 1—USAID/Guinea Budget by Sector from FY 1999 through FY 2006

USAID Strategic Objectives	FY 1999 (\$000)	FY 00 (\$000)	FY 01 (\$000)	FY 02 (\$000)	FY 03 (\$000)	FY 04 (\$000)	FY05 (\$000)	FY06 (\$000)
Natural Resource Management	5,100	3,622	5,638	6,279	5,722	4,824	3,043	
Family Planning and Health	6,025	7,775	6,590	6,950	6,610	6,350	7,050	
Basic Education	4,836	5,005	4,994	5,700	7,701	6,489	5,089	
Democracy and Governance	2,280	2,767	1,300	1,713	1,985	2,220	600	17,282
Post-Conflict Transition (Special Objective)				500	1,500			
PL 480 Title II	2,248	8,965	10,712	3,331	4,438	4,474	11,676	8,330
OFDA			1,020					
Total:	20,489	28,134	30,254	24,473	27,956	24,337	27,458	25,612

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Your testimony, Mr. Ward.

STATEMENT OF MR. HASKELL S. WARD, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, GLOBAL ALUMINA CORPORATION

Mr. WARD. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity. Members of your committee, thank you very much for the

opportunity to appear before you. It has been some years since I was at the State Department. Now 30 years, a coincidence, 30 years ago the Government of Guinea came to our offices at the State Department indicating that they wanted to change partners, and we had long and extensive discussions with them about that change which led to a strengthened set of relationships.

Let me point out another coincidence. I am sitting here with Dr. Challenor and she and I both started out in Africa together. I will not say for her but for me it was 45 years ago, and we were both students in Atlanta in the sit-in movement in that place, and we both went on a program called Operation Crossroads Africa. I was going to become a psychiatrist, and I came back, and I spent the next 45 years dealing with Africa.

My first visit to Guinea was in 1968 when I was on the staff of Operation Crossroads Africa, and it is a country that I know quite well. Dr. James Robinson was the founder of Operation Crossroads Africa and was a good friend of Sekou Toure, and I was a part of the generation that admired Sekou Toure because he represented to us the strong African leaders. We were to find in later years that our faith and confidence in him was misplaced.

Guinea is a country that I know very well, having visited there for the first time in the late 1960s, as I said. Since that time, I have had the pleasure of returning to the country more than 40 times. I have long admired both the spirit, resolve and pride of the people of Guinea. After withdrawing from the French community in the 1950s, Guinea was regarded as the most independent country in West Africa. As such, Guineans are much admired and respected by Africans throughout the continent. In fact, Africa's various independence movements owe much to this nation.

Nelson Mandela's first passport was given to him by the nation of Guinea. However, in large part because of this independent streak during the last three decades Guinea has been isolated from funding and trading opportunities with Europe and the United States, driving the country into deep and deeper poverty. Nevertheless, the country has been a beacon of stability in Africa. It is rich in gold, diamonds, timber, iron ore. It has the largest untapped reserves in the world of iron ore and of course bauxite.

I am here to address the following three issues: The role of bauxite; the role the bauxite industry has played in the development of Guinea, how the recent crisis in Guinea has affected both the bauxite industry as well as the country's overall economy; and the prospects and challenges facing Guinea's private sector today and in the future.

Aluminum is one of the most plentiful metals in the earth's crust. It occurs naturally in the form of bauxite, an ore containing aluminum oxide commonly called alumina. Alumina is extracted from bauxite ore through a refining process. Refined alumina is the primary raw material used for aluminum smelting. As a general rule, it takes two tons of alumina to produce one ton of aluminum.

Aluminum products compete with other materials such as steel and plastics for automotive and building applications. It competes with magnesium and titanium composites for aerospace and defense applications, and it competes with wood and vinyl for building and construction applications. Aluminum's diverse characteris-

tics—particularly it is light weight—resistance to corrosion, high strength and ability to be recycled have made it an essential for modern economies. In this respect, it is considered to be a strategic mineral.

Guinea possesses some of the world's highest quality bauxite and more than one-third of the world's known recoverable bauxite. Over the last several decades, Guinea has exported in the range of more than 15 million tons per year, making the country the world's largest exporter of bauxite. In particular, Guinea bauxite supplies nearly 50 percent of the United States and Canadian import markets. On a global scale, it is estimated that up to 15 percent of all primary aluminum is produced from Guinea bauxite.

At the present time, Guinea has three active bauxite mining operations located at Boke, Fria and Kindia, each of which has been in operation for over 25 years. The Boke mine exports more bauxite to offsite refineries than any other bauxite mine in the world, supplying more than 12 million tons per year of bauxite to alumina refineries in North America and Europe.

The mine at Fria supplies bauxite to a refinery in Friguia, Guinea, Africa's only existing alumina refinery. This refinery is currently owned and operated by Alumina Company of Guinea, which is owned by RUSAL and the Government of Guinea. RUSAL is the Russian Aluminum Corporation. The refinery produces up to 700,000 tons per year of alumina and exports alumina primarily to RUSAL's smelter in Russia and the Ukraine.

The mine at Kindia is owned by Societe des Bauxites de Kindia. SBK's mine is leased and operated by Campagnie des Bauxite de Kindia, a subsidiary of RUSAL. This mine exports approximately 2 million tons per year of bauxite primarily to RUSAL's alumina refinery in Russia and the Ukraine. The bauxite produced at the existing mine in the prefecture of Boke is particularly rich in alumina content and economically recoverable bauxite is spread over many square miles. The mine is operated by CBG under a 75-year concession awarded by the Government of Guinea in the mid 1960s. CBG is owned 51 percent by HALCO, a consortium of integrated aluminum companies consisting of ALCOA, ALCAN and Dadco and 49 percent by the Government of Guinea.

ALCOA serves as the contract mine operator on behalf of CBG. Guinea's mining sector driven principally by bauxite is responsible for roughly 80 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings. On the other hand, Guinea once Francophone Africa's largest agricultural producer is now a net importer of food. Because of its vast depth and quality of bauxite reserves, Guinea will always play a central role in the industry.

In 2001, Global Alumina, my company, and the Government of Guinea entered into an agreement to develop a second alumina refinery in Sangaredi. Until the Global Alumina agreement which was finalized in 2005, the country had been unable to attract investors to address the country's longstanding desire for developing an additional refinery with its attendant value-added benefits. Because of that agreement, other companies have followed suit and agreements have now been reached with ALCOA, ALCAN, ALCANADA for another refinery, and negotiations are underway with other key companies in the industry.

Given the cost advantages associated with in-country production and despite the challenging political and infrastructure environments, the country has been able the last 2 years to attract other major investors. Guinea appears poised for an economic takeoff. While currently political uncertainty exists, there is a broadly based consensus in the country which supports the need to expand the economic value of the country's abundant natural resource endowments.

Guinea's future is directly related to the country's ability to attract investors and this part of the puzzle now appears to have been solved. Global Alumina's refinery project, representing a capital cost of \$3 billion, is not only the largest such investment in Guinea's history, it is also one of the largest such investments in the history of sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, other large investments are currently on the drawing board for the country.

The projected economic benefits to Guinea of Global Alumina's investment portend the beginning of the development of both a cash economy and a middle class. The greatest real threat that Guinea confronts is the massive poverty of its citizens. When a sack of rice consumes one-half of a Guinean's monthly salary, there can be little prospect of political stability.

Global Alumina's experience in Guinea is instructive for others. Despite the country's reputation for French corruption, neither Global Alumina nor its officers were ever approached for any consideration in return for a favorable government decision during the more than 5 years that it took to reach an accord and ratification of its basic agreement.

The recent crisis in Guinea was characterized by a national strike followed by the imposition of martial law, widespread looting, the killing of demonstrators by the Guinea army and a near total collapse of commerce to include the closing of most work sites and facilities. The exportation of bauxite was also interrupted. There are few if any parallels to this level of discontent in Guinea's post independence history.

This discontent has been fueled by the apparent decline in health of President Conte as has been discussed so often here today and the uncertainty of succession. Guinea's inability to afford fuel and food and the continued inflationary decline of the Guinean franc which led to a combustible mixture of social and political forces which found expression this year.

Mr. PAYNE. Excuse me, Mr. Ward. We are going to have to vacate the room soon. So if you could—

Mr. WARD. I can leave the rest.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes.

