



## The United States and Democracy in Cameroon 1990-2008; Development and Interest

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**Abstract:** The paper focuses on how the United States have promoted democracy in Cameroon because the country possess functioning democratic institutions, but these institutions are weak especially in the electoral system and their effectiveness is hampered by corruption. It also focus on the reasons for U.S interest in Cameroon democratic process and the challenges faced by the U.S to foster democracy in Cameroon. The take-off date is 1990 because of the reintroduction of multiparty politics in the country that year. The terminal date is 2008 because democracy was assassinated in Cameroon in 2008 by a presidential decree (Law N°.2008/001 of 14 April 2008) which amended the constitution thereby abolishing presidential term limits. The paper further argues that any discussion of this nature entails a clear identification of the requirements of the New World Order whose prescriptions helped to shape neo-colonial democratic ambitions in the aftermaths of the Cold War. During the last decade of the twentieth century, powerful democratization pressures swept across Eastern Europe seriously affecting the Soviet Union and Africa. These pressures made some autocratic regimes to open up their societies and to adopt the forms and procedures of liberal democracy. Others tried to circumvent the pressure through apparent changes. In the Central Africa region, the developments gave the U.S. an opportunity to use both positive and negative measures to encourage the democratization efforts in Cameroon.

**Key Words:** Democracy, Human Rights, Interest, Promotion, Development

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The decade of the 1960s is usually referred to the “African Decade” because many African countries achieved their independence in the 1960s. Most of the emerging African countries achieved independence with constitutions which, broadly speaking, reflected the influence and interests of their former colonial powers. Although the respect for democracy and human rights were either implicitly or explicitly inserted in the constitution of these emerging independent African countries, most of them eventually drifted away from western-style democracy and respect for human rights. Before the end of the 1960s, one-party rule became fashionable in African countries and Cameroon was no exception.

Cameroon was a colony of Germany from 1884 until 1916, when the Germans were defeated in the First World War. After the war, the League of Nations then placed Cameroon as a mandated territory administered by Britain and France. These two regions became UN Trust Territories after 1945 and East Cameroon (Republic of Cameroon) under France, obtained independence on January 01, 1960 and the West or Southern Cameroons got hers on October 01, 1961 from Britain. The two merged on October 01, 1961 to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. In 1966, President Ahidjo created the One Party system with the desire to accelerate Nation Building, economic development and National Unity. In 1972, President Ahidjo further dissolved the Federation and created the United Republic of Cameroon. However, in 1982 president Ahidjo unexpectedly resigned and gave power to his constitutional successor Paul Biya. In 1984, he unilateral changed the name of Cameroon from United Republic of Cameroon to The Republic of Cameroon, the name with which French Cameroon got independence, and in 1990 he reintroduced multiparty politics in Cameroon.

However the one-party system died on the arrival of multipartism basically because, among other factors, the African leaders who emerged from the independence struggles had a poor notion of an indigenous ideology that could be drawn from African traditional society, and that was necessary for African development. The neo-colonialist situation did not permit the development of any democratic

society in the African continent. For years, France maintained a mercenary affection with her former African colonies and a firm grip on their leadership. France remained a big obstacle that stopped the flow of self-determination and sovereignty of French speaking African countries. It was the violent wind of democratic change that swept across mostly French-speaking African states during the 1990s that the one-party democratic system paved the way for the collapse of one-party authoritarian system. As a result, from the 1990s the population looked to the West for models that could institutionalize democracy and good governance. The United States policy on democracy and human rights promotion in Cameroon was aimed at strengthening democratic institutions, improve governance and promote the respect for human rights.

