

Geopolitics of Security of the Congolese Borders: A Strategic Perspective for Effective Protection

Lunkamba Muembo Didier-Pascal¹

Abstract:- To speak of the borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo today is to address the question of their security. These borders are subject to constant threat and insecurity. As a result, some neighboring countries of the DRC are blamed for maintaining the criminal enterprise along and within the Congolese borders either by supporting the rebel movements, or by contesting or occupying part of the territory, or even by illegally exploiting national resources. Beyond that, the DRC suffers both from the expansionist behavior of its neighbors and from the absence of effective border protection mechanisms. These expansionist tendencies contribute to the emergence of numerous conflicts between the DRC and its neighbours. Indeed, the geopolitics of securing the borders of the DRC is intended as a strategic approach aimed at developing and mobilizing the significant means of power likely to validly defend its national territory wherever it is threatened. To do this, several prerequisites must be met, in particular the redefinition of neighborly relations, the equipment of defense services and the erection of walls. These prerequisites are materials that can materialize the real protection of the borders of the DRC against external threats.

I. INTRODUCTION

For more than two decades, Congolese borders have been known for their porosity. And yet during the period of President Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, they were at least armored. Since then, the strategies needed to secure the borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have still not succeeded in establishing an effective and well-structured geopolitical framework that can guide foreign policy and contribute to the emergence of a climate of peace and sincere good neighborly relations.

The nature of the Congolese space, which conceals plains, valleys, rivers, hills and mountains of geostrategic significance, is favorable to the emergence of armed groups who can hide there and even do a century without being mastered, which is why we are constantly witnessing the resurgence of violence orchestrated by geostrategists in impenetrable corners.¹

¹ Head of Works at the Official University of Mbuji-Mayi and PhD student in International Relations at the University of Kinshasa/Democratic Republic of Congo, +243 81 246 34 56, didierlunkamba6@gmail.com

Notwithstanding this complicated nature, the DRC, as known to all, shares borders with nine countries over a length of over 10,000 km. Several neighbors and non-neighbors enjoy and profit from interests on the back of insecurity in the DRC.

Indeed, one is tempted to say that the major issues that blur security at the Congolese borders are first of all economic, that is to say the development of cross-border mafia mining circuits to the detriment of official intra-regional trade, yet it is legal trade flows that provide a solid basis for economic policies of sub-regional or regional integration.² Then, the proximity of the neighborhood streaked by the identity problem, and finally, the political instability of the few neighboring countries where the regimes in place are contested by the armed groups whose rear bases are on Congolese territory, fuel insecurity along and within the borders of the DRC.

In other words, the abundance of raw materials from the ground and the subsoil is today perceived as a source of vulnerability of the Congolese borders, due to the fact that certain state and foreign economic powers (multinational companies) try at any time to enter Congolese territory militarily by resorting to the training and support of ethnic-based armed groups whose hatred is fueled between the populations and the myth of territorial domination in order to accumulate wealth through the illegal exploitation of minerals.³

Thus, we would like in this study, through the geopolitical approach, to propose some alternatives for securing the Congolese borders. These include, among others:

- *The Reformulation of the Good Neighbor Policy Adapted to Congolese Security Challenges;*
- *Modernization of Military and Paramilitary Services;*

² LUNKAMBA MUEMBO, D-P., "The geopolitical stakes of the borders of the DRC: a historical and socio-political analysis", In Madose n°16, Kinshasa, July-August 2013, p.119-122.

³ MBAYA KANKWENDA et Alli., Dynamics of Conflicts and Development Crises in Central Africa, Ed. Durboiris, Paris, 2004, p.274.

⁴ BARACYETSE, P., The geopolitical issue of mining transnationals in the Congo, Dossiers SOS Rwanda-Burundi, 2000, pp.118-119.

- *The Establishment of A Military System for the Defense of Congolese Territory*
- *Construction of Boundary Walls.*

Therefore, the geopolitics of securing the borders of the DR CONGO, supposes the redefinition of the security landscape of the country, because this is a praxeology better than a school of thought on the action which requires of this fact, a radical reform of military geography with a view to getting out of the classic and static logic of military regions which have shown their limits to the face of the world, it is time to switch to the dynamics of military bases around a polygon of safe circles and areas of vulnerability.

II. REDEFINING THE GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY

The good neighbor policy is one of the principles or axes of the African policy of the DRC which reflects the desire of the Congolese State to guarantee the security and stability of the national territory from the maintenance of relations of trust with neighboring countries. It is a policy of promoting peace in the sub-region with regard to the geographical position of the country.

Spaces of exchanges as well as confrontations and competition, the Congolese borders represent interfaces extended over several thousand kilometers which can sometimes be abandoned because they are out of the way or important for security and cross-border exchanges. This image has important consequences for the defence, protection and securing of the borders in question. Faced with cross-border threats which are for the most part the fruit of foreign and local armed groups practicing guerrilla warfare associated with the smuggling economy, illegal exploitation of minerals, the time for formal diplomacy is already outdated, and the DR.CONGO must switch in a logic of the army of good neighborliness to promote its ambition of regional power, because between nations the sounds of cannons are much more respected and feared than the simple cries of a nation without armed force capable of causing harm to others.