Mr. WARD. I can leave the rest of my statement for the record, and I would open myself up for questions. I would only say in closing, Mr. Chairman, that Dr. Challenor was there in the governance program in the country and played a very important and vital role up until the time of her departure and was very important in many of the activities. I would also say that we have had the best relationship with the American community in that country as we have undertaken our work there.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ward follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. HASKELL S. WARD, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, GLOBAL ALUMINA CORPORATION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to have been invited to speak about prospects for peace in the West African nation of Guinea. Guinea is a country that I know very well, having visited there for the first time in the late 1960s. Since that time I have had the pleasure of returning to the country more than 40 times.

I have long admired both the spirit, resolve and pride of the people of Guinea. After withdrawing from the French community in the 1950s, Guinea was regarded as the most independent country in West Africa. As such, Guineans are much admired and respected by Africans throughout the continent. In fact, Africa's various independence movements owe much to this nation. Nelson Mandela's first passport was given to him by the nation of Guinea. However, in large part because of this independent streak, during the last three decades Guinea has been isolated from funding and trading opportunities with Europe and the United States, driving the country into deep poverty. Nevertheless, the country has been a beacon of stability in Africa. It is rich in gold, diamonds, timber, iron ore (it has the largest untapped reserves in the world) and, of course, bauxite.

I am here to address the following three issues: 1) The role the bauxite industry has played in the development of Guinea, 2) How the recent crisis in Guinea has affected both the bauxite industry as well as the country's overall economy, and 3) the prospects and challenges facing Guinea's private sector today and in the future.

THE ALUMINUM AND ALUMINA INDUSTRY IN GUINEA

Aluminum is one of the most plentiful metals in the earth's crust. It occurs naturally in the form of bauxite, an ore containing aluminum oxide, commonly called alumina. Alumina is extracted from bauxite ore through a refining process. Refined alumina is the primary raw material used for aluminum smelting. As a general rule, it takes two tons of alumina to produce one ton of aluminum.

Aluminum products compete with other materials, such as steel and plastics for automotive and building applications. It competes with magnesium and titanium composites for aerospace and defense applications, and it competes with wood and vinyl for building and construction applications. Aluminum's diverse characteristic, particularly its light weight, resistance to corrosion, high strength, and ability to be recycled, has made it an essential for modern economies. In this respect it is considered to be a strategic mineral.

Guinea possesses some of the world's highest quality bauxite and more than one-third of the world's known recoverable bauxite. Over the last several decades Guinea has exported in the range of more than 15 million tons per year, making the country the world's largest exporter of bauxite. In particular, Guinean bauxite supplies nearly 50% of the US and Canadian import markets. On a global scale it is estimated that up to 15% of all primary aluminum is produced from Guinean bauxite.

At the present time Guinea has three active bauxite mining operations, located at Boke, Fria and Kindia, each of which has been in operation for over 25 years. The Boke mine exports more bauxite to offsite refineries than any other bauxite mine in the world, supplying more than 12 million tons per year of bauxite to alumina refineries in North America and Europe. The mine at Fria supplies bauxite to a refinery in Friguia, Guinea, Africa's only existing alumina refinery. This refinery is currently owned and operated by Alumina Company of Guinea, which is owned by RUSAL (85%) and the government of Guinea (15%). The refinery produces up to 700,000 tons per year of alumina and exports alumina primarily to RUSAL's smelter in Russia and the Ukraine. The mine at Kindia is owned by Societe des Bauxites de Kindia ("SBK"). SBK's mine is leased and operated by Compagnie des Bauxite de Kindia, a subsidiary of RUSAL. This mine exports approximately two million tons per year of bauxite primarily to RUSAL's alumina refineries in Russia and the Ukraine. The bauxite produced at the existing mine in the prefecture of Boke is particularly rich in alumina content and economically recoverable bauxite is spread over many square miles. The mine is operated by CBG under a 75-year concession awarded by the Government of Guinea in the mid 1960s. CBG is owned 51% by HALCO, a consortium of integrated aluminum companies consisting of ALCOA, Inc. (45%), ALCAN Inc. (45%) and Dadco, Ltd (10%), and 49% by the Government of Guinea. Alcoa, Inc. serves as the contract mine operator on behalf of CBG. Guinea's mining sector, driven principally by bauxite, is responsible for roughly 80% of the country's foreign exchange earnings. On the other hand, Guinea, once Francophone Africa's largest agricultural producer, is now a net importer of food.

Because of its vast depth and quality of bauxite reserves, Guinea will always play a central role in the industry. In 2001 Global Alumina and the government of Guinea entered into an agreement to develop a second alumina refinery in Sangaredi. Until the Global Alumina agreement, which was finalized in 2005, the country had been unable to attract investors to address the country's long standing desire for developing an additional refinery with its attendant value-added benefits. Because of that agreement, other companies have followed suit and agreements have now been reached with Alcoa. Inc-Alcan for another refinery and negotiations are under way with other key companies in the industry. Given the cost advantages associated with in-country production, and despite the challenging political and infrastructure environments, the country has been able in the last two years to attract other major investors. Thus, in many ways, and for the first time in its post independence period, Guinea appears poised for an economic take off. While currently political uncertainty exists, there is a broadly based consensus in the country which supports the need to expand the economic value of the country's abundant natural resource endowments. Guinea's future is directly related to the country's ability to attract investors and this part of the puzzle now appears to have been solved.

Global Alumina's refinery project, representing a capital cost of \$3 billion, is not only the largest such investment in Guinea's history, it is also one of the largest such investments in the history of Sub-Sahara Africa. Moreover, other larger investments are currently on the drawing board for the country. The projected economic benefits to Guinea of Global Alumina's investment portend the beginnings of the development of both a cash economy and a middle class. The greatest real threat that Guinea confronts is the massive poverty of its citizens. When a sack of rice consumes 1/2 of a Guinean's monthly salary there can be little prospect of political stability.

Global Alumina's experience in Guinea is instructive for others. Because despite the country's reputation for entrenched corruption, neither Global Alumina nor its officers were ever approached for any consideration in return for a favorable government decision during the more than five years that it took to reach an accord and ratification of its basic agreement.

THE RECENT CRISIS

The recent crisis in Guinea was characterized by a national strike, followed by the imposition of martial law. Widespread looting, the killing of demonstrators by the Guinean army and a near total collapse of commerce, to include the closing of most work sites and facilities, occurred. The exportation of bauxite was also interrupted. There are few, if any parallels, to this level of discontent in Guinea's post independence history. This discontent has been fueled by 1) the apparent declining health of President Conte and the uncertainty of succession; 2) Guinean inability to afford fuel and food; and, 3) the continued inflationary decline of the Guinean Franc which led to a combustible mixture of social and political forces which found expression this year. In order to avoid a recurring spiral of strikes and repressive counter measures, Guinea needs jobs and investors more than ever before. This will be a tall order under current conditions yet potentially highly rewarding

PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES FACING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

From the very outset, and often under my leadership, Global Alumina has placed special emphasis on seeing to it that Guinean's at the community level see benefits from this project. A Community consultative approach has characterized our work and is a feature of every aspect of the project. Relationships with development enterprises from local NGOs to international development agencies have been established. The African Development Foundation and Global Alumina have established a strategic partnership that is designed to foster community participation and create opportunities to Guinean enterprise development. We have been in negotiations which should be concluded shortly in the creation of another strategic partnership designed to train Guineans for skills needed in our construction and operations phases. Strategic partnerships have also been established with the United Nations Development Program and the Guinean national Council Against HIV/AIDS. Global Alumina is a signatory to the UN's Global Compact and the company's work has already been recognized for best practices in the extractive industry field. At a recent UN conference in Accra, Ghana presented a special workshop session and special task force report on the company's community program of community development.

Global has also engaged in extensive discussions with the United States Agency for International Development, the Canadian International Development Agency and the government of Guinea's Ministry of Technical Education to develop a train-

ing program for construction trades. The intent of the program is to develop trained workers who will meet the requirements of the contractors for the project. Through the training program, Global will seek to increase the participation of Guinean labor in the construction phase of the project.

Global Alumina expects that the structure of the program will be finalized shortly and that the program will commence soon thereafter. The company has already begun training programs for heavy machinery operators through the assistance of expatriate operating experts. The heavy equipment training program will be incorporated into the larger training program once the latter is finalized.

