

Africa Report by Douglas DeGroot

After Chad, is Cameroon next?

Strategically located Cameroon, one of the more developed African nations, is being threatened with civil war.

Cameroon is becoming the next target of destabilization by the forces behind Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi, as *EIR* predicted two weeks ago.

This comes on the heels of Qaddafi's move into Chad and his agreement with the French to divide that country into two zones of influence, with Qaddafi dominating northern Chad, and France the south.

Cameroon President Paul Biya announced Aug. 22 that two leading army officers had been purged for involvement in a coup plot against him. The two were close associates of former President Alhaji Ahmadou Ahidjo, who remained head of Cameroon's sole political party, Union Nationale Camerounaise (UNC), after he stepped down from office.

At the same time, Biya announced the fourth reshuffle of the government since he became president last November, with the intention of reducing Ahidjo's influence.

In response, five days after the coup plot was discovered, Ahidjo resigned as head of the UNC, and accused Biya of constructing a police state. This amused those familiar with Ahidjo's iron-fisted rule in collaboration with French colonial interests from independence in 1960 until his retirement last year.

Ahidjo's withdrawal from the Cameroonian political scene, and his hostility toward Biya, makes the country, which shares borders with both Chad and Nigeria, vulnerable to destabilization. Ahidjo is a Muslim from northern Cameroon, while Biya is a Christian from the central-south

section of the country.

When Ahidjo resigned last November, there were reports of arms caches in a section of Yaounde, the capital, occupied by northerners. Ahidjo still has connections to the military (many soldiers have been traditionally recruited from the north), and the bulk of the army's heavy arms and ammunition is stationed in Ngaoundere, in the northern part of the country.

Two days after the coup plot was neutralized, the French daily *Le Monde* in its lead editorial warned of the danger of a civil war between northern Muslims and southern Christians.

The Nazi International and Russian controllers behind Qaddafi are going after a country with one of the better economic records in Africa in recent years. Development officials and businessmen in the West often refer to Cameroon as the best example of African national development. The most important reason for the targeting of Cameroon, however, is its strategic location next to Nigeria. The largest country in Africa, Nigeria, along with Egypt, represent the greatest potential, as nation-states, to resist the plans harbored by Qaddafi's backers for the destruction of black Africa.

Ahidjo made the decision to resign as head of state, retaining the leadership of the UNC, while at his home in southern France last November. He had been told that he was extremely ill, and this was given as the reason for his withdrawal. However, there was reportedly growing dissatisfaction with aspects of his rule in

Cameroon.

The French were unhappy with certain Cameroon policies, and may have wanted a change in leadership to play on the weaknesses introduced by the present conflict between north and south as a way of forcing policy changes.

Although Cameroon is France's largest market among French-speaking African countries, France is unhappy with certain aspects of Cameroon's policy, including the fact that Cameroon keeps about half of its petroleum income in U.S. banks instead of French, and thus deprives the franc zone of hard currency. Ninety percent of Cameroon's oil is sold to the United States. France, however, is only the third largest importer of Cameroonian goods, leaving a trade deficit with France.

Soon after Ahidjo left office, his brother-in-law, Moussa Yaya, was organizing northern businessmen and political figures against Biya, and even discussing the possibility of seceding from Cameroon and joining northern Cameroon with Nigeria.

A fairly lively illicit trade takes place between the two countries, monopolized by northern Cameroonians. They import food and manufactured goods prohibited by Nigerian law, and trade them for Nigerian-made products, which undermines Cameroon's nascent manufacturing sector.

Yaya was thrown out of the UNC in January at a meeting of the party presided over by Ahidjo. But by April, Ahidjo was reportedly maneuvering to regain power, trying to put a politician loyal to him in the prime minister's spot. This plus his control over the UNC would have given him a lot of leverage over Biya. Hence Biya's periodic reshuffles.

The resulting, inherently unstable situation is ideal for Qaddafi's Muslim Brotherhood destabilization networks.