

1 The Menace of Secession in Africa and Why Governments Should
2 Care: The Disparate Cases of Katanga, Biafra, South Sudan, and
3 Azawad

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8 **Abstract**

9 If there were animiminent threat to the integrity of African states, it would be the possibility
10 of a group or region breaking away. Ironically, secession is one threat which few African
11 governments want to acknowledge exists because implies giving tacit recognition to the most
12 reprehensible behavior any group or a region can perpetrate against the state. Pursuing such
13 policy of not acknowledging the threat of succession has come at a price, since it has made
14 governments woefully unprepared to address an actual secession effectively when it occurs.
15 African governments' lackadaisical response to the menace of secession is not only bad policy
16 but also counter-intuitive. The haphazard manner in which European powers spliced the
17 continent into colonies makes every country vulnerable to potentially splitting up for myriad
18 of reasons including a simple disagreement between a region and the central government. This
19 paper makes the assertion that a region breaking away is such an imminent threat to African
20 countries that governments need to pay attention and commit resources to address its causes.
21 Mali splintering into halves in 2012 shows the imminency of the threat of secession and the
22 unpredictable causes that may precipitate such as event. The paper analyzes Katanga, Biafra
23 and South Sudan breaking up to underscore the unpredictability of events which may cause a
24 country to break up.

25

26 **Index terms**— Secession, Katanga, Biafra, Azawad, South Sudan, Casamance, Eritrea, Ethiopia, SPLA,
27 MEND, Tuaregs, Igbo, Ojukwu, Lumumba, Tshombe.

28 **1 I. Introduction**

29 Observing African politics clearly reveals the continent is racked with conflict. These conflicts range from political
30 protests to wars breaking out within countries and externally between countries that share a common border.
31 Most conflicts which have occurred, however, have been confined within national borders. Conflict which occurs
32 inside countries' borders often bears the hallmark of one or more groups squabbling over a natural wealth or a
33 region deciding unilaterally to end its association with a government because of ideological or policy differences.
34 A misunderstanding that arises between a region or an ethnic group and the central government can lay Author
35 : Napoleon Bamfo Ph.D. Department of Political Science Valdosta State University Valdosta, GA 31698. E-mail
36 : nbamfo@valdosta.edu dormant for several years until it explodes unexpectedly into mayhem which can destroy
37 families, relationships, and traditions. The governments of Ethiopia and Sudan failing to address grievances of
38 outlying regions satisfactorily for one-half century steered those regions to war, resulting in Eritrea and South
39 Sudan separating to form new nations. In spite of several cases of internally-generated dissensions and weak
40 governmental structures, it is remarkable that many more African countries have not been torn apart. However,
41 the handful of cases on secession could be misleading because they offer a false impression the issues that can

3 III. DOMESTIC INSURGENCIES A) KATANGA

42 tear apart the relationship between a region and a central government have not been grievous or been adroitly
43 resolved. In reality the sorry state of relationships between regions and central governments in Africa is far from
44 clear. In each country, regions want the central government to address outstanding issues to their satisfaction as
45 government also have wanted regions to play their part by being responsible partners and acquiescing to their
46 edicts. No government can be complacent addressing the issues for which a region or group seeks redress. None
47 may be redundant. Complacency may only push the region or ethnic group to the brink by seeking separation
48 from the union with ramifications that are hard to foretell.

49 This paper draws on secondary sources of research sources as well as current news from the Internet to address
50 secession by drawing attention to the imminence of its menace to the integrity of African countries. African
51 governments, on the other hand, seem less troubled by it than they are about issues that revolve around people's
52 daily subsistence. This may be a perilous miscalculation since, when a country is unexpectedly hit with the
53 possibility of any of its regions wanting to break away, that country may never reclaim the cohesion and pride it
54 once had. Suspicion is sown instantaneously into the relationships that used to exist among people, groups and
55 regions. The paper uses Katanga, Biafra, South Sudan and Azawad breaking away to show the multiplicity of
56 the causes which may precipitate a region deciding to leave a political union. The demands groups make which
57 can push a region to break away have usually been precipitated from the group or region perceiving unequal
58 treatment from the central government relative to other regions or groups. The demands of grievances might lay
59 dormant for years until a 'triggering incident' resuscitates it. A triggering incident could come in various forms
60 such as Igbos being killed in Nigeria in 1966, or the people of Katanga believing in their exceptionalism relative
61 to other Congolese and breaking away. Every African government, therefore, it seems must feel a sense of unease
62 and be alert in order to ameliorate situations which may push a region or an ethnic group to the brink.

63 2 II. The problem of national borders

64 One controversial but enduring legacy European colonialism left Africa was national borders. Breaking such a
65 large continent into smaller sovereign nations has helped to create unique identities among people which have
66 become powerful symbols of national pride and interest. At the same time, the haphazard manner in which
67 nations were created has caused irredentist urgings by groups on other groups which might have been minimal
68 had the colonialists taken greater care clustering groups into countries. Colonial administrators broke up or
69 clustered people, languages, customs and alliances with little rational guidance from history, tradition, and logic.
70 Not surprisingly, the conflicts that have occurred between nations are blamed on the haphazard demarcation
71 of borders (Hughes, 2004). According to Herbst (1989), European colonialists ignored some basic guidelines for
72 partitioning land such as making such important decisions on scanty information about Africa's geography, and
73 dividing territories without taking time to consider demographic, ethnographic and topographic imperatives.