In addition to the construction trades training program, Global intends to establish sustainable development programs that will assist local Guineans in maximizing their participation in employment opportunities which may be indirectly created by the project, such as service industry positions resulting from the influx of workers. Global is working with the African Development Foundation and other non government organizations ("NGOs") to develop and execute these programs.

CONCLUSION

In light of the recent crisis many people are probably asking themselves if Guinea is open for business? Although my response may seem counterintuitive to many, my answer to that question is yes. Like many countries in Africa and the developing world, Guinea is a high-risk place to do business, but the country is a hospitable destination for investors. In fact, Guinea has never expropriated or nationalized any foreign assets. And unless and until replacements can be found for gold, diamonds, iron ore and, of course, bauxite, the business climate can be tolerated much as it is in problematic petroleum producing countries. A good deal of my optimism can also be attributed to the high priority given to investors who want to create a value-added dimension to their mining projects. Yes, the roads are bad, electricity unreliable, skilled labor in short supply and political uncertainty exists. But I believe that Global Alumina's entry into Guinea represents a historic turning point for the country. One has only to observe the number of major private sector initiatives which have been announced since the unanimous parliamentary ratification of our agreement to observe a fundamental shift in the economic environment.

Mr. PAYNE. Well thank you very much, and it is good to hear about value-added industries. One of the problems with extractive industries is that they simply take out the raw materials and ship it off to somewhere else where employment is created by secondary processes, that is a step in the right direction to have some secondary activities in Guinea rather than simply taking the raw material out.

I did not know Reverend Robinson but I knew of him, and as you know his program probably was the groundwork for the Peace Corps. I sent a young student to the Operation Crossroads program to Ghana in 1962 and was active in Youth Works. So I am very familiar with the program, and Dr. Proctor who went on to become the Deputy of the Peace Corps with Sgt. Shriver was one of the architects and a good friend who passed away 4 or 5 years ago.

And I think many people did have high hopes for Guinea primarily because of their independence from France when they decided not to become a part of the commonwealth, not to be dependent on France, said they wanted to go it alone. It could have been an opportunity for the United States to move in to a number of the countries but during the Cold War it was basically ideology that came first, and I think our support of NATO countries put us on the wrong side of many of the emerging new democracies because NATO countries were the colonizers, and we went with them, our western European allies, and as a result we lost a lot of good potential in Congo and Angola and you know Guinea Bissau, many, many others.

Let me just say there has been a mention of Islamic population, and any of you could try to answer the question. What percentage

of the country is Islamic, and do you see any danger of extremism going into Guinea? Up to now I do not think that has been—there have been a lot of problems but that has not seemed to have been one, and I do not know. Maybe Dr. Kaba could talk about the relationship between religious groups in Guinea and whether that has ever been a problem.

Mr. KABA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Guinea is a Muslim country. Islam appeared there in the 11th century. So there are about 1,000 years ago. And what is remarkable, long before the imposition of the French rule in the late 19th century, Islam served as a vehicle to unite the different communities, Mandinkas, Susu and Fulah. So Islam is very positive for Guinean people. About 85 percent of the Guineans are Muslims.

It is an Islam that is Sunni tradition. Sunni practice in general is a peaceful tradition of tolerance, and besides that it is an Islam that is very much mystic-oriented. The scholars speak about Sufi-oriented Islam. Indeed two very important brotherhoods that are known are the Qadiriya and the Tijaniya have played vital role in integrating Muslim community throughout West Africa and in Guinea in particular.

What is remarkable about their brotherhoods is—for the lack of a better word—their quietism. Their calm existence. Their cooperation. Their collaboration with non-Muslim communities, and that has made the whole Islamic culture very tolerant in West Africa in general with some exception northern Nigeria, and in Guinea in particular.

However, around the end of the Second World War, from Egypt a new version of Sunni Islam is to a more radical and militant entered through the Guineans who are studying in Egypt and in North Africa in general. It is the first wave of Wahabbi tradition, and these new ideology affected somehow the ideology of decolonization.

President Sekou Toure, who became the major leader of Guinea, was surrounded by some people who were very glued to this Wahabbi tradition. But Sekou Toure succeeded in controlling that extremism by developing himself a strong relationship with the Arab world everywhere. Indeed it is worth noticing that Sekou Toure was part of those who created the Organization of Islamic Conference or the OIC which is very active in International Islamic Affairs.

Today what is really critical is not so much the existence of Islam. Islam is not militant. Is not more militant than Christianity. It is not more militant than Judaism. The conditions make people militant. So the poverty in Guinea, the existence of the strong Lebanese groups that were in Guinea long before independent and agreement in Guinea, the relationship between those Lebanese and the Hezbollah tradition and the influx of more Lebanese from Cote d'Ivoire, from Sierra Leone, from Liberia and the coming of also more Arabs who are very glued to the Hezbollah traditions and Iranians and the existence of young, impoverished and unemployed young group has led to the emergence in some of the outskirts of Conakry and other cities of free radical Muslims, and it is what Dr. Challenor was referring to.

So while there is no Islamic crisis such in Guinea, but the conditions are there to make young Muslims completely discontent, vis-a-vis the government, and even if the government is run by Muslims, and these young people may respond quite well to al-Qaeda if the conditions were given to them. Thank you.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. I agree it is poverty more so, and I think you bring a good point. People, when they hear "Islam," they think radical or some kind of far off thing. We have Christians who are radical, ask folks of any other religion. You were saying, Dr. Challenor, that you think that Conte should leave the country. You think that would be a solution? Do you feel—and Mr. Ward, any of you wants to jump in—would that be the solution? Are institutions there to be able to bring the country forward?

Ms. CHALLENGER. Mr. Chairman, there are many, many very capable people in Guinea. I think I was concerned about the National Assembly but once they took their one decision not to continue martial law, I think there is great hope. There is no doubt that the army has been absolutely loyal to the President. I might say that during the strike there was tension within the army. These were the midlevel people, some of them who participated in our civil military dialogue, that had been very concerned about the actions of the old guard.

The problem with the army now—and I think the old generals need to retire. One of the things maybe that we might consider is help with a pension plan for the army. You know but get them out of business because the next level of generation of officers in the army, they are better trained. They are more democratic in their orientation.

So I think the army would be something to consider but I think there might be a way to handle that. Obviously it is a patrimonial political system. Conte's family, his hangers on, are desperately clinging to power. This is why I mentioned there must be economic development. The ministers have no place else to go. If they leave office, there is no sector in the community that they can go and even begin to approach even the legitimate remuneration they presently get now.

So they will be uncomfortable, but you do not have a pattern of militias that you had in Liberia or Sierra Leone. That was one thing that this USAID study looked at. We have lots of weapons that came into the region around 2000, 2001 but there has not been an organized effort to either use conflict resources for militias or even to get arms, but arms are in the region and that always poses a danger. But I think one has to try.

Mr. KABA. Mr. Chairman, may I just add one or two sentences? I think that indeed the vast majority of Guineans 2 years ago thought that this military solution was the one given the fact of what happened in neighboring Mali where an intelligent general was able to play the role of reformer. But this is not the case in Guinea, and therefore people generally dismay the army.

One of the reasons why the present situation appointment of a consensus prime minister is so important is that if it succeeds, Guineans with assistance of international community, will have the opportunity to push forward the other alternatives, other solution.

In other words, the prime minister and his government will lead the country toward a totally peaceful resolution of all the crises because within 2 years there will be elections and will have a Presidency, and the role of the army will not be a problem, and the democratic constitution of processes will go on. It is why we must do everything for this government to succeed one way or another.

Mr. WARD. I will not speak on the political dimensions. The economic dimensions we have a direct role in. Our company will employ 11,000 people, more than 6,500 of them are expected to be Guineans. I have worked with Global Alumina for 7 years now, and it has taken us 7 years to negotiate a training agreement to see that we can get a USAID strategic partnership to assist in training Guineans for these jobs. It took us 5½ years to negotiate an agreement with the Guinean Government for our basic agreement.

It has taken us 7 years to negotiate an agreement with USAID to affect a joint partnership. This is a critical problem. If the issue underlying the strike and the issue underlying political uncertainty is economic, then job creation we know can go a long way to addressing that part of the equation.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. In 2 minutes or less since we are out of time—and I do have a number of questions—but, Dr. Kaba, you mentioned the importance of training the military, and I am wondering if you will agree with that first. Secondly, the issue of those who have been previously trained, was there any evidence whatsoever that troops that we conveyed human rights training to and others had any kind of—you mentioned, Dr. Challenor, that the younger officers seemed to be of a different breed than the others who might be more human rights abuse oriented.