The application of such an approach would guarantee the DRC by means of a powerful and effective army to stabilize and secure its borders.

Therefore, the question of the security of the Congolese borders constitutes a major challenge to be taken up in inter-African relations, or better, good neighborliness. This is why the very rapid evolution of the occupation and the phenomenon of massacres in the east of the country under its various facades in the relations between States, influences in one way or another very brutally on the borders. National borders of the DRC, that is to say that national borders are becoming more and more imaginary.

III. THE REFORM AND ACTIVATION OF MILITARY AND PARAMILITARY SERVICES

These are the military-geopolitical strategies of border protection. And the DRC must invest in military projects that can promote peace and security throughout the national territory in order to break once and for all with the untimely invasions of both national and foreign forces.

To do this, three prerequisites are necessary for the DRC, these are the reform of the intelligence and warning services, the professionalization of the army and the border police as well as the installation of the bases soldiers in all the neighboring provinces.

➤ *The Reform of Intelligence and Warning Services*

Civis pacem bellum, who wants peace is preparing for war, this is a challenge to the DRC to understand that the States are cold monsters who have neither friends nor enemies, only their interests to defend, suddenly the DRC must reorganize all the main and subsidiary sectors of its national and international security, because the threat being permanent in the life of the States, the DRC must be ready to act and react against any threat, hence the need to readjust its intelligence and alert services so that the State is informed in real time with a view to taking useful and consistent measures.

Indeed, intelligence and alert services such as the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) and the General Directorate of Migration (DGM) are services of high geostrategic scope for the DRC.

• *The National Intelligence Agency (ANR)*

The ANR is a Congolese intelligence agency which advocates the security and protection of the institutions of the Republic, it is among the high secret services of the country.

Since the accession of Laurent-Désiré Kabila to power in 1997, the reform of the security services in DRC has become a major issue and a concern on the agenda of the international community to pull out of the security abyss all the States affected by conflicts. Laurent-Désiré Kabila has failed to professionalize his security services, hence the need to put in place new bases for any reform and efficiency of the said services.

In 2003, this security awareness was translated in DRC by a variety of initiatives carried out with the support of donors in the field of security and defence. Some initiatives may have initially seemed promising, but overall very limited.⁴

⁴ MISSAK KASONGO., Reform of security services in the DRC, In Paper n°4 Security sectorreform, <http://www.securityanddevelopment.org>. (Accessed February 19, 2022).

The various governments of the DRC who have succeeded each other at the head of the country are held responsible for their lack of commitment in the process of reforming the National Intelligence Agency, but giving more priority to military operations to defeat armed groups to the detriment of the reform of the Intelligence Agency, and for as long as this would be characterized by a political culture instead of a security culture.

The reasons for this slow progress in the reform of the paramilitary security services are complex and politically sensitive, but it is obvious that currently the DRC is in a situation of serious geopolitical conflicts which even affect the security of its borders to such an extent that the need to reform the civilian security sector is as important as the state's ability to conduct the art of war.

The collapse of Congolese security institutions since the Mobutu regime has been accompanied by that of the government's inability to establish state authority. This has the consequence of creating a national and international environment unfavorable to the DRC and streaked with threats of all kinds.

The current functioning of the ANR must be adapted to the security crisis that the country is going through, because the country being at war against armed and terrorist groups, the ANR had to take special measures for greater efficiency.

However, by and through this scientific work we plead for the reform of the ANR so that it becomes a real institution of security and alert of the DRC like the CIA in the United States of America.

To do this, in this era of globalization, this State security service should be adapted to new information and communication techniques in order to appear useful as a geopolitical instrument of the Congolese State, its personnel must be trained in security and espionage even outside the country, especially in the major Western security academies, because security by alert is understood as a method of preventing danger.

Thus, the secrecy and binding nature of the Congolese Intelligence Agency did not allow us to go into the depth of the question, because the violation of State secrecy would constitute a very serious offense in the DRC, but the performance of the security services could allow the State to become powerful and imposing on the African international chessboard, and at all costs be able to stifle inclinations in the bud.

- *The General Directorate of Migration (DGM)*

If it is necessary to put the General Direction of Migration in the basket of the Congolese security services that it must be reformed, it is in relation to its missions assigned to it since its creation by Decree-law n° 002/003 of 11 March 2003, considering it as a public service of the Congolese State endowed with administrative and financial autonomy whose main missions are to implement the

government's policy on immigration, the laws and regulations on immigration and emigration on Congolese soil, ensure the policing of foreigners and that of borders understood as the regulation of entry and exit from Congolese national territory, collaboration in the search for criminals and criminals or suspicious persons reported by the Interpol Criminal Police Organization.⁵

However, the DGM exercises its activities throughout the national territory and in the chancelleries near the diplomatic missions of the DRC abroad, but the assignment of migration officials in the chancelleries still poses problems.

For the security of the Congolese borders, the DGM is characterized by a weak capacity for surveillance and protection of these, although working in intelligence with the other public services committed to State security, access and the movement of people and property at the border posts of the DRC, do not obey the precise, very strict rules of legislative and regulatory order enacted to ensure the security of the Congolese State in all circumstances.