74 The haphazardness shown for cartography was expected because, according to Stone, the Berlin Conference was
75 called mainly to defend the traditional long-standing free-trading system which Europe had set up along the coast
76 of Africa. Colonial administrators and new African governments tried to adhere closely to the boundaries they
77 had inherited to uphold the principle of *uti possidetis*, which provides that states emerging from decolonization
78 shall presumptively inherit the colonial administrative borders they held at independence (Ratner, 1996). That
79 understanding has done little to dampen calls coming from some governments to clarify their boundaries with
80 their neighbors, which is a euphemism for getting a piece of territory back. Legum (1962) Mazrui (1993) predicted
81 that ethnic conflict would present continual problems in politics, and over the next century the outlines of present-
82 day African states would change in one of two ways. The first would be ethnic self-determination which would
83 create smaller states and the otherâ?" regional integrationâ?" will create larger political communities and
84 economic unions.

85 Where a region or an ethnic group is located relative to other regions has been an important but often
86 overlooked factor that determines whether a disenchanted group or region will stay in a political union. A region
87 or group hemmed in by other groups or regions is circumscribed by geography to accept a compromise with the
88 government in a dispute, even if the group finds the solution distasteful. Secession is a treasonable act and is
89 easier for those who participate in it to escape to a neighboring state if the plot goes awry. Location also affects
90 an insurgent group's ability to get money outside its home base to resist government authority. The ability of
91 rebel groups to get major funding from contraband such as opium, diamonds, or coca determines the duration
92 of civil wars (Fear on, 2004). The considerable distance from Punt land and Somaliland to Mogadishu, where
93 a weak provisional federal government has been battling insurgents, provided the impetus for the two renegade
94 northeastern regions of Somalia to declare their autonomy. 1

95 3 III. Domestic insurgencies a) Katanga

96 Belgium had vested business and commercial interest in the Congo, its colony, and was unwilling to grant it
97 independence. This was the time when Africa's major colonial powers of France and Great Britain were granting
98 their colonies independence. In late 1950, however, following protests in Kinshasa and other large cities Belgium
99 was compelled to grant a hastily-(D D D D)

100 Year 2012 arranged independence to the Congo (Democratic Republic). Van Bilsen(1962) asserts that the
101 choice Belgium faced was tragic: it either could grant independence immediately to a country which was in no

102 way prepared for it or undertake a policy of slow decolonization with all the risk of misunderstanding, disorder,
103 and repressive action involved. According to Bokamba (1986), Congo had serious regional and ethnic divisions
104 (with some 200 separate language groups) and a weak sense of national identity. Besides, very few Congolese
105 had had any meaningful political experience prior to independence, and there were only a handful of them with
106 university degrees. Belgium failing to train the Congolese in administrative competence or giving them political
107 experience or a system of government that might work contributed to plunging the country into the mayhem it
108 experienced after independence.

109 An army mutiny occurred in Katanga Province (Shaba) and Southern Kasai soon after independence that led
110 to bloodshed. These provinces were the center of diamond mining in Congo. The mutiny resulted in Katanga
111 pulling out from Congo Leopoldville. The rebellion in Katanga lasted from 1960 to 1963. Kaplan (1967) asserts
112 that Belgium, at the instigation of Moïse Tshombe, the Prime Minister of Katanga Province, used the mutiny
113 by the Force Publique against Belgian officers to intervene on behalf of Belgian civilians in the Congo as stories
114 circulated of violence committed against Belgians by soldiers spread. Tshombe's rise to fame began in the 1950s
115 when he became president of the Belgian-supported Conakat, the strongest political party in Katanga. When
116 he attended the Brussels Congo Conference in 1960 he pressed for a loose federation of independent states in
117 the Congo. In the general elections of 1960, Conakat gained control of the Katanga provincial legislature, and
118 when the Congo became an independent republic, Tshombe proclaimed Katanga's secession from the country.
119 He worked closely with Belgian business interests, appointed a Belgian officer to command his army, and refused
120 to cooperate with either the United Nations or the central government led by Patrice Lumumba (Columbia
121 Electronic, 2011). Lemarchand (1962) also argues Katanga had a strong case for self-determination based on the
122 extraordinary concentration of economic resources in the province, especially the presence of rare minerals such
123 as cobalt and uranium. The province also had heavy industrial development compared with the rest of the Congo.
124 According to Crowley (1963), Katanga was second only to Orientale in size among the six Congo provinces and
125 was the richest, providing 65 percent of all Congo exports. The huge mining company of Union Minière du Haut-
126 Katanga alone paid one-third of the Congo's budget. The province's riches helped to explain why nearly a third
127 of all the non-Africans in the Congo (28,455 out of 94,531 in 1955) lived in Katanga. In contrast, the Katanga's
128 African population of one and one-half million was the smallest of any province. Katanga's sparse population
129 called for migrant workers being imported from Europe and other parts of the Congo into the province with their
130 cultural and linguistic differences causing ethnic tensions. According to Lemarchand (1962, p. 408), one settler
131 organization in Katanga, Union pour la Colonization (Ucol), sought to make the province different from the rest
132 of the Congo by using all efforts to get the white population the liberties granted by the Belgian constitution
133 to the expatriates in the Congo and to promote, by all available means, the growth of European colonization.
134 Belgium's role in helping Katanga to secede and taking additional measures to sustain the breakaway state
135 to develop was beyond dispute, according to Boehme (2005). Belgium did not want its relationship with the
136 newly independent nation to end not only for sentimental reasons but economic considerations as well. Fresh
137 from breaking away, Katanga asked Belgium for help and Prime Minister Gaston Eyskens' government obliged,
138 and was willing to recognize Katanga's de facto independence. In July 1960, the Belgian government created the
139 Mission Technique Belge (Mistebel), an organization that would supply assistance to the breakaway province.
140 Belgian policymakers, however, were not unanimous in the government's decision to accommodate the breakaway
141 state. On July 12, 1960, Congo's Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, lodged a complaint with the United Nations
142 Secretary-General on behalf of the Congo government. It contained an official protest against the Belgian-backed
143 partition of the southern province of Katanga under the leadership of Moïse Tshombé. The Security Council
144 accepted the complaint and passed Resolution 143, which gave the Secretary-General the right "to take the
145 necessary steps, in consultation with the government of the Republic of Congo, to provide the Government with
146 such military assistance, as may be necessary." b) Biafra Tukumo (1970) asserts Biafra pulling away from Nigeria
147 in 1967 was an overt act even though before that time, it had been an idea. Secessionist threats or separatist
148 agitations in Nigeria date back as far as 1914, during the Lugard's Amalgamation of that year. Northerners
149 believed the amalgamation was a mistake because they did not want anything to do with the Southern people.
150 The disparate manner in which Nigerian nationalism developed foreshadowed the ethnic divisions that would
151 emerge after independence. According to Nafziger and Richter (1976), ethnic nationalism grew stronger as other
152 groups sensed their own lack of participation in the benefits of modernization and self-government and joined
153 the struggle. Yoruba nationalism heightening in 1948 was partly in response Hausa nationalism was aroused
154 later in response to the threat of southern economic and political supremacy. Not surprisingly, politics in post-
155 independent Nigeria became controversial as the three major groupsâ?" the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igboâ?" failed
156 to get along. According to Nafziger, the January 1966 coup epitomized this crisis. Nigeria's politics was pushed
157 to the brink following the abortive counting of the population by region for federal parliamentary representation,
158 the boycott of the federal election by one of the two major political alliances, and the resulting refusal of President
159 Azikiwe to appoint a Prime Minister from the victorious party. Following the coup of 1966, relations between
160 the major ethnic groups worsened, as thousands of Igbo living in the north were massacred. Ojukwu, the leader
161 of the Igbo resistance, removed part of the eastern region from the Nigerian federation to form the Republic of
162 Biafra. The federal government immediately declared war on Biafra in 1967 and successfully ended the secession
163 in 1970.