So my question is: Did it help at all, that previous human rights training? Secondly, what country do you think President Conte ought to be sent to? Is there a country that would take him? And a number of other questions. You said also, Dr. Challenor, about the leadership in terms of looking into the atrocities. Is the EU mounting a robust effort to look into that, and why is not the U.S. leading? Perhaps a question for the first panel, but I mean are we AWOL on this issue of trying to get an accounting of people who committed atrocities?

Mr. KABA. Thank you. Congressman Smith, thank you for your question. I think the U.S. training is very important for several reasons. In America there is a tradition of democracy. That includes the tradition of the army being controlled by the civilian, and that has not changed in the last 200-plus years, and I think it will continue. So it is important wherever the U.S. is involved in militarily to carry those traditions, those values. It is why the Guineans care so much about the United States.

So there has been a training of Guineans by the Americans. The rangers, 800 about, were trained, and it was a remarkable program. The only problem is that it was done under an autocratic and a totalitarian system, and it is known to all Guineans that the President took advantage of it to train his own guards, who trained some Liberians who are loyal to the President.

So you see somewhere the system was not well-controlled and is where the danger is, and according to unions—I was not there in January and February—but according to those who have spoken to

me, there was a violation of the rights of those who were demonstrating by the army, by the berets rouge, the Presidential guard, and that is contrary to what really the training should have been. So, Mr. Smith, it has to be well-controlled. It has to be well-controlled. It should go on.

As I did write in my large statement, the training should not be limited to the army alone. Women's organizations, trade union, there are many civil organizations that will benefit from this kind of training. So this is my response to that question, and I think it is what you were asking me.

Mr. PAYNE. We probably have to leave. You can continue to answer the questions as we go vote, and I will just ask the staff to technically end the meeting.

Ms. CHALLENGER. Okay. Yes. Where should he go? Send him to Saudi Arabia or Morocco; at least he would be with fellow Muslims. The European Union has done infinitely more than the United States. They took the lead in condemning this, followed by France and then Japan. It was only after all of those people commented that the American Ambassador issued his statement, and the European Parliament has been passing legislation and insisted that this be taken to the United Nations. The EU is the largest donor, and we are pikers by comparison, sir.

Mr. PAYNE. One other issue that I wish we had an opportunity to discuss is that we have been looking into reviewing the commodities situation in Africa. We find that many of the agreements are very difficult on the country and on the people. For example, the rubber industry in Liberia, the quotas that individuals have to meet per day are unrealistic in many instances. We are looking at the chocolate industry and child abuse. As you know, the Kimberly process deals with diamonds and there is a move to look at new investments that are coming up in Liberia for iron ore. And we should certainly be looking at the bauxite industry in Guinea.

It is sort of a new day today. Much of the world became rich from Africa's wealth. Africa remained poor. Somehow we are going to try to move in the next 3 or 4 years to relook at how these situations interact, subsidies for farmers and things of that nature, so there will be at some time in the future a new approach to try to put forth some semblance of fairness so that the richest continent in the world could perhaps start to develop economically.

I ask unanimous consent to enter a statement of the U.S. African Development Foundation, and also a letter dated January 25, written by Senator Feingold and myself to President Conte expressing our problem with the recent violence in Guinea, and we were very specific about some issues. So that will be a matter of record.

Mr. WARD. Mr. Chairman, we did not have an opportunity to speak of our partnership with the African Development Foundation but it is a key component of our project in Guinea.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you. The meeting stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:01 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

APPENDIX TO PREPARED STATEMENT OF HERSCHELLE CHALLENGER, PH.D., CONSULTANT ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS, FORMER DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE TO GUINEA, USAID

POLITICAL EVOLUTION OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN GUINEA

Background

No Guinean living in Guinea today has ever experienced genuine democracy and good governance in that nation. Guinea is a unique country of paradoxes:

- It is a dictatorship without order
- It is potentially wealthy, but its citizens live in abject poverty;
- It has a democratic Constitution, but its government does not respect its human rights provisions or the rule of law
- Guinea's defense and security forces effectively defend its territorial integrity, but they systematically prey on its people
- It is the watershed of West Africa, but few Guineans have reliable electricity or potable water

As a result of its years of relative isolation, fierce nationalism, policies of self reliance, and perhaps its status as a former French, rather than British colony, Guinea is not well known in the United States. Therefore, my prepared statement contains some background to the crisis that has been unfolding in Guinea over the past six weeks.

Guinea was the only former French colony to vote against joining the French Community of General De Gaulle's Vth Republic in France in 1958. This decision had severe economic and political consequences for the newly independent nation. Brutally cut off from French economic support and subsequently refused aid by the United States, Ahmed Sékou Touré, Guinea's first President, turned to the then Soviet Union for assistance.

As a result of Soviet influence, Guinea became a socialist country with a command economy, an entrenched Communist single party structure, the PDG, with political cells down to the village and district level, and a system of informants to enforce political orthodoxy. During several real, but often alleged, coup and destabilization attempts from 1961 through 1980, Sékou Touré systematically arrested, tortured, killed or made disappear thousands of the intellectual, entrepreneurial, military, government, Peul and other elites from every region of the country of the country. Among the best known of the nearly 5,000 persons who died in Camp Boiro were Diallo Telli, the first Secretary General of the Organization of African Union (OAU); the founder on the national Guinea Ballet, Fodebo Keita; and Achar Maroff, a former Guinean Ambassador to the United Nations. One might suggest that Sékou Touré was Africa's Stalin and Camp Boiro in Conakry was its Gulag. During his regime nearly 2 million Guineans fled the country. Several days after Sékou Touré's died in a hospital in the United States in March 1984, the military assumed power and General Lansana Conté became Guinea's Chief of state, a post he has held to this day.

Among the key legacies of Sékou Touré's regime that have been constraints to democracy in Guinea are: a quiescent civil society riddled by fear and mutual distrust that resists open defiance of presidential authority, a tightly controlled radio and television system that provides no space for external or differing citizen views, a protected mercantile middle class of Lebanese who are beholden to "friends" of the President for their economic security, rather than to their Guinean customers; a

high illiteracy rate of around 55.8%, and a majority adult population, particularly in the rural areas, who communicate almost exclusively in local languages, who lead mainly traditional lives, and have little knowledge of western values.

Guinea's Second Republic led by Conté is a traditional patrimonial "kleptocracy" characterized by governance based not on a series of sound, coherent, well thought out policies, but rather on reaction to events, external pressures and predictions from his soothsayers. Although reputed to be a very good soldier, General Conté has little formal education, is rooted in traditional values and practices, and believes he is President of Guinea through the will of God.

Initially President Conté's government made some progress towards democratization until around 1996. A liberal Constitution, which guaranteed a broad range of human rights, was adopted in 1990; the government authorized multi-party elections in 1992; it dismantled the state terror and informant apparatus, allowed greater economic freedom, and allowed a relatively free press, albeit with limited circulation. Guinea experienced an average 3.5% to 4% growth rate and serviced its debts in a timely manner. However, every election since the first multi-party presidential elections in 1993 through the most recent local elections in December 2005 has been fraudulent. The government political party, the Party for Unity and Progress (PUP) emerged as the dominant victor in the country's two legislative elections since 1984 and President Conté has won landslide victories in the three Presidential electoral contests between 1993 and December 2003.

The 1996 mutiny of discontented soldiers in Conakry that prompted some mid-level army leaders to undertake an abortive attempt to overthrow President Conté was a major threat to President Conté's power. President Conté displayed what has been his characteristic reaction to crises, that is, to undertake a series of reforms to get past the crisis, then take action to weaken the impact of those reforms or renege on the commitments altogether in order to retain his power and privileges. The military revolt destroyed the Presidential offices and killed several dozen Guineans. Captured and taken to the main military camp in Conakry, President Conté gained his release by promising a series of reforms, increased military benefits, and amnesty for the coup leaders. Instead, in a classic maneuver of promises later broken through presidential action, Conté arrested hundreds following his release and tried 98 soldiers and citizens in 1998, many of these soldiers languished in prison until 2006.