Vigilance at the borders of the DRC is not at all effective insofar as despite the presence of services that can ensure the security of the national territory, the Congolese borders have become more porous than before, this proves to the sufficiency of the geopolitical inability of border protection services to carry out their work properly, such is the current case of the presence of M23 rebels and other armed groups in the territories of Rutshuru and Walikale, North Kivu province; hence the urgency of reforming the DGM in order to provide it with the appropriate means for surveillance and alert on the Congolese border route.

Furthermore, the other security measures carried out at border inspection posts are not effective in practice, such as the screening of passengers and their luggage when crossing Congolese borders, do not provide clear assurance on the threat that would come beyond the national territory, the proof is that all known rebellions on Congolese soil are always supported and/or created from outside; the eastern part of the country could be a clear illustration for this purpose.

In addition, the specialized division of the DGM in terms of borders should be equipped with the latest technology detection equipment such as x-ray devices, magnetic gates, scanners, tomographs, discreet alarms, surveillance cameras or paramilitary radars.

Beyond the materials likely to be used to secure the borders of the DRC, a human imperative is essential, it is that of strengthening the security capacities of the agents committed at the borders, and if necessary insert in the teaching program university a faculty or a department of

⁵ Main missions of the Directorate General of Migration, In <http://www.dgm.com.cd>. (Accessed January 24, 2021).

Migration-Border at the end of which we will have specialists in Migration and border protection.

➤ *The Capacity of the FARDC*

The observation in military matters of the DRC is complaining or even contrasting in the sense that the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in acronym FARDC in the current era which could allow this country to be felt and respected on the scene African international community, remain in global difficulty and the DRC appears to this day as a disoriented nation.

Indeed, the professionalization of the Congolese army in question here, is that of making it much more effective, that is to say morally disciplined and patriotic, strategically trained and equipped, tactically offensive and dissuasive. The FARDC programming law promulgated in 2022 is an important step towards improving the living and working conditions of the Congolese soldier, but not yet sufficient.

The problem of the overall reform of the Congolese army remains and which could give birth to its professionalization; because the questioning of the Congolese national territory is the logical consequence of an incapacity of nuisance of the Armed Forces of the DRC, FARDC in acronym to defend the national territory against an enemy well equipped and having a certain capacity of nuisance and resistance which is likely to destabilize and call into question the Congolese borders.

Indeed, it would be important to outline the profile of what could be a real capacitation of the FARDC. First, to have a defense and security capacity capable of guaranteeing the integrity of the national territory and ensuring the safety of people and their property.⁶ The constitution and functioning of the Congolese army must conform to the expectations of the Congolese population and to the nature of the threats hanging over it.⁷

Every day that passes, the Congolese demand that their army be dissuasive, powerful and disciplined, because all ambitious reforms should aim to set up a system of training, effective remuneration, equipment and military industrialization. . This would provide a solution to the military and police frustrated by the lack of adequate equipment and housing as well as by a general mismanagement of the security sector. The late General Mahele had said in his time that "if insecurity is not controlled, what the criminal in the security service", but today compared to the almost uncomfortable living and working conditions, the soldiers and policemen often use their own weapon to make ends meet by falling back on the

poor population; this resurgence of violence is justified in the sense that we can train troops several times with the most efficient military experts in the world, in the end, if you do not pay them by offering them attractive salaries and benefits, it will be difficult to maintain solid discipline within the ranks of the Congolese army.⁸

This is to say that the capacity of the army is as much in its mode of management, command, equipment as in its training or training. The professionalization of the army is the sine qua non condition for making this elite corps an army of specialists, requiring sophisticated skills, unflinching technicality and tacticity and proven morality.⁹

Once again, the size and duration of the military service of the Republican army must correspond to the adequacy between the inclinations of threat, the financial means of the State at war and the strategic conditions of the army. Failure to meet these prerequisites would reduce the soldiers' capacity for action or dedication.

In addition, the DRC must become aware of the price to pay to control all these parameters and to make the choice on the quality of men and equipment to the detriment of the number.

Thus, the capacitation of the army, does not mean only to train a soldier, a fighter able to use sophisticated weapons requiring advanced technological skills, but also to make the soldier an actor in the socio-economic production of the country "the army, it is also the money = to produce the money and above all also to pay the money to the army".

IV. THE GEOSTRATEGIC DEFENSE DRAFT OF THE CONGOLESE TERRITORY

It is not enough to capacitate the army, it is also necessary to equip this army with a geopolitical vision of defense adapted to the threats and vulnerabilities which risk compromising or mortgaging the future of the country. Because a State which does not seek to work out a defensive plan adapted to its needs and its potentialities, fails to fulfill its principal mission, and condemns itself to the tender of the other States and doomed to disappearance.

➤ *The Military Device*

For this military dimension, the DRC should first prioritize a geostrategy bringing together neighboring countries in the security circle to meet the challenge of the Congolese borders and, this border geostrategy would aim to revitalize the Congolese army so that it is a real army of war. Because the strengthening of security agreements and alliances has shown its limits in the sense that these

⁷ Constitution of the DRC of February 18, 2006 in its article 188.

⁸ MWAYILA TSHIYEMBE., The DRC and its army: what type of army, what size and what strategy, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2005, In <https://www.congoforum.be> (consulted on March 05, 2022).