164 Deciding whether Biafra had a claim to independence, Nixon (1972) asserts the distinct circumstance which

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165 led to the Biafran claim to independence began in May 1966, with a series of attacks against the people of the
166 Eastern Region living in the North. New and even more extensive massacres in the North in September 1966 and
167 the mass migrations that followed intensified the fears Easterners had for their physical safety. This worsened
168 tensions between the Eastern Region and the federal government. Post (1968) believes Biafra pulling out of the
169 federation was based on the unequal sharing of national wealth. The Nigerian Independence Constitution of 1960
170 redistributed revenue by a series of formulas, which allowed the regions to get between 65 and 75 percent of their
171 funding from federal payments. The Eastern region's special grievance was that it was receiving only about 60
172 percent of the rents and royalties from the oil produced there. Easterners believed the other regions were cheating
173 the region out of development capital for which there were no guidelines for its sharing. These grievances, together
174 with others, precipitated the January 1966 coup, which was started by Igbo officers. The major victims of the
175 coup were politicians and senior officers from the north. Since early 2000, the Movement for the Emancipation
176 of the Niger Delta (MEND) formed with the sole purpose of driving away foreign oil companies from the Delta
177 region and returning oil money to the indigenous people of the Delta. The 2003 "Niger Delta Manifesto" gives
178 a rambling account of the history of the plunder of oil by colonialists and the Nigerian government in the Delta
179 region ("The Niger Delta Manifesto", 2003). c) South Sudan half a century against the Egyptian authority and
180 later the Sudanese government seemed precipitated less by economic benefits than the cultural differences that
181 exist between the North and South. The discovery of oil in commercial quantities in both the North and South in
182 the 1980s, however, raised the stakes for the South to break away. The struggles for the peoples of South Sudan
183 to be free came to fruition in July 2011, when an independent republican nation was born. Sudan was the largest
184 country in Africa and, under the best of conditions, the vast expanse of land and diversity of its people posed a
185 formidable challenge for any government wanting to keep an active line of communication with all its regions and
186 peoples. Barbour (1964) and Deng (2006) describe the contrasting rates of development between the north and
187 south as important in understanding the issues in Sudanese politics. They include the South's strikingly high
188 gross reproduction and death rates, high infant mortality rates, poor diet, medical services, and education which
189 fell far below the rest of the country. The most striking contrast was the North being occupied principally by
190 Arabicspeaking Muslims, while the South was occupied by African Negroid peoples, some of which are Christian.
191 Southerners believed the government in Khartoum, which was dominated by the Muslim North, was lukewarm
192 to its development and imposed discriminatory laws on the people found there.

