

Paul Collier (2010) War, Guns And Votes Democracy In Dangerous Places. London:P Bodley Vintage;245 Pages, Paperback.

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I. Introduction

The book is authored by Paul Collier a professor of economics and international relations at Oxford University, has won the 2008 Lionel Gelber prize for the best book on international affairs and it protests fundamental issues on wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in dangerous places. The book is divided into three major parts which focus on Denying Reality: Democracy, Facing Reality: Nasty British and Long and the changing reality, accountability and Security. All these parts are covered in ten chapters contributed by the author Paul Collier a Professor of Economics at Oxford University. He won the 2008 Lionel Gilbert prize for the World best book on International Affairs. He has lectured on subjects of economics and International Relations in many Universities around the world.

Part one comprises Chapter one to three. These chapters focus on issues of votes and violence which are manifested in most of the poor states in the world where the citizens live below the poverty line of 1 US Dollar per day. The citizens have low income and are deprived of their electoral power through corrupt leaders who compromise the electorate by buying the votes to attain political positions. He also addresses the issue of ethnic politics which is destructive towards the democratic leadership of the parliamentary leaders and the President. The author observes that leaders are ethnically elected thus undemocratic leading to misuse of power and marginalization of certain ethnic groups on racial lines. The chapter three; inside the cauldron and emphasizes on Post- conflicts settlement where economic reconstruction, peace keeping is key towards peace initiatives which is expensive exercise in war torn countries that requires a global attention.

Part two of the book facing reality; nasty, brutish and long .Chapter four deals with guns, fueling the fire, chapter five deals with wars: The political economy of destruction, Chapter six deals with coups: The unguided missile and chapter seven the meltdown in Cote D Ivoire. These covers issues on political manipulation of the civil society and the struggle for power in the bottom billion states.

1.1 In chapter one the author discusses the challenges of democratic systems in the world's poor states.

The author examines the how democratic systems are manipulated during elections in bottom billion (poor) societies which are characterized by dictatorship and autocracy. This is he attributes to most of the developing Nations such as Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Angola, Indonesia, Latin ,America and Asia where the politicians manipulate the electorate through retail or wholesale buying of votes to favor themselves and the presidential candidate leadership. Indeed democratic government has no choice but to deliver what ordinary citizens want. The author observes that governments which are accountable their states help to reduce violence in accordance to the tenets of the democratic theory. He emphasizes that violence can be reduced when the cost of living is improved by 7 thresholds to enable the poor access basic needs. He also notes that the rich in democratic societies who get rich at \$27,000 do so by instigating political violence and autocracy. The politically unstable states with low income levels are affected by conflicts and political regime which are characterized by riots, assassinations, political strikes, accidents, guerilla warfare and civil wars. According to the Author societies that are divided on ethnic grounds produce parliamentary and presidential leaders with criminal records such as President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi of Kenya, Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Mwai Kibaki of Kenya whose propaganda in 2007 presidential election triggered 2008 electoral violence in Kenya. Other presidents who fall in the same category are Obasanjo of Nigeria, Tsabo Mbeki of South Africa, and Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan. Most of these autocratic states have dysfunctional policies as revealed by researchers of Political Science. Researchers have observed that governments pump money into the political economy to win elections and drain back the money after the elections (political cycle). The author relates these to manipulated democracies to autocracy where elections are never free and fair.

1.2 Chapter two highlights the ethnic politics in the poor states

The bottom billion trumps the national identity and is more diverse than the high income countries. In Tanzania President Nyerere used Kiswahili language to construct identity of Tanzania's while in Kenya President Moi favoured the Kalenjins likewise to President Jomo Kenyatta. Research reveals that in the absence of states, ethnicity is the basis of collective action. Religious faith also constructs ethnic obligations as it was observed in the funeral of the late Kenyan lawyer Otieno spouse Wamboi who wanted him be buried in Upper Matasia other than Nyaligunga (Luoland) but ended up being buried at his in Nyaligunga. The politicians apply economies of scale to maneuver the voters by burying them (voter loyalty). Collins Jennings analyses electoral competition as a dividing factor in ethnic societies. He points out that the coalition of parties in Northern Ireland Catholics verses Protestants leads to polarization of the voters as it was the case of 2007 electoral violence in Kenya and the rest of Africa with many coups due to deteriorating democratic politics. The author notes that China's support of autocratic leadership engineers political strife in many countries in Africa and compares this to ethnic diversity that may generate bad autocracies like Saddam Hussein of Iraq, Samuel Doe of Liberia. He feels that ethnic diversity can be overcome by super imposing a constructed National Identity as in the case of Surkarno of Indonesia in 1945 – 1967 and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania between 1964-1985 and Nelson Mandela the political giant of South Africa.