⁹ LAGRANGE, I., The reform of the army of the DRC, In <http://www.irinnews.org/international-crisis-group>, (accessed on April 14, 2022).

¹⁰ MWAYILA TSHIYEMBE., Op-cit. <https://www.congoforum.be>

agreements have not been able to prevent the territories of neighboring States from offering themselves as a strategic sanctuary to armed opponents to destabilize other States, these military alliances have not guaranteed that the states of the sub-region do not attack each other and/or support armed groups hostile to their neighbours.

This is why, the geopolitics of defense adapted to the spatial immensity of the long Congolese borders of more than 10000 kilometers, and of a territorial space with continental dimension which is the DRC is 2345000 km², is the preventive and offensive geopolitics projection of military bases in all neighboring provinces according to real or potential threats, whether internal or external. This is to say that the geographical and geostrategic circumstances require the DRC to have a powerful army with regard to the geopolitical behavior of all the countries of the region. Installing military bases in all the border provinces with neighboring States is to deter all ambitions of the ambitious current and future destabilizers and expansionists of the Congolese territory.

To be much more effective, this geopolitics must proceed with the mobilization and availability of troops, weapon systems and logistics on all the points deemed sensitive on Congolese territory, militarized meter by meter, valley after valley, river after tributary, hills after mountains, lakes after islands to the confines of nine borders.¹⁰

We articulate the new geopolitical landscape of security or border surveillance of the DRC as follows:

The first security circle is that of the northern part of the country comprising the former Orientale Province and the former Equateur Province, whose military bases would be set up in Kisangani and Mbandaka to facilitate intervention in the focal points or sensitive to the borders between the DRC, South Sudan and the Central African Republic;

The second security pivot is that of the eastern part of the country, which would bring together the two provinces of North and South Kivu with military bases installed in Goma and Bukavu to allow rapid intervention at high-risk points on the border with Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi;

The third security circle is that of the south-eastern part of the DRC including the former province of Katanga, in addition to the Kamina base, the other military bases would be installed in Kalemie, Pweto, Lubumbashi and Kasumbalesa to allow soldiers committed at the borders between the DRC, Tanzania, Angola and Zambia to intervene in real time;

The fourth pivot is that of the Center-South part of the DRC which would concern the former province of Kasai Occidental which, apart from the military base installed in

Kananga, another could be accredited in the hinterland at Tshikapa for facilitate FARDC troops to quickly bring aid to key points on the border with Angola;

The last security circle is that of the western part of the country thus encompassing the former provinces of Bandundu, Bas-Congo and the city-province of Kinshasa whose bases would be installed respectively in Kikwit, Matadi and Kinshasa without forgetting that already installed in Kitona to deal with border incidents that could occur on the border between the DRC, the Republic of Congo and Angola.¹¹

Thus, after tracing the geopolitical security trajectory of the Congolese borders, a geostrategic requirement is dismissed, that of the mobility and flexibility of the armed forces. These two conditions are based first on the guarantee of the regular availability of forces everywhere and in any place on the whole of the Congolese territory where the need would be felt. To realize this geopolitical dream, the FARDC must be equipped with a general staff for planning, coordinating and conducting attacks and defense which is in perfect and permanent mobility; then, on the ability to increase combat effectiveness through the adaptability of forces to the level of the domino effect on the battlefield or operational superiority in any type of military engagement by comparing the capabilities available with the corresponding organization of the armed forces according to the country's needs and security.¹²

➤ *Revitalization of the Border Police*

The large territorial expanse possessed by the DRC accompanied by very vast borders, unfortunately the inability to ensure territorial integrity has been observed for several decades. Although this position is a permanent natural given that any political regime must capitalize on. This is why Frantz FANON had presented this country in a metaphorical image as "the continent's trigger" from which Africa could boost its development.¹³

It is necessary to set up a geopolitical alert based on the revitalization of the Border Police, border and customs posts as well as border markers.

¹² LUNKAMBA MUEMBO, D-P., Geopolitics of the borders of the DRC: Powerlessness in African international relations, Memory of DEA / DES in International Relations, University of Kinshasa, 2019-2020, pp.114-119.

¹³ MWAYILA TSHIYEMBE., Op-cit, <https://www.congoforum.be>

¹⁴ LUNKAMBA MUEMBO, D-P., Congolese Geopolitics in the control of borders in Central Africa, Bachelor's thesis in International Relations at the Official University of Mbuji-Mayi, 2009-2010, p.8.

¹¹ MWAYILA TSHIYEMBE., Op-cit, <https://www.congoforum.be>

Achieving this will require the geopolitical and personal commitment of the DRC to manage border disputes.

- *Border Police*

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, border control is the responsibility of the Congolese National Police, whose specialized units work from almost dilapidated posts, installed along the major border barriers. These police units generally lack means of communication, vehicles, etc.

It should be noted that the DRC Border Police is a large unit of the Congolese National Police (PNC) whose main mission is to ensure the protection and security of the Congolese international borders as well as the surveillance of the national airspace.¹⁴ This special unit of the PNC should be deployed throughout the national scope and especially in the provinces that are in contact with international borders.