193 According to Tucker (1934), up to the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Sudan government
194 paid no attention to developing any official language in the South. All official intercourse with southern natives
195 was through Arabic, the official language of the North, even though pronouncing the sounds and arranging
196 the syllables of Arabic or 'Bimbashi Arabic' were distorted. Johnson (2003) also sees multiple causes for the
197 North and South conflict, which include the British manipulating ethnic rivalry during colonial rule and the
198 North continuing a long pattern of oppressing the South. Distrust caused southern soldiers to mutiny against
199 the Khartoum government in 1955, plunging the country into a seventeen-year civil war; the so-called Anya
200 Nya rebellion, which ended with a compromise for southern autonomy in 1972 (Bell, 1975). Despite the peace
201 agreement between the North and South holding four years after signing, Kasfir (1977) was doubtful it would
202 last. His pessimism was based on the pervasive suspicion which existed between the parties and the scattered
203 incidents of violence and concessions which aroused dissatisfaction among influential groups in both the North
204 and South.

205 (SPLA) forming in response, seizing most of the South and starting another civil war. According to Hutchinson
206 (2001), the birth of the SPLA caused the fighting between the North and South to intensify as the SPLA made
207 overthrowing the northern-dominated, national, Islamic state in Khartoum one of its objectives. Khartoum and
208 the SPLA reached a peace agreement in 2005 to end the rebellion, but the impromptu death of John Garang,
209 the SPLA leader, rekindled distrust. Hutchinson asserts the hatred between the North and South ran deep,
210 not the least of which was southerners not forgiving northerners for being accessories to the slave trade in the
211 south in the nineteenth century during the Egyptian occupation. Despite deep geographical differences, Roden
212 (1974), however, sees social rather than physical causes as the root of the problems in the Sudan, stemming from
213 strong differences in culture, especially in attitudes. Cultural differences have been reinforced by wide disparities
214 in the spatial sharing of investment. In recent years, water and oil have become major resource issues in the
215 south. Present-day Sudanese politics also has been dominated by the plight of the thousands of refugees in
216 Darfur and their slaughter by the Janjaweed who are government-backed militias, and the government's refusal
217 to cooperate to prosecute the perpetrators of those crimes. d) Other secessions: Successful, failed, and ongoing
218 Governments in several countries in Africa also have contended with threats that had come from groups wanting
219 self-rule and ending their long association with the central political authority. Some of these agitations for self-
220 rule have shown greater poignancy than others. In Ethiopia, the threat from its coastal colony to break away
221 lasted thirty years and culminated in a costly war which ended in 1991, with Eritrea emerging as a breakaway
222 state. Ethiopia officially agreed to Eritrea's independence in 1993 and made Eritrea the first successful breakaway
223 nation in post-independent Africa. Eritrea breaking away from Ethiopia was attributable primarily to political
224 rather than economic or cultural differences. The major ethnic groups of Ethiopia and Eritrea share a common
225 history and culture. In Eritrea, the Tigrinya, Tigre and Kunama are found along the common border with
226 Ethiopia, and politically, were governed under the Ethiopian flag for sixty years. The dominant religions in both
227 countries are Christianity and Islam, and trade and cultural exchanges have always happened among the diverse

228 groups living in the northeastern region of Africa for a long time. What brought marked changes to the region's
229 political development was Italy colonizing Eritrea in 1890, which made Eritreans to see themselves differently
230 from Ethiopians. Italy streamlining governance in both Eritrea and Ethiopia under its rule did not heal the
231 rifts which strong imperious ambitions wrought. According to Yohannes (1993), the British liberation of Eritrea
232 and Ethiopia's resulting in annexation of Eritrea in 1942, were viewed skeptically by Eritreans from the start.
233 Ethiopia desperately needed access to the Red Sea, but Eritreans opposed the blatant manner in which Emperor
234 Haile Selassieinterfered with its affairswhen the Emperor declared it the fourteenth province. The poor living
235 conditions in Ethiopia caused by drought and famine gave Eritreans little hope their living conditions would
236 improve if their political association with Ethiopia continued. Eritrea's economy ironically, has not fared any
237 better since it pulled out from its union with Ethiopia. According to Bereketeab (2007), the second war with
238 Ethiopia in 1998 set Eritrea's economy back.

239 There are other regions in Africa which, like Eritrea and Ethiopia, have had tensions caused by different colonial
240 histories as well as cultural and linguistic differences. The seare the Casamance and Senegal, Cabinda and Angola,
241 The Volta Region of Ghana and Togo, and Anglophone Cameroon and Francophone Cameroon. Since the mid-
242 1980s, Northern Uganda, which is populated chiefly by the Acholi, has suffered from civil unrest perpetrated by
243 the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony, himself an Acholi and a smaller organization, the Allied
244 Democratic Forces. Kony intends to rule Uganda according to "Ten Commandment Principles" and has abducted
245 several thousand children and pillaged several villages in the northern region, leaving nearly half a million people
246 homeless. 2 Mali's government is facing its gravest threat yet from these Tuareg rebels. On April 6, 2012, rebels
247 from the northern half of the country, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), declared
248 the northern half of Mali an independent state under the name Azawad. The new state covers more than half
249 of Mali and includes Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu. According to Burgess (2012), the rebellion which kicked off in
250 January 2011 owes its success in large part to Gaddafi