1.3 Chapter three talks about inside the Cauldron: Post – conflict settlements in the world

Post conflicts situation are fragile and 40% of them lead to violence or civil wars in the world. Countries which have encountered such scenarios of peace and settlement such as Srilanka, Burundi, Southern Sudan, Sierra Leone, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Bosnia and Kosovo, Eritrea, Singapore, East Timor are prone to civil wars. There has been research to establish whether post conflict peace endures in states. The legitimacy and accountability theory states that peace can be secured by fair elections and is illustrated by percentages to discuss the statistics of autocracy and conflict situation in Angola and Srilanka, Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Democratic Republic of Congo is an example of countries with intractable conflicts with extrajudicial killings and a series of assassinations key government officials. Peacekeeping initiatives are hard to implement in post conflicts states, are expensive for the contributing nationals and even to the host country. In this respect the author observes that since peacemaking has become a problem or failure, alternative method of over the horizon guarantees to be introduced as the British is doing in Sierra Leone. Francophone's have helped West African states to stabilize and recommendations of more international peacekeeping troops to be deployed in war tone countries to curb violent conflicts. The author stipulates that during civil wars lots of assets (Capital flight) of the bottom billion (poor) societies is transported to foreign states by people in power paralyzing the country's economy which lead to poverty. The author states, "Everyone has an interest that everyone else should keep his capital in the country". He ends the chapter by noting that post conflict countries are characterized with insecurity, autocracy, declined economy, high inflation, civil wars and coup de tats.

1.4 Chapter four, the guns fueling the fire brings and genocide in Africa

the issue of genocide undertaken by ethnic groups in countries where leaders are power hungry such as Rwanda where Hutu government slaughtered more than half a million Tutsi's with machetes. Proliferation of arms and arms race are key motivators of violent conflicts in the bottom billion states. The guns or ammunitions drains a country's economy as military spending increases leading economic recessions and low income among the citizens which builds up to violence. The author relates the scenario to has been North Atlantic Organization (NATO) and Warsaw Pact during the Cold war, Costa Rica through President Arias the Nobel peace Lieutenant who led the world in virtually eliminating military spending. Developed states in America always give statistics on military spending in supporting states in conflict with stockpiles. The author points out that countries of the bottom billion are at \$ 9 billion compared to the total inflow of \$ 34 billion with military spending of 1.5 percent points of its GDP. Some countries like Pakistan and India point nuclear missile to each other yet they share a common border an indication of mistrust and potential violence. "Security is subject to economies of scale". These statements show a political economy of destruction for most of the budgetary spending is levied to security and purchase of arms. The chapter highlights that serious violence in societies trigger civil international wars such as Ethiopia, Eritrea are aided by Italians and Cote D Ivoire by French. Indeed it's true that civil wars cannot end because countries which have interest in certain issues will continue to fight to derive the satisfaction of political power and acquire wealth.

1.5 Chapter five deals with wars:

The chapter focuses on the demerits of war in developing states where the leaders manipulate the electoral to excel to political power. The author see this type of system to be characterized by extralegal military groupings in the form of rebels, terrorist, freedom fighters or gangsters entrench the country into civil wars.

Research shows that countries with civil war have low income as shown in the 1960 - 2004 report of Johas Savimbi's civil war in Angola. Civil wars in accordance to the economists lead to economic destruction hence poverty. Research has proven that countries with fewer proven natural resources are in the worst history of civil wars. The author brings out a theory that two identical countries of 10% risk of conflicts when merged can build a super country of 20% which reduced risk of civil war to 12%. Split of Eritrea from Ethiopia, East Timor from Indonesia, Yugoslavia split into six countries, Southern Sudan from Sudan has reduced civil wars and violence of countries attacking its own people. Conflict groups are sometimes funded by neighboring countries and parties who have interest in the political power. Conflict in Darfur of Sudan was supported by religious groups such as John Kony's Lord's Resistance Army of Northern Uganda.

1.6 Chapter six discusses the issue of coups as the unguided missile

This brings instability in most governments in the world and are associated with political violence. Coups are due to bad or prolonged oppressive leadership such that of Samuel Doe of Liberia and Mahathir of Malaysia, Mobutu Sese Seko of Democratic Republic of Congo and Quetta Masire of Botswana. Coups are said to replace dictators and break the social cohesion and replacement of dysfunctional government leaders like emperor Hailie Selasie of Ethiopia who was overthrown due to autocracy. According to research records 191 out of 336 attempted coups 82 are successful with Africa is 4% of the attempted coups annually. Most of the coups in poor states is due to ethnic polarization a global risk to a political leadership. Qualitative research reveals that successful and unsuccessful coups depend on proper leadership of the state, income of the citizens, accountability of the army and generally the performance of the ordinary citizens.