### 2. REASONS FOR U.S INTEREST IN CAMEROON DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

By the mid-1990s new issues and developments caught up with U.S. traditional pursuit of democratization in Cameroon and the objective to achieve a realistic economic agenda in the Gulf of Guinea and its hinterlands. These issues included among others the promotion of new U.S economic interest, African development problems, and new forms of intervention in the democratization process. By supporting emerging democracies in their development during the second half of the 1990s, the U.S. sought to build a more secure and economically prosperous world in which individuals could live freely and enjoy healthy and productive lives. They U.S. government reorganized and celebrated the many phases of democracy as this political system took hold in many countries each with a variety of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. The U.S also committed itself to help governments in both developed and developing countries in democratic developments through these interests discussed below;

Since the late twentieth century, Africa has played an important role as an energy supplier of oil to U.S and global markets. By the 1980s, Nigeria and Angola were among the top ten suppliers to the U.S. following their crude oil production of 65.000.000 tons and 9.000.000 tons respectively. Sub-Saharan African countries like Gabon, Congo, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea also generated substantial revenues from the sales of oil.<sup>1</sup> This increase in the production of oil encouraged international cooperation between the nations of the South and the multinational oil companies of the industrialized North. As the largest single market in an increasingly integrated world energy system, the United States became committed in the development of petroleum resources around the region through her energy policy for the maintenance of global energy security. The new U.S economic interests included the geopolitics of oil and natural gas, the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline project and the Cameroon Deep sea port project.

Recognizing the growing strains on energy resources, the U.S. Government sent representatives to develop comprehensive and balance energy policy that could help the private sector, strategy for the local governments to promote dependable, affordable and environmentally sound production and distribution of energy for the future. This resulted to the National Energy Production (NEP) guided by three main principles: balance increased production with a renewed focus on the clean and efficient use of energy; expand and diversify different sources of energy to encourage energy decisions guided by competitive markets and public policies that state efficient outcomes.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the central aspect of U.S. energy policy portfolio was only targeted to technologies that promised to alter any future oil shortages.

The 1973 oil crisis illustrated a number of ways in which the international system had drifted away from extreme polarization toward greater flexibility in terms of alignment patterns within the western bloc. This explained the disarray as European and Japanese allies for the most part abandoned their traditional supplies to the American position on Israel.<sup>3</sup> Even though, the Middle East conflict was not a true test of bipolarity since it did not involve strictly East-west issues and the alliances were still left intact. However, most notably the North-South confrontation, which was also based on increasing importance as the success of OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) states emboldened other Third World countries to make more harsh demands for a “New International Economic Order” (NIEO). It was on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994, less than two months after the end of the oil embargo against the

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Pritchard, *Geography of Africa* (London: Macmillan Publishing Company Ltd: 1986), 160.

<sup>2</sup> *Afrique/Etats-Unis*, No. 03, June 2004, 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> Patterson, E. Thomas. *The American Democracy*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc. publisher, 1990), 15.

United States-that majority of Third World States in the UN General Assembly pushed through a “Declaration of the Establishment of a NIEO and a Programme of Action” followed in December by a change in the Economic Rights and Duties of State”.<sup>4</sup> Whereas the East-West conflict pitted the non-communists against the communists North-South conflict pitted the rich against the poor. Although both the United States and the Soviet Union variously posed as the champions of the poor and the oppressed, neither could they resist the fact that they were located far above the equator and, more importantly, shared some things in common that were somewhat at odds with the interests of the less developed states. The United States, however, because of its greater role in international economy, along with its fame as leader of a bloc of former colonial powers, became the more frequent target of the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup>

There is a serious question whether such a system would promote freedom, democracy and the enforcement of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights more than the U.N. This is because the U.S. stood for the decentralization of global political and economic system through the use of multinational companies of the Western European countries. Her effort also took advantage of public-private partnerships, market enhancing policy tools, and international cooperation with long-term imperatives to strengthen U.S. economic and national security which was threatened by the 1973 oil embargo by the OPEC members.<sup>6</sup> During the 1990s, the U.S decided to diversify energy supplies and the promotion of new resources in the Western Hemisphere, Russia, the Caspian region and Africa, to also improved dialogue with key producing and consuming nations like China. In addition, several realities shaped U.S. thinking about energy security: two thirds of the world’s known oil reserves were in the Middle East.<sup>7</sup>