To demonstrate his commitment to reform, in July 1996, President Conté appointed technocrats to his cabinet and selected as Prime Minister Sidya Touré, the Guinean former Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister in Cote d'Ivoire. Conté granted responsibility for coordinating all government actions, including economic planning and finance functions, and promised financial reforms, rationalization of public expenditures, improved government revenue collection and reform of the judicial system. In fact, under International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank agreements in 1996 and 1998, Guinea continued to pursue fiscal reforms, privatization of public sector utilities, and increased more government expenditures on education, health, infrastructure, and the banking and justice sectors. But out of concern that he was losing control over the government's finances, in 1997 President Conté transferred most of the budget and finance responsibilities to a newly appointed Minister of Budget and Finance loyal to him. Sidya Toure currently leads the UPR, one of the 5 major opposition parties in Guinea.

After President Conté's re-election in 1998, and basking in some improvements in the economy, Conté replaced many of the technocrats in his cabinet with loyalists, mainly from his own Soussou ethnic group. This decision initiated a period of greater political restrictions, cronyism, corruption, and a steady deterioration in the country's economy, particularly after the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) Sierra Leonean rebel incursions in Guinea's Forest Region, supported by Liberia's President Charles Taylor.

The 2000/2001 rebel attacks on Guéckédou, in the western part of Forest Region of Guinea, which borders on Sierra Leone and Liberia, greatly damaged that city and neighboring villages and displaced tens of thousands of Guineans. Guinea's military, bolstered by an effective unit of Rangers that had been trained by the United States successfully defended its territorial integrity without any assistance from ECOMOG. It is important to note at this juncture that during the decade of civil wars in neighboring Sierra Leone and Liberia, Guinea hosted nearly 1 million refugees in several camps and many repatriated Guineans. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided significant support to the refugee populations but their presence did impose economic pressure on the Guinean government. Buffeted by the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the GoG invested heavily in arms and increased its defense budget to secure its borders and protect its territorial integrity, as well as provide covert support to the Liberian ULIMO

rebel movement to retaliate against the 2002/2001 incursions into Guinea financed largely by Charles Taylor.

As a result of the incursions, President Conté postponed the 2000 legislative elections until 2002. Then in 2001 he succeeded in modifying the Constitution in a referendum that removed the two term limit and age restrictions for presidential candidates and extended the presidential term from 5 to 7 years. Troubled by these maneuvers to retain power and the lack of a level playing field in the electoral system, several of the opposition political parties boycotted the 2002 legislative elections with the result that the government PUP party gained 91 of the 114 seats in the unicameral legislature. The UFR opposition parties won 20 seats and other parties received 3 seats.

Greatly concerned about the inequities in the electoral system, thirty-three political parties, including the PUP, met in July 2003 and agreed to a memorandum on electoral reform that was sent to the governmental. They called for five main changes: (1) the creation of an independent Electoral Commission; (2) the strict neutrality of government officials during elections, (3) media liberalization and the authorization of private radio ownership, (4) institution of transparent ballot boxes, and (5) the use of a single ballot during elections. President Conté's regime did not agree to these conditions, so opposition parties boycotted the December 2003 presidential elections, a decision which again gave a landslide victory to President Conté.

IMF and EU Economic Sanctions and a New Cycle of Reform and Repression

A. The Sanctions

As a result of poor economic and political governance, the IMF, World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the European Union (EU) suspended economic assistance to Guinea in 2002 and 2003 respectively. Under the Conté administration, the IMF/World Bank and the European Union have been the largest donors to Guinea. The major bilateral donors include Japan, the United States, Canada—until September 2005 when Canadians withdrew from Guinea—France, and Germany.

In 2002 the IMF suspended assistance to Guinea under its Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) because the GoG was not servicing its debt and failed to meet certain performance criteria. This decision occurred as Guinea was about to reach the Decision Point under the Bank HIPC program to reduce the debt of highly indebted developing countries. As a result of the above mentioned increased defense expenditures and widespread corruption, the GoG experienced double-digit inflation and the accompanying increased prices for such basic commodities as rice and cooking oil; it had failed to deliver effective, reliable public and social services to its people, particularly electricity, water and telephone services, as well as adequate resources to the education and health sectors. The EU suspended all but humanitarian assistance to Guinea in 2003 for reasons related to the country's flawed electoral system and failure to honor other governance provisions of the European Union-ACP Cotonou Accords.

Corruption is endemic in Guinea and this privatization of public resources is led by the President who goes to the Central Bank or Customs Office personally to withdraw tens of thousand of dollars or Euros at will. The judicial system has broken down as decisions in the courts are purchased, and a culture of impunity has permeated the country, including unrestricted, open shakedown of taxi drivers, transporters and ordinary citizens by police and security forces day and night. Citizens have no reliable recourse to the law whatsoever, unless they are prepared to bribe the judges.

These were the conditions in Guinea when I arrived in Conakry in mid-October 2004 to assume my position as Team Leader for Democracy and Governance at the USAID Mission in Conakry.

B. The Proposed Reforms

During the summer and fall of 2004 there was a series of anomic demonstrations against high prices of rice and fuel, in Conakry and several cities in the interior that were brutally put down by security forces, as well as student protests in Kankan, the second largest city, and in Conakry. Facing continued pressure to do something, President Conte appointed a new Prime Minister on December 9, 2004 to institute political and economic reforms. The newly appointed Prime Minister, Cellou Dalein Diallo, is a Peul, who had held various ministerial positions under Conté's regime for 8 years, most recently as the Minister of Fisheries. Diallo was the 5th Prime Minister President Conté had appointed since 1984. Diallo's immediate predecessor, the highly respected François Lounceny Fall, assumed his position in February 2004 and resigned in April after only 3 months in office.

In his New Year's speech December 31, 2004 President Conte stated that since that the military threats to its territorial security had ended, Guinea was now free to institute democratic reforms. In February 2005, shortly before the armed attack on the President's motorcade January 19th, Prime Minister Diallo announced President Conté's five point reform program to: (1) achieve greater macro-economic stability, (2) improve governance and fight corruption, (3) provide reliable public services, especially potable water, electricity, cellular telephone services, (4) resume political dialogue with opposition parties, and (5) to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS. In an effort to restart economic assistance from the IMF and World Bank, Guinea started to repay its debts, restrict the parallel currency exchange market, gave increased lip service to the fight against corruption, and the Prime Minister embarked upon a process of political dialogue with the opposition political parties, mainly with respect to the arrangements for the 2005 local elections.

In response to these initiatives the EU and the bilateral donors, prompted by the UNDP Resident Representative agreed, "to accompany" the government in its tentative reform process and provide financial support for the 2005 local elections, provided that the Government,

- Become current in its debt repayments;
- Rationalize its currency exchange regulations and take concrete measures to bring about macro economic stability;
- Resume political dialogue with the opposition political parties and that their Constitutional rights of freedom of speech and assembly be respected; and
- Establish an independent or autonomous Electoral Commission in time for the 2005 local and communal elections; and authorize private radio ownership

The Tense Spring and Summer of 2005

Although Prime Minister Diallo succeeded in obtaining agreement from the IMF and the World Bank for an IMF Staff Monitoring Program in April 2005 and the EU agreed to normalize its economic relations with Guinea, no new funds were received in the summer of 2005. Tensions increased in May 2005 following a series of events including the GoG decision to increase the price of gas by 52% and the continuing failure of the GoG to reach a political consensus on the organization of the elections with all of the key opposition parties. Violent demonstrations over the spiraling price of a 50 kilo bag of rice, which had increased from 26,000 Guinean Francs (GF) in 2004 to 110,000GF in early July 2005, exacerbated an already difficult situation. President Conté's pressure on rice importers and retailers to force them to sell rice at 75,000GF in fact made the situation worse. Unable to obtain foreign reserves from the Central Bank to pay for imported rice, combined with the increasingly high price of foreign currency because of the steady depreciation of the Guinean Franc, many rice sellers simply decided that they could not afford to sell it at all. Meanwhile the President's failing health further deteriorated thereby causing many to question his capacity to rule.

The triumphant return to Guinea from political exile in France in July 2005, of the militant leader of the RPG opposition party, Alpha Conde, created serious concern not only among PUP militants, but also among some opposition political parties. Conde had been a serious presidential contender during the 1998 presidential elections, but was arrested by the government on bogus charges.