It also suffers from the lack of equipment to properly fulfill its mission, that is to say that it does not have the substantial means of transport and communication capable of communicating at all times with the General Staff. It lacks its own helicopters to better monitor the airspace, it is not sufficiently armed to deal with emergency situations at the borders. Therefore, this geopolitical diagnosis deserves to be taken into account to better secure the borders of the DRC.

- *Border and Customs Posts*

According to Roger-Nestor LUBIKU, there is a difference between the border post as such and the customs border post in the sense that the border post is essentially made up of elements of public power such as the National Police to ensure the security of the area. While the customs border post consists of regulating contact relations with the neighboring country, in particular the movement of populations, goods, merchandise and traffic. So, in the customs border post, several services operate such as the immigration service, the customs service, the intelligence service...¹⁵

From the geolocation point of view, the border post is located one or more kilometers from the common international border between two States, while the customs border post is located on the border while respecting the principle of the so-called wide neutral zone of more or less than 100 meters on either side of the common international border. Therefore, several border and customs posts can be located across the Congolese national territory. We can, for example, cite: the border and customs posts of Aru and Mahagi in the former Orientale Province characterized by

intense road traffic and commercial activities between the DRC and Uganda.

In South Kivu, there is also the customs border post of Kavimvira in the territory of Uvira (DRC), located on the Bujumbura road (Burundi). In the former province of Katanga, there is the important customs border post of Kasumbalesa, which is the gigantic entry and exit route linking the DRC to the other countries of Southern Africa.¹⁶ This customs border post has an important vast neutral zone of 400 meters at a rate of 200m on either side of the common international border DRC-Zambia.

- *Updating the Border Markers*

The boundary marker is a landmark located on the ground on the common international border between two neighboring countries for the effective demarcation of a border. Its purpose is to make it stand out, that is to say, to make it more noticeable and more visible.¹⁷

However, the DRC finds itself in difficulty to ensure protection and regular technical control of border markers. Almost all of the Congolese border markers are in a dilapidated state, which causes a lot of confusion and claims of border limits with neighboring countries. This is why we recommend that the DRC proceed with the reconfiguration and systematic maintenance of its border markers, that is to say the reconstitution of the markers that have disappeared or been destroyed. Because some neighboring countries have been able to move a few terminals with the intention of appropriating a piece of land to the detriment of the DRC. This territorial expansion is motivated by the exploitation of the natural resources of the soil and subsoil located on horseback or totally on Congolese territory.

So, the geopolitical role of the border marker is to physically identify the common border between two neighboring countries to make it better identifiable if necessary.

In the light of the foregoing, the DRC can in no way claim to become a powerful State, if it does not take into account the geopolitical dimension of its territorial existence by setting up a real strategy for the protection of international borders. Power cannot be negotiated, but it imposes itself and manifests itself.

A country with continental dimensions will not be able to settle all its border conflicts without the manifestation of the political will of the Government. We know that there is a Permanent Border Commission (CPF) placed under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior, but this structure does not benefit from the substantial means to be truly deployed on the ground in order to be effective.

¹⁵ LUBIKU LUSIENSE, R-N., The international borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo: inventory and geostrategic issues, Mediaspaul, Kinshasa, July 2012, p.77.

¹⁶ LUBIKU LUSIENSE, R-N., *Op-cit*, p.78.

¹⁷ Same, p.80.

¹⁸ Same, p.78.

V. THE CONSTRUCTION OF BOUNDARY WALLS

Fed up with the incursions and occupations of Congolese territory by certain armed groups supported by the neighboring countries of the DRC¹⁸, reflect the implementation of the balkanization project planned both regionally and internationally, all the offensives and occupations of the M23 of some Congolese towns and localities expose those who are behind armed groups on the territory of the DRC. , the objective pursued in all these rebellions is to appropriate Kivu, a region very rich in minerals and agricultural land. From where to build the boundary walls, would be ideal.

➤ *Historical and Comparative Reminder Against Territorial Threats: Lessons to be Learned by the DRC*

The use of walls to secure the territories of States is not a new fact, it is as old as the ancient world where the battle and the conquest of spaces were the first concern of the peoples. Once the space was conquered, they erected walls or bulwarks whose role was to counter the potential threat of the enemy and to delimit the borders with the neighbors.

Indeed, walls, barriers and other border security devices have the merit of being visible to the eyes of the population and potential adversaries¹⁹. Even if the wall does not precisely follow the border line, it will at least set it back. This interest in obstacles to delimit a space has always been present in certain African countries for several decades, enclosures around villages to fortify borders, particularly in North Africa and Southern Africa.