As the World’s superpower continued to search for natural oil and gas in other parts of the world, the 1990s began with a vision to explore, exploit and export the untapped oil discovered in Chad in 1969. Considering the fact that Chad had been in civil war and political instability for thirty years, and the fact that it was a landlocked country with no access to the sea, the end of the Cold War then opened new avenues for an energy hungry superpower to commit its multinational oil companies into the extraction of Chadian oil at Kome in Doba, Southern Chad.<sup>8</sup> Regarding early negotiation for the construction of the pipeline and transportation of the crude oil through the Atlantic Ocean to U.S., Cameroon became a partner in the Chad-Cameroon pipeline due to the relative peace and security that the country was experiencing since independence as compared to other Central African countries like Central African Republic (CAR), DRC and Congo. To that effect, Presidents Paul Biya and Idriss Deby of Cameroon and Chad respectively signed a letter of intent in Yaoundé on July 30, 1992, for the construction of an oil pipeline project from the locality of Doba in Chad to Kribi in Cameroon covering a distance of 1080 kilometers. The shareholders in the project had earlier thought of a pipeline from Kome to Limbe in South-West region of Cameroon but changed their minds due to the existing structures of the Oil Refinery and its nearness to the Atlantic Ocean and Nigeria.

The Cameroon government had rejected such a proposal partially because of the opposition strongholds in the South-West region.<sup>9</sup> This was already a clear indication that the pipeline projects which needed to pass through an environment with favourable political stability would be at risk if Limbe was chosen for its location on the Atlantic Coast of Cameroon. Another political argument for the construction of the pipeline after the 1992 accord between Cameroon and Chad came from France. France declared that “the pipeline should not pass through Cameroon, rather through the Republic of Central Africa and DRC”. The French proposal was mainly to protect her oil company-ELF which had the largest Oil

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>5</sup> Gottfried, M. Ramon ed. *Weapons of Mass Instruction: Selected Speeches and Essay on Politics, Art and Leadership*. (Lagos: Spectrum Books Ltd, 2004), 43-44.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Inkeles, *The Emerging Social Structure of the World*, in *World Politics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1925), 479.

<sup>7</sup> *Afrique/Etats-Unis*, No. 03, June 2004, 9-10.

<sup>8</sup> *Le Messenger*, November 22, 1993, 4; [Http://www.usatrade.gov/ibp/](http://www.usatrade.gov/ibp/) detailed information can be obtained from the U.S Department of Commerce website (accessed on May 8<sup>th</sup> 2024)

<sup>9</sup> *Le Messenger* November 22, 1993 Interview with Dr. Kumpule Calvin and Dr. Eboho Martin-Dieudonne, Ministry of External Relations, Yaoundé, March 10, 2004.

investment at *Pointe-Noire* in Congo with more than FCFA 500.000.000.000 to realize what is known as the Great platform off-shore Petroleum in the Central African Region. The French fear was due to the fact that the pipeline was only for the interest of the United States which was likely to generate future political strategic problems in her sphere of influence.<sup>10</sup>

Government to improve on the democratization processes increased. This opportunity was intensified following the criticisms made by the Amnesty International and the French Socialist Party relating to the irregularities noted during the 1997 presidential elections in Cameroon. The d As the American Company led the Consortium, the U.S. Government desire to pressurize the Cameroon ocument which expressed the American point of view signed by the spokesman, James Rubin at the State Department, was entitled “Les Etats-Unis Regrettent L’impasse sur la Reforme Electorale au Cameroun”. In this document, the U.S. regretted why the Government and the principal opposition parties such as the SDF had failed to assure an indispensable organization of the October 12, 1997 Presidential Elections. To that effect, the State Department clearly condemned the SDF Chairman John Fru Ndi for his policy of boycott because according to Rubin, stated that “boycott cannot solve any problem”.<sup>11</sup> The State Department also cited the remark made by the former U.S Ambassador to Cameroon, Frances D. Cook, who considered the 1992 presidential elections as “a stolen victory”.<sup>12</sup> Following the report published by NDI, upon reviewing the electoral manipulation without any independent electoral commission, the U.S continuous condemnation was not necessarily in the interest of the Cameroonians. It was also for the same desire that the State Department’s spokesman declared the U.S. intension to officially meet and reconcile between the Mubutu Government and the then rebel leader of the ADFL-Laurent Desire Kabila in former Zaire (DRC). This approach was intended to protect the established American Multinational Cooperations which were not ready to witness the collapse of Kinshasa because of their huge investment in the country.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. U.S PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY AND ACTIVE INTERVENTION IN THE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS OF CAMEROON