1.7 Chapter seven focuses on the melt down in Coted D' Ivore

It starts with highlights on mismanagement of the economy compounded by elections, followed by coups and civil war fueled by a scramble for arms regardless of the international community embargo on sale of arms and stockpiles. The author says the country has good economy from the exports of cocoa ransacted by the immigrants from Burkina Faso before civil wars and coups infiltrated the country's government system. In the 1956 Cote d' ivore was successful when president Houphuet – Boigny build the economy using socialism theories similar to Kwame Nkurumah of Ghana. The collapse of the cocoa prices in 1980 and fluctuations of oil prices facilitated foreign borrowing leading to a debt of \$15 billion draining the country to poverty and its collapse. When President Houphout Boigny died after a reign of 30 years followed a struggle for power with a series of coups by leaders Henri Konan Bedie and Alassane Quattara an economist who drained the country's economy to a level that he was unable to pay salaries for the civil servants and military salaries leading to loss of trust in the civil servants and the military. Due to mistrust of the leadership the period that followed was characterized by civil wars, coups and declines of the economy of the state.

Part three brings out the issue of the changing reality, accountability and security. Chapter eight deals with State and Nation building. Chapter 9 discusses better dead than fed while chapter 10 focus on the changing reality. According to the author the state building through a painful, slow and circuitous process of formation that turned them into nations. He denotes that legal states are built on International ratification and only need recognition and on this basis that how the bottom billion states were established and exist. The author brings the ideals on how territorial states were built, sighting their basis on primordial ethnic solidarity and the conjuring of their boundaries by urban, middle class, romantic nationalist of the 19th century. Some of the state formation was driven by unusual economic properties of violence. Unproductive groups core were said to be good at violence than professionals. Effective states facilitate economic growth, weak states become better when they develop a sense of identity which later empowers them. Autocracies become weaker as their income reduces. The decolonization of the bottom billion produced little states similar to the situation of post Roman Europe. Most of them face hyperinflation especially Zaire, Zimbabwe which are imposing a tax of 50% on all cash holding of the citizens which siphoned or misappropriated by errand leaders emerged in corruption. The author compares President Museveni and ID Amin Dada of Uganda on the status of Nation building show that the state has sound economy with portrayal of transparency and accountability in this reign of president Museveni with similar achievements in Rwanda by Paul Agape, Belgium and Canada.

1.8 Chapter nine focuses on better dead than fed.

The main focus is on the delivery of the public goods to the poor civilians (bottom billion) from the international and the national community. Most of the societies suffer depravity for basic public goods like security and accountability which is hard to implement in the bottom billion states. Since they are divided into smaller territories like Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Pakistan and so forth. The states suffer because of the assumed sovereignty of the autocratic presidents. The states have no regional cooperation to foster accountability for security and economic growth to improve the welfare. The European Union, America and Japan command the words sovereignty and economy because they have good political power and high income. The author compares

Russia and Burundi economies to address the issues of regional cooperation. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has been unable to monitor stubborn leaders such as Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Gaddafi of Libya and even the agenda of Pan – Africanism of Nkwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania lacked unity of purpose among the African states. Some researchers feel that Africa should have been bundled into seven large states with little ethnicity which could be safer than very many small states with numerous problems. Large states like America with highly transparent governments have streamlined system of provision of public goods to the citizens than that of the bottom billion states without checks and balances of their economic systems. The implication is that with time democratic states will continue to decline due to leadership problems.

1.9 Chapter ten focuses on changing reality

The author states that societies at the bottom billion are structurally insecure and unaccountable sighting Sudan and Somalia in 2007, followed by Nigeria , Pakistan and Kenya, Chad and East Timor in 2008 which faced the coup and rigging during elections. The author emphasises that security and accountability are very important for the development of any state and failure may lead to the creation of socio economic conditions of poverty has been experienced by the bottom billion for 40 years. There is need for visionary leadership to transform the ethnic societies and nationals to achieve security, accountability and economic development among the states. The Chapter mainly summaries the contents of the wars, Guns and Votes; democracy in dangerous places which are characterized by poor political leadership, violence, poverty and misuse of power in the bottom billion states.

It is a straight forward acknowledgement that the author has researched well on the political leadership in the bottom billion states across the world. The book fills the gap on the knowledge of the political leadership agenda in most of the small states curbed with ethnicity in the world. Secondly the author highlights pertinent issues of democracy, political leadership, economy, poverty, insecurity, elections, accountability that emerge in developing states globally. Thirdly the researcher reports after every chapter gave the data and findings of leadership situations in comparison of developed states and individual bottom billion states. The key concepts of review were highlighted giving a clear link of the work to the international policy and diplomacy. Scholars of political science, international relations and diplomacy will find the book more informative and relevant to state security, economic planning and good governance in small states and sub regions globally. Thus the book is relevant useful text for scholarly studies in colleges and universities.

II. Conclusion

The author gives the list of the bottom billion states in the appendix which are defined as the low-income countries in a development trap of wars , guns , votes and democracy. The book is based on the authors and other scholar's research as indicated in the references . The author gives summaries of key information at the end of every chapter to keep the reader on track and motivation for further reading. The index gives a guide on the location of key or texts in the book to ease reading. The strength of the book is covered in tangible research data and information by the authored supported by scholars and theorists. The book covers democratic demerits in most of the developing states especially Africa where more emphasis has been given on the rogue states with intractable conflicts. Thus the book has a vast cross- sectional information on global politics, diplomacy and international relations in comparison of the poor states, developing and developed nations in the world.