While the transparency of the local elections was considered one key indicator of the government's commitment to genuine reform, another key indicator was President Conté's continued political support of the reform minded Prime Minister Cellou Dalein Diallo. Three main events cast doubts about President Conté's commitment to enact genuine reforms. First, despite President Conté's commitment to fight corruption and authorization for Prime Minister Diallo to make Mamadou Sylla, repay the \$22 million he allegedly owes the government, Conté later publicly voiced his support for Sylla in March 2005 and quietly told the Prime Minister to drop the matter. Mamadou Sylla is a Guinean entrepreneur and was the President of the *Patronat*, the local Chamber of Commerce, and a close confidant of the President. The President's decision to personally release him from prison in December 2006 was one of the main factors that triggered the third national labor union strike on January 10, 2007.

Secondly, in July 2005 the Prime Minister had undertaken steps to assign a 4th cellular telephone license to SONATEL, a Senegalese company backed by the French company *France Telecom*, in order to help address the very problematic functioning of the Guinea parastatal telephone company, SOTELGUI. Around the same time the Minister of Telecommunications, Jean Sultan, the former Vice President of the Central Bank when Sylla borrowed money, and key ally during Conté's 2003 presidential campaign, made a questionable deal to award the 4th license to another

company. Despite a consensus of the Cabinet to offer the license to SONATEL, President Conté yielded to pressure from Minister Sultan and once again did not support the Prime Minister he had appointed to lead the reform process.

Thirdly during a World Bank review of the status of their loan portfolio in Guinea, Bank officials noted that \$30 million for a rural road project still had not been expended. Consequently, they requested that these funds be transferred from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Public Works, a decision favored by the Prime Minister. The Minister of Agriculture—who uses his government’s resources mainly to maintain the President’s farm—did not want to transfer the funds and the President once again failed to back up his Prime Minister. Faced with the inability to obtain firm, unchanging instructions from the President it was rumored in the summer of 2005 that the Prime Minister was considered resigning.

The local elections initially scheduled to be held in June did not take place until December 2005, because the GoG failed to undertake the required reforms in a timely manner and since it did not have adequate resources to finance elections on its own. The EU, the largest donor for the elections had stipulated that it would not release funds until the government had made sufficient progress in meeting several conditions, including a dialogue with all political parties to reach a consensus on the organization of the elections, an agreement to establish an independent or autonomous Electoral Commission and the effective liberalization of the media and authorization for private radio ownership. Although the cabinet approved the provisions in June, President Conté delayed signing the media liberalization Decree until August 2005. He did not issue the Decree establishing the Autonomous Electoral Commission (CENA) until October, less than 2 months before the elections December 18, 2005.

Even though the GoG agreed to use a single ballot and transparent election boxes, allowed opposition parties to campaign in the interior relatively free from interference, and granted free air time for opposition party candidates, the government took other measures to ensure PUP majorities in the December local elections. The members appointed to the CENA were old line party loyalists, who rendered that body relatively ineffective and no private radio stations were authorized until the summer of 2006, at least 6 months after the local elections. More seriously, the GoG was able to throw the elections by 3 main methods: rejecting the electoral slates of many opposition candidates; selectively distributing the papers, printed to address the problem that few rural voters had identity cards, to mainly PUP members; and falsifying the election results to increase PUP winners in many local districts during the voting centralization process.

The U.S. Mission in Guinea fielded 40 Election Observers that covered all 7 Administrative Regions and Conakry and our reports systematically documented these anomalies. Indeed in the Kankan Region, where I personally observed elections, the Prefect in Kouroussa instructed his two body guards to fire AK-47s into a crowd of voters who were posing no threat to his safety. Three people were hit and a young student almost died of his wounds. I carry the AK-47 shell with me to this day. The official who perpetrated this criminal act was never brought to justice.

The Post Election Climate and the Radicalization of Civil Society

The fraudulent actions of GoG officials and PUP supporters during the elections, that delivered majority PUP victories in the 38 Urban and Rural Development Councils at the local level in Guinea turned out to be a double-edged sword. The election fraud not only heightened popular discontent, but also further undermined donor confidence in the government’s commitment to fundamental change. As a result, the EU decided to withhold the assistance it had promised and the government desperately needed.

The groundswell of popular discontent, reflected in three major events that followed in rapid succession at the end of February through most of March 2006 dramatically shifted the political equation in Guinea. The first event was the historic national labor strike from February 27 through March 3 organized by the combined federations of the public and private labor unions, CNTG and USTG. This was a seminal event, because it was virtually universally effective throughout the country. Even after President Conté appealed to workers to return to their positions on the local language radio stations, they ignored him. The streets were empty; shops remained closed, as did most of the market stalls. The success of the strike shocked the government, surprised the unions, and gave civil society a greater sense of empowerment.

The USAID funded Civil Society Forum on “Civil Society, the Elections and the Political Process,” organized March 8–10 in cooperation with the National Council of Civil Society Organizations in Guinea (CNC SOG) through the assistance of USAID/Guinea’s implementing partner, capitalized on this climate of discontent. It

brought together representatives of 68 local NGOs and officials of the CNSCOG from each of Guinea's 7 Administrative Regions and Conakry. The purpose of this Forum was to examine the irregularities that took place during the local elections, the lessons learned, and devise a strategy to address these issues prior to the legislative elections in June 2007. The Forum's Final Declaration, which openly criticized GoG policies and called for a series of political and economic reforms, reflected civil society's maturity and increased assertiveness as result of USAID's interventions over past four years.

Sandwiched in between these two meetings was the first U.S.—Guinea Binational Consultations. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Africa, Linda Thomas-Greenfield led the U.S. delegation. Although this Binational Consultation was originally scheduled for another time, the dates had to be changed because of other intervening commitments. However, coming as it did at this time, gave the appearance that the United States was forging closer links with the Guinean government when the unions and civil society were at greater odds with the Conté regime than they had been at any previous time in during his regime.

The important National Consultation of the Key Forces in the Society to address the current crisis in Guinea, March 17–20, was convened jointly by 15 opposition parties and the CNSCOG. This meeting was patterned after the National Conferences of 1990 that began in Benin and led to the new democratic openings in several Francophone African states. It brought together several hundred Guineans from all walks of life to debate over three days in plenary and workshop sessions the problems facing Guinea and make recommendations of ways to address them. The National Consultation's far reaching final recommendations called for a series of socio-economic changes and, more pertinent for our concerns, a political transition led by a Prime Minister, selected by consensus, and the replacement of the National Assembly and the Supreme Court by two new bodies. Guinea government officials immediately condemned the political recommendations as a violation of the Constitution which outlines procedures for succession in case of the incapacity of death of the incumbent president in office, and said they were tantamount to a verbal coup d'état. Certain embassies, including that of the United States, also considered the political recommendations to be totally inappropriate.

In any case, the surprising emergency medical evacuation to Switzerland of President Conté early in the morning of the second day of the National to Switzerland in the early morning of March 18, 2006 provided added drama and sense of urgency to the conferees deliberations. The President's evacuation not only focused the attention of the administration, Guinean citizens, and the donor community on issues of political succession, but also raised fears of a possible military coup.

According to Article 34 of Guinea's Constitution,

In case of vacancy of the function of the President of the Republic following death or resignation of the President of the Republic, or any other major obstacle, the interim is assured by the President of the National Assembly or, if he is unable to do so, by one of the Vice Presidents of the National Assembly, by order of seniority; The vacancy is stated by the Supreme Court, who is seized of this question by the President of the National Assembly, or if he cannot, by one of the Vice Presidents.

The Constitution further calls for new presidential elections within 60 days. It is widely known that El Hadj Aboubacar Somparé, the clever, cosmopolitan President of the National Assembly, served as the Guinean Ambassador to France during Sékou Touré's regime and as a former President of the government PUP party. Therefore Somparé is viewed as a representative of the old guard and hence suspect. During President Conté medical treatment in Switzerland, Somparé reportedly had private consultations with military leaders and certain cabinet officials. Fodé Bangoura, Chief of Staff in the Office of the President and *eminence grise*, allegedly called the National Assembly President on the carpet for what Bangoura considered inappropriate behavior. Fodé Bangoura made certain that President Conté had a triumphal return to Conakry by ensuring that crowds were at the airport and lining the streets to greet him.