The U.S human rights and democracy strategy in Cameroon is to improve the democratic and human rights environment throughout the country by promoting elections that meet international standards, decentralization, independent and professional media, strong civil society and religious tolerance, as well as combating child labor. The United States has also been involved in a number of high profile public outreach efforts to help develop a free press and advance democratic reform. Over the course of 2003 and early 2004, the United States has actively engaged officials from all levels of the Cameroonian Government, local and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), members of civil society and the media to strengthen Cameroon’s democratic institutions and improve respect for human rights. When the presidential elections was scheduled for October 2004, the United States’ primary focus was on developing a more free, fair and transparent electoral process and preparing the media to effectively cover the elections. In anticipation of the October 2004 presidential elections, the Ambassador and other embassy personnel met repeatedly with high-level Cameroonian officials, including President Biya to encourage concrete action in reaching the Cameroonian government’s stated objective of holding a free and fair election. The Embassy formed a donors’ working group to coordinate policy messages and assistance expenditures in support of that goal. The Ambassador attended an international meeting on Cameroon’s elections and successfully lobbied reluctant donors for additional funding for electoral reform.

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<sup>10</sup> *Le Messenger*, February 27, 1992, 7; Interview with Ewunkem Claude, Ministry of External Relations, Yaoundé, March 10, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> *Le Messenger*, September 22, 1997, 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Le Messenger*, September 22, 1997, NDI Reports of 1992 also insisted on the stolen victory.

<sup>13</sup>But America supported a despotic Mobutu Sese Seko for over three decades and later backed the rebels of Desire Joseph Kabila against the despot in the aftermath at the end of the Cold War was also undemocratic because urging Mobutu to end the thwarted democratization processes in that country through unelected government was a bitter lesson which the Zairians remarked against American intervention. Such charges could also be attributed to the fact that both the U.S and U.N stood by and Patrice Lumumba was taken unaware by his own countrymen during the 1960s. That marked the beginning of America sin of omission in Central Africa.



On the legislative side, the United States worked with members of the Government and the National Assembly to strengthen the National Elections Observatory (NEO). Legislation passed by the National Assembly in 2003 makes the NEO a semi-permanent body by extending members' terms to three years and explicitly includes NGOs and opposition parties in the member selection process.<sup>14</sup>

In order to promote democracy and decentralization, the United States has worked to develop the capacity of local government leaders by organizing a seminar for 25 mayors and other elected officials on public involvement in democracy. In addition, the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the Embassy held several interactive dialogues on democracy and human rights with Washington and other African posts through the State Department's broadcasting network for Africa (AFNET). The United States has been active in developing an independent and professional media in Cameroon. The Public Affairs Section held numerous training workshops for journalists, including five "Corner Stones" workshops to instruct more than 150 local journalists on how to effectively cover electoral politics. The PAS also organized two workshops on investigative journalism attended by more than 130 journalists. These workshops were widely covered by the local media, increasing their impact. The United States also sponsored a speaking tour by Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh, Regional Director for Africa at the National Democratic Institute, who spoke on "Community Involvement in the Electoral Process" and the "Role of the Media in Elections."<sup>15</sup>