• *North Africa*

The construction of walls to close borders has been adopted and used since colonial times in Africa. In 1931, for example, to prevent the Libyan rebels from using Egyptian territory as a sanctuary, the Italians built a 270 kilometer long line with several thicknesses of barbed wire networks, some of which were electrified, bordered by a control road linking forts or small forts. communicating by telephone and radio²⁰. In 1936, the construction of the Mareth line was undertaken by the French colonial power over 45 kilometers along the border between Tunisia and Libya. The construction of the said line consisted of the French strategy of curbing the aggressive and expansionist ambitions of Italy on the African continent, in particular after the conquest of Ethiopia. But then, with the wars of decolonization, several devices for securing the borders multiplied and extended in North Africa, it is in particular, in Algeria, on the Moroccan

border, where an embryo of barrier was set up by the French army in June 1956, with the installation of barbed wire. This barrier, thus called the "Pédron line". Another barrier was erected facing Tunisia in 1957 which will be known thereafter under the name of "Morice line". As Laurent Touchard points out, even if these barriers could not reverse the outcome of the Algerian war, but the formidable effectiveness of these devices would have a decisive impact on the military balance of power within the Algerian borders complicate greatly the supply of insurgents or rebels.²¹

In 1980, faced with the mobility of the Polisario Front which claims the independence of Western Sahara, Morocco undertook to erect "walls of sand" in Western Sahara. The first which initially extended over 300 kilometers and the six others were built in 1984 and 1987, thus making it possible to lock almost the entire territory, i.e. most of the useful country. These so-called sand walls built by Morocco had or are intended to protect the strategic interests of Western Sahara and southern Morocco, to intercept the attack columns of the Sahrawi People's Liberation Army (APLS) armed branch of the Polisario to inflict a lot of losses on them and make the Polisario Front and its external supporters feel guilty: Algeria and Libya by placing them in the position of aggressors.

• *Southern Africa*

In southern Africa, some cases of wall construction were used to fight against rebel movements. During the bush war, Zimbabwe had tried to protect itself against the incursions of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) Movement from Mozambique. This barrier called "Cordon Sanitaire" (CORSAN) seems to have been inspired by "the Morice line" in Algeria. The CORSAN was presented as a series of obstacles consisting of fences with alarm devices and minefields bordered by a track intended to facilitate the arrival of intervention elements.

In South Africa, discontinuous electrified fences also developed from 1984, on its borders with Zimbabwe and Mozambique. They are installed along the borders favorable to the passage of the fact that the country was in full Apartheid and its neighbors supported the Movements which opposed the segregationist policy of Pretoria. The objective was to prevent infiltration from territories deemed hostile on the one hand and to block the arrival of refugees fleeing the civil war in Mozambique. Among these most dreaded barriers is the one with Zimbabwe nicknamed "the Serpent of Fire".

In the light of these historical and geonomic illustrations of some African countries, the DRC must learn lessons to do the same. Because the construction of each wall a border aims to solve well-defined problems.

¹⁹ LUNKAMBA MUEMBO, D-P and Alii., "The Geostrategic Scheme of Rebel Movements in Eastern DRC: Birth, Evolution, Resistance, Rebirth and Repercussions", In CRIGED/ISC-KIN, Special No., Vol. 1, August 2014, pp.300-304.

²⁰ TOUCHARD, L., "Of Walls and Men: Securing African Borders in the 21st Century", In Focus Stratégique, N°85, IFRI, Paris, November 2018, p.23.

²¹ Same, p.24

²² Same, pp.24-25.

➤ *The Construction of walls Against Armed Groups in the DRC*

The erection of walls as border security barriers must be seen as an effective strategy to fight against armed groups inside and along the borders of the DRC.

Plunged into the chaos of wars and armed conflicts since 1996, the DRC lives to the rhythm of porous borders. The construction of the walls must imperatively begin on the zones or borders considered to be very vulnerable, because the threat is even more precise with terrorist attacks and massacres of the populations and localities, cities of Beni, Butembo, Ituri ... on the border with Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi whose armed groups seek at all costs to seize.

Faced with such a threat from the East, the DRC must embark on the establishment of appropriate mechanisms by using technology that would make it possible to lighten the task of the Congolese army against these armed groups and their accomplices, by with the forces to intervene in the event of enemy action and support points every five kilometres. The wall will only see its effectiveness increased with the use of technological means with numerous ground radars, light aircraft, alerts. Terrorist massacres and killings are valid reasons for the DRC to erect walls in its eastern part. The cost of building and deploying the military over every five kilometers is considerable, and therefore constitutes a major obstacle to the modernization of the Congolese land forces.

The geopolitical obligation is dismissed insofar as there are alternative routes allowing rebels to infiltrate even the population to thwart the forces of order. The main role of the wall is not to block these terrorist and armed groups from making incursions from neighboring countries, but rather to make it difficult and complicated for them to operate, by raking in their activism for fear of being sandwiched missing where flee. It is also a question of protecting all the most exposed villages and towns about ten kilometers from the borders, such as Beni, Butembo, frequently the target of actions by the alleged ADF and other Mai-Mai armed groups. , which attack both military and police forces and civilians.

Therefore, the DRC must have an elite police and military unit, mobile and able to quickly bring aid to populations and border posts, to patrol without fear of being endangered by better armed groups.

➤ *Erection of the Great walls Against Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi*

The nature of the walls can change or evolve in order to present a mortal danger against the enemy or adversary depending also on the nature of the threat which weighs on the country. The choice of erecting a great wall along the borders with Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi is justified by the simple fact that on these borders there is a higher rate of insecurity.