Nevertheless, concerned about the widening gap between the government and the people, Aboubacar Somparé noted during his closing remarks on the occasion of the closing of the National Assembly Budget Session at the end of March 2006, that Guinea was "undergoing a historically unprecedented economic crisis, he then stated,

It is necessary to resume the dialogue, for a democracy cannot exist without discussion, without exchanges [of views]. In a democratic regime, discussion necessarily precedes action. . . . In the current national context it seems to me

to be absolutely necessary to recall one more that nothing important, nothing solid, nothing that is durable, nothing that is good, and finally nothing that is legitimate can take place without the institutionalization of a community of reflection and without effective communication.

The GoG's leadership crisis became more obvious on April 5, of 2006, when, following pressure from Fodé Bangoura and other close advisors, President Conte fired the Prime Minister. Bangoura was not consulted about the proposed cabinet reshuffle Prime Minister Diallo had gotten President Conté to sign and disapproved of Diallo's proposals. So Bangoura convinced President Conte that the Prime Minister was trying to usurp power and convinced him to retract his Decree authorizing the new cabinet changes. Not satisfied, the President's closest aides convinced him the next day that Prime Minister Diallo's actions were illegal and that he should be fired and possibly punished. Perhaps more than any other occurrence, this strange series of events on April 4th and 5th increased public concern that President Conté was not acting with a full deck and demonstrated the lengths to which the President was willing to jeopardize the country's economic well-being to maintain power.

Prime Minister Diallo's dismissal was one of the main reasons the IMF, which was on the verge of approving a normal lending program for Guinea, decided later that month to delay its final consideration of a new financial assistance program. Obtaining these additional resources had been an essential component of the government's economic commitments in the tripartite accord (government, private sector and unions) the government had signed with the unions to end the first strike on March 3rd. Now these resources would not be available.

During the Labor Day celebrations on May 1, 2006, USTG leader issued a scathing critique of the government and the President of the National Assembly. At that time, the USTG and CNTG union federations also issued a joint Manifesto calling for a series of administrative and economic reforms, which the GoG failed to implement. A subsequent ministerial reshuffle of May 29, 2006 consolidated the power of the Fodé Bangoura, the President's Chief of Staff, who was elevated to Minister of State for Presidential Affairs with supervisory responsibility over the Ministry of Economic and Financial Control. Former conservative PUP Ministers returned to the government, such as Moussa Solano, the arch conservative former Minister of Territorial Administration, who was appointed Minister of State for the Interior and Minister of Territorial Administration has legal responsibility for organizing all elections in Guinea. Alseny Gomez, a Camp Boiro survivor and Minister of Security when Alpha Conde, RPG leader, was arrested during the presidential elections of 1998, was appointed as the new Minister of Justice.

After the GoG failed to address their grievances, the joint Unions launched a second National Strike on June 8. While the strike was largely respected for the first four days, things deteriorated on June 12 when the Baccalaureate examinations were to take place. The GoG announced on June 11, that the military would proctor the Baccalaureate, examinations, after the teachers made clear they intended to support the national strike and could not do so. Students showed up for the examination on Monday June 12 and found that few schools had made provisions for them to take the examinations. Frustrated, the students throughout the country left the schools in anger or despair. Those in Conakry began to march peacefully to protest their inability to take the baccalaureate examinations. Others in Labe and other towns in the interior burned tires and threw stones in protest. The GoG deployed security forces to maintain order, and they killed an estimated 21 people, on that day, most of whom were students. The GoG has blamed the opposition parties for the June 12th disruptions and then called for a Dialogue and the restoration of order.

In late June USAID implemented a very successful Civilian-Military Seminar on "Civil-Military Relations in Guinea. Despite the tensions between Guinean civil society leaders and security forces over the killings during the second strike on June 12, every civil society leader and defense and security official invited agreed to participate. This meeting was attended by the two main union leaders, Dr. Ibrahima Fofana and Ms. Rabiadou Serah Diallo, leaders of the PUP and main opposition parties, as well as representatives of the National Assembly, the religious community, the media, private sector, women's and youth groups, and the bar association. By providing an occasion for civilians and military and defense forces to meet on neutral ground and talk about issues that affected both groups defused some tensions. The participants adopted a Plan of Action and elected a Civilo-Military Follow-Up Committee co-chaired by a member of the National Assembly and the highest ranking security official participating in the sessions. What emerged clearly from these sessions was the irrefutable evidence that the Guinean people seek dialogue, want

better governance, improved economic conditions, and a feeling of human security in order to raise their children, and live in harmony with their fellow citizens.

By July 2006, it was apparent that the new Minister for Territorial Administration and spokesman for the government was not prepared to be as open to electoral reform as had been his predecessor Kiridi Bangoura, who had been transferred from that Ministry to one on pre-university education during the cabinet reshuffle of May 2006.

USAID/Guinea democracy and governance program's final action, for the cycle, beyond the electoral activities that are ongoing, was to attempt a major National Dialogue at the ministerial level on key political, social, economic, and cultural recommendations in an effort to end the political stalemate between the government on one hand and the opposition parties and civil society on the other. Although I participated in all of the preparatory meetings, actual Dialogues did not occur until after my departure. However, the government continued to remain intransigent.

Conclusions

I am convinced that the government led by President Conté has no interest in good political and economic governance. Ministers are afraid to take initiatives for fear of reprisals. The vacuum in political leadership at the level of the President has merely encouraged top officials to take what they can while they can. President Conté will remain an obstacle to democracy in Guinea as long as he is on the scene. If it has done nothing else, the tragic events during the January strike and particularly the atrocities of January 22nd and during the period of Martial Law have ended what had been widespread acceptance of the possibility of a military transitional government in Guinea similar to the Mauritanian model. My conversations with civil society leaders in Guinea during the strike make me believe that this has been a major turning point and that they will continue to be vigilant in their quest for justice, improved economic well-being and good governance. They have shed their blood and now require full support of the U.S. and others in the international community to prevent any recurrence of such brutality. At a time when the U.S. is supporting a Pan-Sahelian initiative to prevent sanctuaries for would be Islamists, it is critical to openly support popular forces for freedom and justice I this majority Muslim state. Not to do so would make hypocrisy of our government's stated commitment to transformational diplomacy and democracy throughout the world.

MATERIAL SUBMITTED BY THE HONORABLE DONALD M. PAYNE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA AND GLOBAL HEALTH

TESTIMONY OF THE UNITED STATES AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

I. Introduction

The United States African Development Foundation (USADF) thanks Chairman Donald M. Payne and other members of the Subcommittee for extending an opportunity to the Foundation to submit testimony on the topic of "Prospects for Peace in Guinea."

USADF was created in 1980 by the U.S. Congress with the goal of overcoming poverty in Africa by adopting a different approach to traditional U.S. foreign assistance programs. The concept—then as now—is to enable individuals and groups to emerge from poverty by putting their own ideas to work, not someone else's. USADF focuses on a sector that is largely overlooked by other development assistance efforts, that of small and medium-sized businesses and social enterprises that are the driving forces behind private sector growth. USADF's methods have evolved over time, with experience, but one of the main pillars of the Foundation's work has been to remove barriers to growth and to promote the success of our customers: thousands of Africans who have no lack of innate entrepreneurial instinct but simply lack the means to get going and stay on the path to success.

USADF investments are pivotal instruments of US foreign assistance programs transferring knowledge and capital, developing local skills, creating jobs and generating wealth. Through its support of small businesses and social enterprises, USADF is having a positive impact on the formation of stable, democratic economies that are necessary for maintaining peaceful societies.

II. Background to USADF Activities in Guinea

USADF has been active in the Republic of Guinea since 1986. Over the past two decades, USADF has helped thousands of poor Guineans improve their lives by providing support to community-based organizations. The Foundation has used two approaches:

- 1) supporting small business development and job creation in poor communities; and,
- 2) participatory development in rural communities

In the area of small business development, USADF has directly invested in more than 30 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across Guinea and helped them become profitable by providing working capital, technology, technical assistance, and training. Under the Village Community Support Program, USADF helps rural communities to determine their needs and prioritize their investments in basic community infrastructure projects such as primary and secondary schools, health facilities, wells and bridges.

Despite government efforts to encourage a free market economy and promote foreign investment, USADF believes that Guinea's growth rate is still below its potential. Guinea has abundant natural resources, including approximately one third of the world's known bauxite reserves, as well as diamonds, gold and other mineral ores. The country also has great potential for developing hydroelectric power from the Niger and Milo rivers. However, the national economy is not diversified and remains heavily dependent on mining revenues.