Despite the 2000 law authorizing the creation of the private radio and television stations, the Government continued to fail to respond to requests for broadcast licenses, and radio and television stations were forced to operate illegally.<sup>16</sup> In December 2003, the PAS officer met with the Cameroonian Minister of Communications Jacques Fame Ndongo to discuss the problem and underscore the importance of developing a free press in Cameroon. To complement the programs with local government leaders and the press, the United States organized two workshops to train leaders in civil society on political organizing and the local registration process for NGOs. The United States also awarded two grants using Economic Support Funds totaling \$250,000 to local NGOs for elections-related projects: \$180,000 to the Cameroon League for Human Rights to be distributed nationwide an elections guide in seven local languages, provide training in approximately 250 villages on elections procedures, civic responsibility and the application of electoral law, and hold a seminar to train print and radio journalists on coverage of elections; and \$70,000 to the Youths International Movement for Africa to distribute a series of educational posters in French, English and seven local languages related to election themes, encouraging people to vote and explaining voter's rights. The group planned to hold meetings in five regions of Cameroon to train local authorities, opinion leaders and youth groups to participate in the election education campaign.<sup>17</sup>

The Democracy and Human Rights Fund awarded \$50,000 to three organizations working to sensitize Cameroonians on good governance, human rights and the importance of being politically active. The United States also sponsored 17 government and civil society leaders to travel to America through the International Visitor program. In order to increase respect for human rights, the United States worked closely with the military and police to curb abuses by law enforcement. In compliance with the Leahy Amendment, the Defense *Attache*'s Office worked to foster more professional security forces by sending members of the Cameroon Government for training in Civil Military Relations, Military Peacekeeping Operations and Maritime Law Enforcement. The United States spent \$176,485 on training for Cameroonian military and law enforcement through the Expanded International Military Education and Training program.<sup>18</sup>

The Embassy worked to advance women's rights and the rights of disabled persons throughout the year. The PAS organized a seminar on "Women's Social and Political Integration" and an AFNET program

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<sup>14</sup>Cameroon country report 2008, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>16</sup> John, A. Wiseman, *Democracy in Black Africa: Survival and Revival* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1990) 1.

<sup>17</sup> Cameroon country report 2008, 3.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2001 Volume 1*, Washington D.C., Committee on International Relations of the U.S. House of Representatives and Foreign Relations of U.S Senate, April 2002, p.III.

on “Women in Development” involving approximately 200 women leaders. Through the Special Self Help Grant program, local communities built a number of maternal health centers and also received materials for a school for the blind. In the area of religious freedom and tolerance, the PAS organized a panel discussion on “Islam and Religious Tolerance,” except of which were aired during two editions of the weekly television program “Understanding Islam.” The Ambassador also reached out to the Muslim community of Cameroon by hosting an Iftaar dinner during the holy month of Ramadan. In addition, approximately 500 copies of the International Information Programs pamphlet “Muslim Life in America” were distributed to Muslim leaders throughout the country. Funding continued to flow from U.S Labor Department for the multi-year International Labor Organization (ILO) program to eliminate the worst forms of child labor from the cocoa sector of commercial agriculture. In an effort to combat trafficking of women and children, the United States gave the ILO in Cameroon two \$150,000 grants to develop new trafficking legislation and train local law enforcement and the judiciary on implementation of the new legislation.<sup>19</sup>

The U.S. government's paramount policy priority has promoted democratic principles and practices and strengthened democratic institutions and respect for human rights. This can be supported by the fact that in 2007, the U.S. concentrated on the conduct of the mid-year national legislative and municipal elections in Cameroon. In 2008 these activities continued, with a particular focus on the establishment of an independent electoral agency in anticipation of presidential elections in 2011.<sup>20</sup> The U.S. government also identified the expansion and solidification of democratic practices, especially respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms of expression (press and individual), as particular challenges for the country. Although the country possesses functioning democratic institutions, those institutions are weak, especially the electoral system and their effectiveness is eroded by rampant corruption. The United States have promoted its goal of strengthening democratic institutions and improving respect for human rights by actively engaging officials from all levels of government, local and international nongovernmental organizations, and other members of civil society and the media. The U.S. have continued to press high-level government officials, including the president, about the need to respect human rights, punish human rights offenders, and establish and nominate independent members of the independent electoral body known as "Elections Cameroon."<sup>21</sup>