251 The Casamance, a region in southern Senegal, has become that country's most restless region since early
252 1980, when the Movement of Democratic forces of Casamance (MDFC) began a violent confrontation with the
253 Senegalese government for self-rule. Casamance used to be a Portuguese region before France and Portugal
254 negotiated a settlement which handed over the territory to France. The region's history, location, and poor
255 economic condition have provided the impetus for separatism. Niger was plunged into civil war from 1990 to 1995
256 when independent-minded Nigeriens and ethnic Tuaregs opposed to the central government wanted autonomy
257 for northern Niger. Rebels seeking autonomy attacked the capital, Niamey, followed by reprisal attacks from
258 government forces arresting Tuaregs en masse. In 1995, the largest Tuareg coalition, the Coordination of Armed
259 Resistance, agreed to a limited autonomy and signed a peace accord with the Nigerien government. who recruited
260 Tuareg fighters into his security forces and when his regime fell, they fled back to Mali with large stockpiles of
261 weapons. The estimated two to three thousand experienced, well-armed returning Tuareg fighters were angry
262 not only by the events in Libya but President Amadou Toure's government's lackadaisical attitude addressing
263 the problems their return created. Polgreen (2012) and Cowell(2012) assert this made the Tuareg fighters to
264 reinvigorate the longstanding rebellion they have had with the central government. The Mali army made mainly
265 of sub-Saharan Africans which had previously held the upper hand against the lightly armed Tuaregs was now
266 facing a heavily armed and determined enemy (Brode, 2012). The aftermath of the rebellion was a coup d'état
267 spearheaded by Captain Sonogo that overthrew President Amadou Toure on March 22, 2012. Many members of
268 the Malian army believed the ousted president was not equipping them well enough, not sending reinforcements
269 when needed, and keeping the population in the dark about the deaths of government troops. Ironically, the
270 rebels announced Azawad's independence after the coup.

271 The Tuareg disenchantment with Mali's central government runs deep and goes back several years. One cause
272 has been their dislike for being dominated, first by French colonialists, which they fiercely resisted, and second,
273 by the Bamako government. As Prasse (1995) notes, the "Tuareg must exist largely at the mercy of hostile
274 ruling powers since the departure of their colonial masters." Lecocq (2005) describes the Tuareg society as being
275 stratified with the upper strata being white, even of European descent. The lower strata, on the other hand,
276 are made up of blacksmiths and blacks. Indeed, the Tuareg kept black slaves, bellah, for several years until they
277 were emancipated in the 1940s by French colonial administrators. Since 1970, harsh living conditions resulting
278 from drought have precipitated a southward migration of the population which has brought confusion to social
279 and political structures (Dresch, et al. 1977). The Tuareg rebellion, which began in 1996 and lasted until 1998
280 was violent and persistent, and spilled from an earlier Tuareg rebellion in Niger against the government. The
281 United States, because of its War onTerror, militarized the governments of the Sahel, bringing further instability
282 to the region. Keenan (2004) shows how Tuaregs attacking humanitarian convoys in Mali in 2004 caused deaths.
283 Besides, a longstanding feud between Kounta and Arab Tribes erupted in a fresh outbreak of fighting.

284 4 IV. Africa's secessions: an assessemnt

285 a) The contentiousness of sharing wealth Economic considerationsâ?"? precisely, a region or a group assessing
286 if it would get greater economic benefits by breaking away than staying put will always be an important and
287 recurring variable which will weigh heavily on the decision the region or group makes. Colonialism left a legacy to
288 colonies in how they defined their commodity exports, as farmers were given a wide array of crops and minerals
289 in which to specialize. Regions that are large-scale producers of export commodities like cocoa, coffee, tea or

290 precious minerals such as gold and diamonds are compelled, through monopolistic buying by marketing boards, 291 to contribute money to the common fund. In most African nations, the manner in which government allots money 292 to regions may not be defined by the locus of production or need but by politics. Regions that wield political 293 power or dominate the civil service may reward themselves the most. Based on central governments' tradition 294 of putting taxes from exports into a common fund, regions lacking in high-value minerals and crops have been 295 more accepting of their budgetary allotment from the government. Regions endowed with high-value minerals 296 and crops, on the other hand, expect to be compensated a little bit more. 3 What stands out about public 297 revenues in most African countries is governments' overreliance on a single crop or mineral for exports. Countries 298 endowed with plentiful natural resources, ironically, have been prone to violence because of disagreements over 299 the manner in which governments and producers share money. While disagreements between government and 300 farmers over commodities pricing, for instance, may be tampered by pragmatism, the same cannot be said for 301 nonorganic minerals such as gold and oil. Agricultural and forest products spread across several regions and 302 make organizing for civil action difficult. Oil, diamonds, and gold and other minerals, on the other hand, are 303 found in specific areas and are nonreplenishable. Extracting those minerals is contentious as local landowners, 304 the government, and private companies haggle over pricing and farmland degradation. ??earon (2005) puts oil 305 at the top of minerals that may spark civil war. Oil, he explains, provides easy source of rebel start-up finance 306 and because oil producers have low state capacities given their low per capita income, also oil makes state or 307 regional control a 'tempting prize.' The volatile politics of Angola's enclave of Cabinda and Nigeria's Delta 308 Region, both major oil producing regions, and of the diamond-producing districts of Kono and Koidu in Sierra 309 Leone supports Fearon's thesis. The thesis shows that other high-value minerals can incite violence, too. Decalo 310 (1985) admits that African politics even during the heyday of independence has always been a privilege reserved 311 for the elite, with social repression as an alternative method for keeping power in the face of declining legitimacy 312 and societal scarcity. Besides, poor training, corruption, and nepotism in public bureaucracies have ensured 313 that only the opinions of the ruling elite stand in policy decisions. Fearon and Laitin (2003) the end of the 314 Cold War. They argue that conflicts are not caused by ethnic and religious antagonisms, but poverty and weak 315 bureaucracies have become major sources of insurgencies. Weak bureaucracies translate into weak local policing 316 or inept and corrupt counterinsurgency practices such as an inclination for brutal and indiscriminate retaliation 317 that help to drive noncombatants into rebel forces. b) Sundry causes for breaking away Some disaffected groups 318 have used economic sabotage, expressed overtly or covertly by destroying production equipment, to show their 319 displeasure with government policy. Disaffected groups that feel powerless taking on the central government in a 320 secession attempt may find engaging in economic sabotage a viable, cost-effective option. MEND, realizing the 321 enormous military capability of the Nigerian government has opted for a strategy of hurting Nigeria's economy by 322 sabotaging oil equipment and hampering production in the Niger Delta. MEND has not given up on its ultimate 323 goal of seeing the Niger Delta region break away from Nigeria. In 2007, at the height of MEND's campaign, 324 Mouawad (2007) reported there were few safe places left for oil companies in the Niger Delta, the epicenter of 325 Nigeria's petroleum industry. It reported armed rebel gangs blowing up pipelines, disabling pumping stations, 326 and kidnapping over 150 foreign oil workers since 2006. Later that year, Shell shut down about one-half million 327 barrels a day of production from its fields. Jackson (1992, p.2) argues that the weak link between governments 328 and citizens in sub-Saharan Africa has been the cause of states lacking empirical statehood as expressed through 329 authority and power to govern a defined territory and population.