In other words, the Congolese-Rwando-Ugando-Burundian borders are significantly problematic or even porous. These borders stretch over a length of more than 1200 kilometers, they are the ones that pose many problems for the stability of the DRC, which is why the construction of a wall on all the borders with neighbors deemed hostile, must be effective, it is in particular the Congolese-Rwandan border which measures only 213 kilometers, that Congolese-Burundian 205 kilometers and that Congolese-Ugandan 817 kilometers.

Some problems are reported for example between the DRC and Uganda in Lake Edward, several Congolese fishermen are arrested and others are in prison in Uganda. A few canoes and motors were also seized by the Ugandan navy. For some time now, it has become a business for the Ugandan navy to systematically arrest fishermen found on the lake, charging them large sums of money.²²

The effectiveness of the walls as a means of securing the borders of the DRC depends on what is expected of them. They will allow the DRC to easily control cross-border flows with the three countries, reduce easy incursions by armed groups, sometimes prevent the DRC from being a sanctuary for foreign rebel movements, reduce the effectiveness of elements of armed groups local and foreign with the complicity of neighboring countries.

For the Rwandan-Congolese wall, it should also be remembered that its role is not only to prevent the movement of the Rwandan army and/or armed groups at all costs, but also to make it more difficult with more or less ambitious from the Congolese territory where these rebels can move, get supplies with a certain ease.

If the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) are allowed to reorganize, to rationalize the deployment of their elements on the border with Rwanda, while creating trust with the local populations, we will achieve stability on this border.

However, the construction of such a Congolese wall will pose problems for local populations around the feeling of isolation and separation of cross-border communities because the crossing points would be significantly reduced. This social obstacle is also explained by the fact that the construction of this wall would come up against a problem of brutal separation of communities that no one would be willing to respect, but rather forced to do so. Because this wall can be built on systematically populated areas where their installation poses more problems than it solves.

It is added to the social obstacle, the technical one of the fact that the construction of the wall between the DRC and its three neighbors targeted as problematic borders, only

²³ KAVIRA MUYISA, S., "On the management of the border conflict between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda between 2007 and 2018", Vol. 29 No. 3, Jun. 2020, pp.642-644.

makes sense on routes whose ends are difficult to circumvent geographically, and a 1235 kilometer long border. Once built, the wall would be easily controllable to prevent incursions. However, the configuration of the land on the border with Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda is difficult for this type of work because the topography is also important due to the rugged or mountainous and liquid areas obviously complicating the construction and increasing thus the costs.

VI. CONCLUSION

The quality and nature of its borders in terms of area, natural opportunities such as rivers, lakes, rivers, mountains, geographical position or location on the African continent place the DRC ahead of its own responsibilities to secure them.

Such a geopolitical reality of an incredible space of approximately 2345000 Km² and more than 10000 Kilometers of borders, sufficiently proves the difficulties encountered by this giant of Africa to secure its border limits with neighbors so pretentious geopolitically.

Always weakened and destabilized by wars and attacks of all kinds, the DRC suffers both from territorial illness, that is to say from its grandiose unsecured expanse and from the lack of a realistic policy that can provide this country with an army that is not only strong, but also powerful based on the geopolitical prerequisites previously announced within the framework of the capacitation.

The absence of such an army has led the DRC to become the epicenter of armed conflicts in Central Africa, which does not allow it to naturally play its geopolitical role in this part of the Continent in order to impose its hegemony. Hegemonic research aims at the creation, crystallization and development of power relations and/or a relatively stable powerful army between the different human or state groups.²³ Beyond that, some researchers believe that the major challenge that reigns within the Armed Forces of the DRC is that of their proper care.²⁴

Like the metaphorical image of Frantz Fanon who attached to Africa the label of a revolver whose trigger is placed in the Congo, we believe that the DRC is considered as a great elephant with the necessary assets for the power, but unaware of the mechanism of development of those, being then in physical confrontation or of war against the mosquito, animal deprived of size, but having on the contrary ingenuity to compensate for its physical inferiority. Faced with such an event, history tells us that the master mosquito on the giant elephant triumphed. This proves

sufficiently that the geographical or physical dimension has ceased to be the sole vector of power. The aggression of Rwanda via the M23 is proof of this. Hence in International Relations, there are no States without importance.²⁵

In its numerous bilateral relations with neighboring countries from East to West, and from North to South of the country, each of its nine borders constitutes an important geopolitical cross-border space. For example its eastern international borders, the DRC has problems with Rwanda on Lake Kivu because of methane gas, Uganda shares a common layer of oil resources in Lake Albert, Tanzania with which, the DRC would share the port of Kigoma in the Indian Ocean would allow it access to the Middle East and Southeast Asia as well as the waters and resources of Lake Tanganyika, the waters of the Nile with Sudan and other countries coastlines.²⁶

To the West by the Atlantic Ocean, the DRC shares with Angola the oil resources and the other fishing resources to which we add the diamond at the base of the disputes in 2007 around the border locality of Kahemba.