The United States have continued to urge the development of an independent election monitoring commission. During the July 2007 legislative and municipal elections, the embassy placed election observers around the country. Through private and public diplomacy the embassy communicated concerns about deficiencies in the process. During this same period, the embassy worked with multilateral donors and the government to reform the electoral process, especially assisting with a voter registration campaign. U.S. officials attended high-level working groups, whose participants included members of the UN Development Program and European Union, to coordinate policy on finance, governance, and assistance expenditures in support of the elections. During the 2007 New Year's Eve speech, President Paul Biya signaled his intention to change the constitution to remove presidential term limits. The U.S. government, in private meetings with high-level government officials and in public statements, continued to underscore the importance of respecting presidential term limits to solidify the democratic process. Additionally, in February 2008, in an effort to encourage dialogue about proposed constitutional change, the embassy organized a high-level roundtable discussion with participants from civil society and the government to discuss democracy, the constitution, and presidential term limits.<sup>22</sup>

The United States have continued to support local NGOs in implementing projects to promote good governance and the rights of women and children. The U.S. government funded four NGO projects aimed at promoting democracy and human rights through the dissemination of the criminal procedure code and the empowerment of under-represented groups in the country. In an effort to support anticorruption efforts, the U.S. government continued to support local NGOs' anticorruption campaigns.

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<sup>19</sup> [Http://www.smallgrantsprograms\\_U.S.EmbassyinCameroon.html](http://www.smallgrantsprograms_U.S.EmbassyinCameroon.html) (accessed in May 2017).

<sup>20</sup> Cameroon Country Report, 2008, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Defang Nkeng Maurice, Retired worker, United Nations Populations Fund Activities, Yaoundé; Presidential National Elections Observatory Lebialem Representation, Yaoundé, November 10, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> West Africa trade Hub: Making trade happen-Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea: Growth and Economic Possibilities in Africa, [www.watradehub.com/French.html](http://www.watradehub.com/French.html). (Accessed in May 2017).

One of these campaigns was aimed at empowering citizens to bring cases of corruption to the courts, as well as encourage whistleblowers and greater information sharing with civil society and the media. U.S. officials have continued to advocate through public interviews the need for a free press to advance democracy. U.S. officials have also continued to push for the issuance of licenses to independent radio and television stations. In private meetings with government officials and in public remarks, the embassy expressed concerns about reports of restrictions on press freedom and the closure of media outlets. In a show of solidarity with diverse sources of information, U.S. officials continued to visit private media organizations.<sup>23</sup>

The U.S. government works with the Cameroon government, local NGOs, and multilateral donors to promote fundamental human rights and democratic governance. For example, in 2007 the U.S. ambassador delivered remarks to parliamentarians and high-level government officials urging them to draft legislation banning female genital mutilation. To support religious tolerance, the U.S. ambassador continued the annual practice of hosting an *Iftaar* dinner and promoted the U.S. government's report on international religious freedom.<sup>24</sup> In 2007, the U.S. ambassador hosted a second *Iftaar* dinner in Douala, the country's commercial capital, for the first time. In that same year, the United States sent four young NGO leaders to a course entitled, "Youth Empowerment and Leadership," which centered on civic participation, youth leadership, governance, and conflict resolution. The embassy hosted a digital video conference on "Electoral Commissions and Election Transparency," which addressed a broad spectrum of issues related to the functioning of electoral commissions, including problems encountered, best practices, and the role of electoral commissions in ensuring transparency. The embassy also conducted a five-day program on "Civil Society, Democratization, and Elections," which featured a panel discussion with civil society leaders and lectures for students and faculty in three universities. This enabled the United States to highlight the importance of citizen participation in strengthening democracy and electoral processes. The United States embassy conducted workshops in various parts of the country to train the media about how to cover political events, particularly the importance of balanced reporting and follow-up on campaign promises. The U.S. embassy sponsored a series of call-in programs in which U.S. officials explained the impact of the civil rights movement on the social and political evolution of the United States and highlighted the universal significance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s struggle for social justice.<sup>25</sup>