330 "Citizenship means little, and carries few substantial rights or duties compared with membership in a family, 331 clan, religious sect or ethnic community. Often the government cannot govern itself, and its officials may in fact 332 be freelancers, charging what amounts to a private fee for their services.

333 When assessing whether a region's threat to break away is real or illusory, it is essential to consider its location 334 relative to other regions of the country. Anecdotal evidence shows regions that have tried to break away have been 335 those situated in the outer fringes. What facilitated Katanga, Biafra, the Niger Delta, Puntland, Somaliland, 336 Southern Sudan, Cabinda, and Azawad breaking away was those regions proximity to other sovereign nations. 337 Secessionist agitations being hatched from regions on the fringes is no accident since a path for escape when the 338 insurgency fails is a consideration not lost on insurgent leaders. Governments threatened by secession task their 339 military to use force to halt that treasonable act. The likelihood of war and even a greater likelihood of losing that 340 war have made groups planning an insurgency to be circumspect before putting that plan into action. Closeness 341 to other countries also reduces the effectiveness of law enforcement in stopping smuggling, a major revenue source 342 for border residents. Clapham (1998) believes that the resentment that citizens show toward government is due 343 to governments' predictable practice of exacting tribute from its populations in any way it can. "A process that 344 only results in alienation, evasion and the growth of an informal economy whose *raison d'être* is to evade the 345 demands of the state." At the same time, the penchant African governments have for concentrating power at the 346 center makes the regions placed in the outer fringes poorly served in development projects in schools, hospitals, 347 and road networks.

352 fearing the dreadful consequences of secession. Every African government deems a group or a region's right to
353 leave a union to form a sovereign state non-negotiable. Regionally-based separatist movements are disdained by
354 governments which believe they have an exclusive right to sovereignty. Throughout the world, the supporters of
355 separatist movements are considered criminals (Douglass and Zulaika, 1990). Victory in the resulting war which
356 a government starts to restore national integrity overwhelmingly has been won by the government, bolstered by
357 strong diplomatic support and superiority in troops and armaments. Not ceding to insurgents' demands was the
358 strategy which Colonel Gowon, Nigeria's leader, chose when Biafra announced its sovereignty in 1967. According
359 to Uzokwe (2003), Gowon, refused to accept Biafra's sovereignty and declared the secession illegal. He went on
360 to amass 100,000 troops to crush the rebellion and re-integrate Biafra into Nigeria. This tough stance which
361 governments take against insurgencies is intended as much to preserve a state's integrity, as it is to forewarn
362 other factions from emulating this illegality in the future.

363 The African Union which has unflinchingly upheld the principle of states' inviolability has used its stature as
364 a supranational organization to leverage leaders inside and outside Africa to hold back diplomatic and military
365 support from regions that break away. This policy which the organization officially adopted in 1964 was meant
366 to tamp down the fervor of self-determination which was running rampant during the first half of Africa's
367 independence decade. The OAU feared that backing the declaration of self-determination from groups in newly
368 independent nations would set the stage for an avalanche of demands, whereby every

369 **6 C**

370 Year group which was disenchanted with its government would seek to withdraw. The OAU's strong stance
371 against secession, however, undermined its disenchantment with Portugal and Spain which had been holdouts for
372 independence. Tanzania, Cote d'Ivoire, Zambia, Gabon, and Haiti recognizing Biafra as an independent state,
373 exposed the OAU's seeming hypocritical philosophy. It was a symbolic statement of support either for Biafrans
374 to keep fighting, or against the Nigerian federal government to stop its assault.

375 In the 1960s and 70s, the United Nations was conflicted, as the OAU was, about the appropriate response to
376 give to ethnic groups and regions seeking self-determination from the countries of which they were part. The
377 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 and the International Convention on Civil and Political
378 Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, respect people's civil and political rights. The UDHR, coming almost a decade before
379 the great decolonization wave began in Africa and Asia, anticipated the self-determination effort which had begun
380 in India and Pakistan and was poised to spread to Africa. In the 1960s, the United Nations supported every
381 colony in Africa decolonizing, including imposing selective sanctions on the racist regimes of Rhodesia and South
382 Africa; yet it never backed Katanga and Biafra breaking away. Apart from the Soviet Union and Cuba supporting
383 Ethiopia in the early stages of Eritrea's insurgency and the United States tepidly supporting Eritrea, Eritrea did
384 not get any official backing from the United Nations or the OAU. The message must be clear, therefore, to a
385 group or region wanting to break away that it might not get much external support even if it presents convincing
386 evidence of atrocities or discrimination.