With the Republic of Congo, there is the island of Mbulambemba and the channel of the Congo river as well as the sedimentary basin which spreads over the two banks of the Congo river and the Ubangi, even the waters of the Congo river make the purpose of replenishing Lake Chad and also of supplying Israel with natural waters through the Salomon project.²⁷

The "arbitrary" dimension of borders would contribute to the emergence of numerous conflicts on the continent, just as the identity or tribal dimension remains a variable in the outbreak and development of these conflicts and would constitute a significant risk factor when it is mobilized, even exploited, by at least one of the countries in conflict. This is the case with what is happening in eastern DRC. Each border illustrating an interstate dispute, reflects the specific nature of the problems it abounds, we were able to see to what extent each of the problems is both singular and complex. Problems on the DRC border with Angola are not the same on the border with Zambia or with Rwanda.

The Congolese borders are therefore porous, despite the inclusion of the notion of "intangibility" in the founding texts of the AU, the idea that a border is immutable.

All this sufficiently proves the need to develop and mobilize significant means of power for the DR.C in order to be able to validly defend its national territory within the limits of its borders.

²⁴ BAYART, J-F., *The State in Africa. The politics of the stomach*, Ed. Fayard, Paris, 1989, pp.145-148.

²⁵ MANTUBA NGOMA, P., and Alii., *The DRC: democratization at gunpoint*, Ed. Konrad AdenauerStiftung, Kinshasa, 2006, In <https://www.abebooks.fr>

²⁶ CAHIER, P., *Contemporary Diplomatic Law*, 2nd Ed. Librairie Droz, Geneva, 1964, p.162.

²⁷ YAC DUBA, C., *Offshore deposits of cross-border hydrocarbons*, Ottawa University Press, Canada, 1997, p.26.

²⁸ [Http:// www.irst.acrw.gestion-commune-des-ressources-naturelles.](http://www.irst.acrw.gestion-commune-des-ressources-naturelles)

To achieve this, it is important to proceed with the installation of military bases in all border provinces or bordering foreign countries in order to deter and nip in the bud the ambitions of aggression and balkanization of the country. The Congolese defense and security forces have a major role to play in this process of the emergence of stable borders guaranteeing both the security of the territory, the fluidity of trade and the peace of the populations.

As for the construction of border walls as a security device, it is essential to have regular patrols, drones, surveillance cameras and planes to help increase the chance of reducing threats.

REFERENCES

- [1]. BARACYETSE Pierre., The geopolitical issue of mining transnationals in the Congo, Dossiers SOS Rwanda-Burundi, 2000.
- [2]. BAYART Jean-François., The State in Africa. The politics of the stomach, Ed. Fayard, Paris, 1989.
- [3]. CAHIER Philippe., Contemporary Diplomatic Law, 2nd Ed. Librairie Droz, Geneva, 1964.
- [4]. Constitution of the DRC of February 18, 2006 in its article 188.
- [5]. [Http://www.irst.acrw.gestion-commune-des-ressources-naturelles](http://www.irst.acrw.gestion-commune-des-ressources-naturelles).
- [6]. KAVIRA MUYISA Sylvia., Management of the border conflict between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda between 2007 and 2018, Vol. 29 No. 3, Jun. 2020.
- [7]. LAGRANGE Irin., The reform of the DRC army, In <http://www.irinnews.org/international-crisis-group>.
- [8]. LUBIKU LUSIENSE Roger-Nestor., The international borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo: inventory and geostrategic issues, Ed. Mediaspaul, Kinshasa, July 2012.
- [9]. LUNKAMBA MUEMBO Didier-Pascal et Alii., The Geostrategic Scheme of Rebel Movements in Eastern DRC: Birth, Evolution, Resistance, Rebirth and Repercussions, In CRIGED/ISC-KIN, Special Issue, Vol. 1, August 2014.
- [10]. LUNKAMBA MUEMBO Didier-Pascal., Congolese Geopolitics in the control of borders in Central Africa, Bachelor's thesis in International Relations at the Official University of Mbuji-Mayi 2009-2010.
- [11]. LUNKAMBA MUEMBO Didier-Pascal., Geopolitics of the borders of the DRC: Powerlessness in African international relations, Memory of DEA / DES in International Relations, University of Kinshasa, 2019-2020, pp.114-119.
- [12]. LUNKAMBA MUEMBO Didier-Pascal., The geopolitical stakes of the borders of the DRC: a historical and socio-political analysis, In Madose n°16, Kinshasa, July-August 2013.
- [13]. Main missions of the Directorate General of Migration, In <http://www.dgm.com.cd>. (Accessed January 24, 2021)
- [14]. MANTUBA NGOMA Pamphile et Alii., The DRC: democratization at gunpoint, Ed. Konrad AdenauerStiftung, Kinshasa, 2006, <https://www.abebooks.fr>
- [15]. MBAYA KANKUENDA et Alii., Dynamics of Conflicts and Development Crises in Central Africa, Ed. Durboiris, Paris, 2004.
- [16]. MISSAK KASONGO., Reform of security services in the DRC, In Paper n°4 Security sectorreform, <http://www.securityanddevelopment.org>.
- [17]. MWAYILA TSHIYEMBE., The DRC and its army: what type of army, what size and what strategy, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2005, <https://www.congoforum.be>
- [18]. TOUCHARD Laurent., Walls and Men: Securing African Borders in the 21st Century, Strategic Focus, N°85, IFRI, Paris, November 2018.
- [19]. YAC DUBA Cissé., Offshore deposits of cross-border hydrocarbons, Ottawa University Press, Canada, 1997.