The over-reliance on extractive industries has been a significant dilemma in Guinea, as in other countries across Africa. While creating substantial revenues for the government, the extractive industry in Guinea has not traditionally led to an improvement in the living conditions of communities that surround the mining operations. In short, it has failed to foster robust local supply chains that can generate wealth for local communities and build a stable, peaceful middle class. Thus, in Guinea as well as in many other parts of Africa, we encounter the juxtaposition of extractive operations that generate tremendous wealth within some of the poorest communities in the world. This is a recipe for instability and political unrest.

III. Solving the Extractive Industry Dilemma: USADF Partners with Global Alumina

In an effort to improve the way that extractive industries have traditionally managed their investments in host countries, in 2006 USADF entered into a five-year strategic partnership agreement with Toronto-based Global Alumina. This partnership is designed to provide support for local communities affected by the mining and refining operations of Global Alumina as well as to promote the development of local SMEs and is an excellent example of how large scale investments can take an integrated approach to economic growth in Africa.

Over the next five years Global Alumina will invest \$2.35 billion in the development and operation of a 2.8 million ton bauxite refinery and related infrastructure in the Boke prefecture in northwest Guinea. This project represents one of the largest capital investments made in sub-Saharan Africa. Benefits of this investment will include:

- Increased revenues to the Government of Guinea: Annual revenue flows will range from \$5–12.5 million per annum; a 5% mining royalty; and corporate income tax at a rate of 35%, producing an annual revenue of \$100–150 million.
- Creation of jobs: Approximately 8,000 jobs will be created directly as a result of the construction phase, with an additional 24,000 to 40,000 jobs projected in sectors serving the mine and surrounding community
- Development of industry: It is estimated that the direct capital expenditure on Guinean products by Global Alumina will exceed \$100 million, not including labor salaries.

In addition, Global Alumina has agreed to contribute \$500,000 annually towards local community development, and will invest in excess of \$40,000 in employee housing and related social facilities.

While these impacts are significant, they will not translate into sustainable wealth generation in the local communities that surround the mine and refinery. To address this specific issue, USADF and Global Alumina have agreed to partner to develop the communities that are impacted by the refinery as well as to promote the development of local SMEs. A joint fund will be created through equal contributions totaling \$2 million annually over a period of five years. The fund will be managed by USADF in accordance with existing investment principles and eligibility criteria of the Foundation. The goal of the investment fund is to support local communities and to build a network of robust SMEs that serve both Global Alumina and the local economy in order to maximize socio-economic benefits from the extractive activities.

IV. USADF—Global Alumina Partnership Objectives

A. Community Development

The USADF—Global Alumina partnership is designed to enhance local participation and delivery of social services in the planning, execution and maintenance of micro-projects which address the priority needs of villages or communities directly or indirectly affected by bauxite mining, alumina processing and transport operations. Micro-projects may encompass infrastructure enhancements as well as small economic activities aimed at improving village-level conditions such as operation of grinding mills, livestock rearing and small-scale farming.

The expected results include:

- development of community awareness of the needs and concerns of women and poorer community groups in planning micro-projects;
- development of a set of prioritized micro-projects to be prepared and implemented with community contributions by the village and/or district;
- efforts to mitigate the impact of having to relocate households;
- development of trained village or district-based community infrastructure management and maintenance committees; and
- development of strategies for communities to prepare for the anticipated influx of workers and others associated with the mining operations.

Although the general strikes experienced throughout Guinea in early 2007 have created minor delays, USADF is on track to deliver rapid results. With the help of local USADF partner organization networks, local communities have defined their micro-projects and are in the process of implementing a number of them, including school construction, reforestation, and skills training in cottage industries such as soap making and vegetable cultivation.

B. Creation of Local Supply Chains based on SME linkages

The partnership will also promote the development of competitive, profitable and sustainable SME networks which will provide high quality services and products to Global Alumina and other entities. The goal of the partnership is to integrate these local enterprises into a supply chain that serves the refinery and the wider community. SME investments will target three stages of the Global Alumina venture:

- *Construction:* SMEs that operate as suppliers to Global Alumina or its contractors during the three year construction phase, such as building material manufacturers and welding companies.
- *Operations:* SMEs that provide ongoing goods and services to the refinery once it is operational in 2009, such as spare parts distributors and equipment maintenance and repair services.
- *Local economy:* SMEs that service the general needs of the communities surrounding the refinery, including poultry farms and hotels.

USADF has re-engineered its proven screening and assessment methodology to ensure that all investments are relevant to Global Alumina's needs. All SMEs will be required to demonstrate USADF's investment principles of profitability, socio-economic impact and replicability. Overall, investments will be designed to allow selected SMEs to develop the capability to work independently with Global Alumina. Investments include providing both capacity building assistance (e.g. consulting, training) and capital investment (e.g. fixed assets and working capital).

As of end-February 2007, USADF has screened over 500 local SMEs and has identified ten strong candidates for investment funding. Over the next six months, the Foundation will work with its in-country partners to design and process investments which will enable these enterprises to begin to build a network of suppliers.

Not only will these strengthened SMEs create additional jobs, but more importantly, they will allow local communities to capture revenues that would otherwise flow out of the country. The net impact will be to build a strong local economy that derives sustainable benefits from the presence of Global Alumina's refinery.

V. Looking Forward: Guinea Aluminum Corporation Joint Venture

On March 7, 2007, Global Alumina Corporation entered into a joint venture agreement with BHP Billiton, Dubai Aluminium Company Limited (DUBAL) and Mubadala Development Company PJSC to jointly develop and operate the alumina refinery project in Guinea. BHP Billiton, the world's largest mining company, is expected to manage the joint venture. BHP has a strong reputation for social responsibility, and has, in fact, successfully participated in a similar supply chain linkage project in Mozambique.

USADF looks forward to extending our positive relationship with Global Alumina to all new participants in the joint venture. We expect this will enhance our collective commitment and capability to delivery sustainable benefits to the economies and communities that surround the refinery.

VI. Conclusion

Building upon over twenty years of business development and poverty alleviation in Guinea, USADF is excited to take our activities in Guinea to the next level through this public-private partnership with Global Alumina and its partners. Our unique strategy to partner with Global Alumina and jointly invest in SMEs will not only create jobs, but more importantly, will allow local communities to capture additional extractive revenues that would otherwise leave the country. We are optimistic that this is the best possible approach to addressing the extractive industry dilemma in a sustainable manner, both in Guinea and beyond. More importantly, USADF is confident that this public-private partnership will demonstrate how large scale industry and US foreign assistance programs can work together to contribute to stable, thriving economies and peaceful societies.

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

President Lansana Conte
c/o Alpha Oumar Rafiou Barry
Ambassador to the United States
Embassy of the Republic of Guinea
2112 Leroy Place, NW
Washington DC 20008

January 25, 2007

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express our concern about the recent violence in Guinea related to the ongoing nationwide strike. As the Chairmen of the United States Senate and House Subcommittees on Africa, respectively, we both have a long record of engagement in the continent and closely follow developments there.

Guinea has an admirable history of being a lynchpin of stability in a very volatile region, but the current crisis reveals deeply-rooted challenges that must be addressed if the country's peace and prosperity are to be restored and sustained. The freedoms of association and of speech are central to effective democracy, so we are troubled by reports of peaceful demonstrations being forcibly suppressed. Such aggression violates human rights and must not be allowed to continue. Additionally, those responsible for the recent deaths and abuses must be held accountable for their actions through scrupulous investigations and prosecutions.

Instead of attempting to silence dissent, real resolution of this conflict will only come with increased inclusiveness in Guinean politics and economics. The first step towards reclaiming legitimacy in the eyes of your citizens and the world is to engage in productive dialogue with Guineans who feel unrepresented.

To demonstrate your commitment to democracy, we encourage you to facilitate the formation of a national unity government charged with organizing truly free and fair elections. Such leadership on your part would not only bring an end to the violent unrest that threatens Guinea's economic progress and international reputation, it would also lay the foundation for greater participation and prosperity and reestablish Guinea as a model for its neighbors and throughout Africa.

Sincerely,



Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator
Chairman
Senate African Affairs Subcommittee



Donald M. Payne
United States Representative
Chairman
House Africa & Global Health Subcommittee