387 **7 VI. The pitfalls of leaving**

388 The fear new African governments had that well-established kingdoms such as Buganda, Ashanti or Oyo would
389 look inward and withhold support for their new nations was largely unfounded. It was not for lack of grievances
390 from the old kingdoms or regions, however, but rather fear. Regions and their ethnic groups recognized the heavy
391 odds it would face if their ragtag people's militia were to square off against well-stocked national armies. The
392 horrific loss of lives which soldiers and civilians suffered in the Eritrea's war with Ethiopia and in the Nigerian and
393 the Sudanese civil wars, have become ominous reminders of the daunting sacrifices a region or group inevitably
394 will have to make if it tries to break away. Despite the relative calm existing in the relations between African
395 governments and their administrative regions, it would be shortsighted for policy makers to assume that deeply
396 felt grievances emanating from the regions could be treated lightly or ignored. Separatists' agitations are hard to
397 uproot and may smolder for years because the most ardent promoters of separatism often enjoy folk hero status.

398 The constant clashes in Nigerian states, not just those in the Delta, between residents and immigrants about
399 religion and economic opportunity are reminders of how fractious and intricate intrastate politics in multiethnic
400 nations could be. It may serve African leaders well if they assumed the glue that binds the patchwork of groups
401 inside their boundaries can unravel anytime under the flimsiest of provocations. Disagreements over property
402 rights, border lines, smuggling, and members of one group ill-treating the members of another group have pitted
403 groups against each other. Most disputes do not rise to the point of an aggrieved group wanting to pull out. Other
404 disagreements, however, have, such as Tuareg rebels in northern Mali and Niger and Hutu rebels in eastern DRC
405 wanting autonomy, and prompting armed intervention from government. Inside countries, regional inequalities
406 and other causes such as population size and population concentrations can start a conflict (Raleigh, 2009).

407 Whenever a region or an ethnic group decides to break away from a sovereign state it has caused war that had
408 been declared unfailingly by the government which believed its sovereignty had been breached. The resultant
409 war had usually exacted a high price both on the region wanting out and the government wanting to keep its
410 sovereignty. Even in Cabinda and the Casamance where rebel groups have not formally broken away by setting
411 up independent sovereign nations, the hot pursuits which the Angolan and Senegalese military had undertaken

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412 to hound rebels have laid to waste people, property, and families. The costs associated with secession, not
413 surprisingly therefore, have been those usually borne from war especially in human lives and the destruction
414 done to property and the means of production. Also as occurs in wars, refugees internally or externally
415 displaced become the inexorable collateral damage. The United Nations which since 1960 has continually provided
416 peacekeepers to prevent Africa's internal conflicts from worsening has always borne a substantial part of the cost
417 of those conflicts. The United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Congo-UNOC-the UN's first in Africa's
418 independent decade, caused a financial crisis which plagued UN operations for several years. ONUC's annual
419 cost was \$66million when the UN's overall budget was only \$70million and France and the Soviet Union refused
420 to pay ??ONUC, 1964). For its fiscal 2012 budget, the Security Council (2012) estimated a cost of \$7.8 billion
421 for its peacekeeping operations worldwide, with the operations in Africa taking about three-quarters of the total.
422 The greater part of the monetary cost of wars to reclaim territory, however, has been borne by the government
423 which declares war. According to Okpaku (1972), the three- was in the loss of lives where the greatest cost of the
424 Biafran war was felt, especially in Biafra where most of the fighting took place. The war caused 100,000 military
425 casualties and between 500,000 and two million civilians' deaths from hunger, starvation, and disease. Military
426 spending in the Sudan picked up exponentially after 2000 when the government's war with the south intensified.
427 From 2000 to 2006 (when data were available), the country spent three percent of its GDP on the military,
428 amounting to \$13.9 billion (SIPRI).The politics and the war that defined Eritrea breaking away from Ethiopia
429 were exercises in attrition. In early 1990, Human Rights Watch (HRW, 1990) reported Asmara, Eritrea's capital,
430 being cut off from overland supply for more than 200 days as the Ethiopian military starved the city of food
431 and supplies. Resentment between the two countries never subsided pushing the two sides to fight a war from
432 1998 to 2000. Air raids against civilians and the rounding up and expulsion of long-term Eritrean residents from
433 Ethiopia and of Ethiopian nationals Eritrea were the war's preferred strategy ??HRW, 1998).

