

Review of: "Armed Conflicts in Africa and Environmental Intelligence for Sustainability"

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WHO DOES THE COLONEL WRITE TO?

The article by the authors Al-Hamndou Dorsouma and Michel André Bouchard is devoted to environmental intelligence. The topic is relevant, although “environmental intelligence is not a new or expensive area of endeavor for the Intelligence Community”^[1] (John Deutch, the director of the CIA, 1996). Therefore, the statement of Al-Hamndou Dorsouma: ‘In this paper, the concept of Environmental Intelligence for sustainability (EIS) is defined as a strategic approach to analyze and manage the relationship between anticipated or on-going armed conflicts and sustainability. It may range from a pre-conflict strategic environmental and social assessment to governance and management tools developed as a three-dimensional framework operationalized through preventive, prospective and reactive measures’^[2] encourages the search for novelty. The focus appears to be decomposing the light of African armed conflicts into environmental, sociological and political components through an intelligence prism. The researchers propose a definition of a three-dimensional intelligence structure, but practically do not develop an institutional line: who, for whom and for whose money conducts intelligence activities. Intelligence, albeit environmental, can both distract and attract attention from the most vulnerable point. Therefore, the formation of an international intelligence community in war-torn Africa may be irrational, if not impossible. In addition, modern environmental reconnaissance requires not only means of ground-based chemical, geological and other types of monitoring, but also space observations. This severely limits the effectiveness of African national intelligence agencies. The trend may be to strengthen not the regional, but the global structure. The authors mention the participation of business in intelligence activities – these are also institutional issues.

‘El coronel no tiene quien le escriba’ (“Nobody writes to the Colonel”) was the title of the story by the Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez. When no one writes to the colonel, that’s one thing, but when there’s no one to write the colonel, that’s a failure...

[1] Deutch, J. (1996). The environment on the intelligence agenda. Speech presented to the World Affairs Council. [Online]. Available: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/John-Deutch/publication/268341446_The_Environment_on_the_Intelligence_Agenda/links/575c856108aed88462133ba9/The-Environment-on-the-Intelligence-Agenda.pdf

[2] Dorsouma, A.H. (2022), *Conflit Armé et Développement Durable en Afrique: Cas de la Côte d'Ivoire*; l'Harmattan, Collection Études Africaines, 258 pages.