The United States worked with the military and police to curb human rights abuses. To foster more professionalism in the security forces and engender more sensitivity for human rights, the U.S. government used funds from the International Military Education and Training program to send members of the armed forces to military schools in the United States, where they studied civil-military relations, peacekeeping operations, military subordination to civilian authorities, and a broad range of other legal and human rights topics. The United States also funds partnerships for local police and government officials at the International Law Enforcement Academy, which provided instruction to local law enforcement authorities in Botswana and the United States.<sup>26</sup>

The Special Self-Help Fund (SSH) provides small-scale assistance to Cameroonian communities as part of the U.S. Government's commitment to support development activities in Cameroon. Since 1983, the U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon has funded small community projects under this program in all ten regions of Cameroon. The maximum support available for most projects is USD 10,000 (or about 6 million francs CFA). A single community/group cannot receive more than one grant in a given funding period.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The United States has been pushing democracy, human rights, transparency and good governance reforms in Cameroon. These reforms are supposed to pave the way for positive, economic and political growth in the regions. The U.S. interest in promoting democracy, good governance and transparency is

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<sup>23</sup> Cline, Roger. *World Power Trends and U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1980s*. Boulder Colo.: Westview Press, 1980.

<sup>24</sup> Cameroon country report 2008, 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Afrique/Etats-Unis*, No. 9/93, July 6, 1993; Country Report, 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Arat, F. Zehra. *Democracy and Human rights in Developing Countries*. Boulder Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991.

based on the assumption that they will contribute to better governance and economic development, which in the long run will benefit the United States. Even though a large amount of democracy assistance has been given to Cameroon, there has still been a short fall in democratic transition in the country. Election manipulation, post-election violence, and corruption are still common occurrences in Cameroon, and the country has had the same president for the past forty years. Instability, Corruption, poor governance and violence continue to destabilize Cameroon. A significant finding from this research and a contribution to the foreign policy and the promotion of democracy and human rights literature makes it known that the United States has not compromised its democracy agenda when dealing with African states. Foreign policy scholars have argued that the U.S. has abandoned its support for democracy and has opted to work with authoritarian regimes for its energy interests. This study has confirmed that the traditional assumption held about U.S. foreign policy, energy security, and democracy promotions towards Middle East does not necessarily apply to African states especially in Cameroon. The United States' interest in promoting democracy in Cameroon is rather opposite to its policy towards Middle Eastern monarchies. Several assumptions can be made regarding why the United States followed different policies towards states in different parts of the world. One possibility is that the U.S. policy makers believe democracy, respect for human rights and good governance are the best way to achieve stability in African states. A major contribution this study makes is to confirm that the theoretical assumption held by U.S. policy makers about the relationship between democracy and stability is followed by actions. Many of the African states have gone through or currently have internal conflict. Democracy is believed to be the best mechanism to reduce conflicts and corruption in Cameroon and create responsible governments. Democratic institutions in Cameroon are supposed to create a system of checks and balances that will produce a mechanism to control governmental power. Furthermore, it is important to note that in Cameroon, democracy is better able to protect private property, which is essential in promoting investment and thus ultimately generating economic development. President Clinton in the *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* document stated that "Democracies create free markets that offer economic opportunity, make for more reliable trading partners, and are far less likely to wage war on one another." This belief is apparent in the U.S. foreign policy towards Cameroon. The United States believed that by promoting democracy in Cameroon, it would be able to create good governance and reduce corruption. A democratic Cameroon would respect its citizens and the environment. The "National Cake" would be evenly distributed and local communities would be able to benefit from their natural resources. Cameroon under this scenario would have less violence, become more stable, less corrupt and production of natural resources might increase thus improving living standards. This outcome would have a positive impact on Cameroon and the U.S. as well.

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