434 A region or an ethnic group that publicly declares its plan to leave a union risks becoming the target of
435 resentment and suspicion by the government and other groups which may see such plan as a threat and a
436 betrayal. The ill will created may last several years, especially when geographic distance becomes an impediment
437 to promoting a uniform national culture. Despite a union consummated more than one-half century ago, some
438 Zanzibar is are still opposed to the island's union with Tanzanians. Similarly, many Cabindans do not consider
439 their enclave to be part of Angola. The Biafran war heralded the long-running insurgency in the Niger Delta.
440 A war or any act of disobedience has usually drawn the fury of ruling governments to employ the strongest
441 means available to end that threat. The strategy has been to employ the police or military to harass groups
442 and individuals. Not surprisingly, wars in Africa concomitantly have also brought human rights abuses. From
443 2000 to 2007, HRW (2008) criticized the Angola's MPLA government for unprecedented human rights abuses in
444 Cabinda, including the unfair trial of Fernando Lelo and four soldiers. Most of those detained in Cabinda were
445 held in an unofficial military detention center, where they were tortured and held in inhumane conditions for
446 months. In 2012, HRW (2012)also chastised separatist Tuareg rebels of northern Mali for committing many war
447 crimes including rape, using child soldiers, pillaging hospitals, schools, aid agencies and government buildings.
448 An Islamist armed group summarily executed two men, cut off the hand of at least one other, carried out public
449 floggings and threatened women and Christians.

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451 The nonchalant manner in which African governments have treated the threat of any region of their country
452 breaking away epitomizes the mind-set most leaders have for not believing the threat exists, and if it does,
453 having the ability to contain it. The logic behind this philosophy appears simple; leader believe the only answer
454 to end rebellion is to use force, which would also forestall similar rebellious acts spreading to other regions.
455 The inconsistent and vindictive manner in which governments have addressed regional problems, however, has
456 not helped to muzzle regions or groups from expressing their grievances and apprehensions. Governments not
457 showing empathy has indeed hardened the resolve disaffected regions have by engaging in asymmetrical warfare
458 such as kidnappings and sabotaging economic facilities, which they believe would help them to achieve the goal
459 of selfdetermination they have set. Places like Cabinda in Angola, Zanzibar in Tanzania, and the Casamance in
460 Senegal which have become notorious for political ferment continue to keep their reputation. Like the governments
461 they despise, these regions also believe the cause they are aiming for is just.

462 Even though Africans seem predisposed to ethnic or regional breakups, the behavior of governments to this
463 threat suggests oblivion, ignorance or supreme confidence to subdue such threats if they should ever arise. The
464 AU's condemnatory stance toward a region breaking away from a sovereign nation as well as the impressive
465 record of success African countries governments have had against renegade regions, and the sporadic nature of
466 such attempts explains governments' complacency to this existential threat. Even when the threat of a region
467 breaking away is obvious, the credential of autocracy to which many African governments had worn prevents
468 them from seeking compromise with groups with whom they disagreed. Even among governments which believe
469 in the rule of law the conviction that the will of the sovereign must always prevail when addressing matters
470 considered to serve parochial interests is strong. Governments believe they would pay an unredeemable price if
471 they were to negotiate with groups that make strong demands for autonomy. The manner in which Nigeria's
472 military government of Sani Abacha handled the Ogoni crisis in the mid-1990s showed prejudice, incompetence
473 and brutality of the highest order against people of the Niger Delta. The military government treated the Ogoni in

474 the manner it did because of an unstated prejudice the people in the Niger Delta were associated with the Biafran
475 secession. Once a region tries to break away, the people living in that region are described as untrustworthy;
476 a label from which the people in the region may find difficult to disentangle It was in keeping with a string of
477 poor judgments that the government of Sani Abacha arrested, tried, and hung Saro Wiwa, an environmental
478 activist, in 1995. The Ogoni uprisings foreshadowed the unrests in the Niger Delta in the 2000s which has cost
479 the country billions in oil revenues.

480 Over more than one-half century since Kantanga's secession began, African governments should have learned
481 the lesson that sporadic but ominous regional rumblings will never stop, unless governments diligently address
482 their causes. Communities that make significant contributions to the national economy must be rewarded amply
483 for their good fortune. The stances which most governments have taken when addressing regional issues, on the
484 other hand, have lacked pragmatism as they believe doggedly that ruling governments must have the final say
485 in all matters about sovereignty. It should never be lost on any observer, however, that African governments'
486 preferred nonchalant stance toward the menace of secession and other regional issues in general, may be deliberate
487 because they do not want to spend extra money and personnel to evaluate them to come to solutions which would
488 be long lasting. Grievances may be settled quickly and cheaply through force. Some observers would hope history
489 would teach governments that constituents would be better served if they reflected on the escalating crisis in
490 Mali of Tuaregs of the north breaking away from the south. The Bamako government never envisaged that a
491 dormant grudge would be resuscitated by fighters coming home from Libya who have become emboldened by
492 having access to a bevy of weapons to back up their demand. It seemed farcical that such unlikely events would
493 per mutate to create a crisis that may end the Republic of Mali as the world had known it. Sadly, having built
494 a reputation for not planning for contingencies, African governments are unlikely to draw any hard lessons from
the Malian crisis. ^{1 2 3}



Figure 1:

Figure 2:

495

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³In early 2009, the American military helped plan and pay for an attack on the Lord's Resistance Army, but the offensive went awry, scattering fighters who later carried out a wave of massacres as they fled, killing as many as 900 civilians. Jeffrey Gettleman and Eric Schmitt. U.S. Aided a Failed Plan to Rout Ugandan Rebels. New York Times February 9, 2009.3 To show its sensitivity to the plight of residents of the Niger-Delta Region, the Nigerian Federal Government allocates substantial amounts of money to the nine states in the region. In 2009, out of 180 billion Naira designated as 'statutory transfers', 35.6 billion Naira was allocated to the Niger-Delta region to improve economic and social development. See The Appropriation Bill, 2010. Available at <http://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng/Bill2010.pdf>

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