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Wade's Senegal and its Relations with Guinea-Bissau: Brother, Patron or Regional Hegemon?

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ABSTRACT

Against the background of the low-intensity conflict that affects its Casamance region, Senegal should pay particular attention to its relations with its southern neighbour, Guinea-Bissau. Since 2000 Senegal has used its democratic legitimacy, diplomatic network and scarce resources to pursue a policy of influence and patronage towards a neighbour weakened by the war of 1998. In return, the Senegalese government has received special support from the Guinea-Bissau armed forces in its fight against secessionist rebel forces in Casamance. Far from being merely a representative of – or channel for – French or Western interests, under the leadership of Abdoulaye Wade Senegal showed its capacity for exercising a policy of influence in the West Africa sub-region and the African continent as a whole, albeit as a consequence of some favourable conditions, and with only limited financial resources.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFP	Agence France-Presse
APS	Agence de Presse Sénégalaise
CFA	Financial Community of Africa or African Financial Community (<i>Communauté financière d'Afrique</i>); also know as West African franc (ISO code XOF)
CPLP	Community of Portuguese Language Countries (<i>Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa</i>)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
Fesman	World Festival of Black Arts (<i>Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres</i>)
FLING	Liberation Front for the National Independence of Guinea (<i>Frente de Luta pela Independência Nacional da Guiné</i>)
ICG	International Crisis Group
MFDC	Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance (<i>Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance</i>)
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (<i>Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde</i>)
PANA	Pan-African News Agency
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union

INTRODUCTION

Opération Gabou was unquestionably one of the most impressive foreign policy initiatives undertaken by an independent Senegal. A military intervention that lasted from June 1998 to March 1999, it required Dakar to deploy more than 2 000 soldiers to its small southern neighbour, Guinea-Bissau. The intention was to help President João Bernardo ('Nino') Vieira stave off an attempted coup d'état by military rebels led by Brigadier-General Ansumane Mané, that resulted in the so-called 'Seventh of June War'.¹ That Senegal was prepared to make considerable sacrifices in that instance clearly indicates Guinea-Bissau's importance to Dakar. To Senegal, Bissau matters primarily because of the low level, apparently insoluble, conflict that for the past 30 years has troubled the Casamance region in the south of Senegal, which borders on both Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia.²

Although Senegalese troops withdrew in March 1999 after a ceasefire, the war proper ended only in May 1999 on a defeat for Dakar: Mané took over, chasing Vieira. Kumba Yala, head of Guinea-Bissau's Social Renewal Party and another of Vieira's opponents, won the subsequent presidential election in February 2000. Soon afterwards a major political upheaval took place in Senegal, with the March 2000 election of the long-standing opposition figure, Abdoulaye Wade, as president. This was the first political turnover in Senegal's political direction since independence in 1960. After assuming office on 1 April 2000 Wade quickly took steps to reinforce Senegal's relationship with Guinea-Bissau; the first diplomatic trip of his presidential term was to Bissau less than a month later. Under his presidency Senegal succeeded in exercising considerable influence over its small southern neighbour without further major interventions on the lines of *Opération Gabou*; it was the Guinea-Bissau army, not 'foreign' forces, that eventually dislodged the most extreme elements of the rebel Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance (MFDC) from their bases along the border with Senegal.

How can one understand the re-establishment of such strong ties between Dakar and Bissau so soon after *Opération Gabou*, which the population of Guinea-Bissau had met with marked hostility? One must first establish which developments were structural and which circumstantial; which strategic and which tactical; and in what ways events were influenced by the long, tangled histories of the two countries, especially against the background of post-conflict Guinea-Bissau on the one hand and on the other, the fundamental changes in Senegalese politics brought about by the 2000 election. What does this relationship tell us about the capabilities and limitations of Senegal given that the country is often described either as a diplomatic pawn of France, or of the West in general, or an ultra-opportunistic player that uses foreign policy as an instrument to attract resources for internal use?³ Finally, one must also consider the way in which the relationship between Bissau and Dakar fits into the wider West African, African and world context. By examining Senegal's handling of such a major strategic question for itself as Guinea-Bissau, this paper seeks to shed light on the foreign policy of the Wade regime by analysing its tools, 'style', connections and developments between 2000 and the end of Wade's presidency in 2012. It also looks at Senegal's relative power and influence in its immediate region, as well as in its broader continental environment.

AMBIVALENT NEIGHBOURS

Some historical background is necessary before tracing the complex path of the relationship between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau after 2000, and drawing some general conclusions.

The territories that today constitute Senegal and Guinea-Bissau have a long common history, based on the dynamics of colonialism and linked to the coastal presence of the Portuguese from the 15th century, and consequent involvement with the Atlantic trade.⁴ Even after the colonial borders were drawn, ties between Senegal and the Portuguese colonies of Cape Verde and Guinea – now Guinea-Bissau – remained strong. They were nourished by Senegal's relatively dynamic economy. Immigrants from Portuguese Guinea provided cheap labour for French Senegal, with some moving on to metropolitan France. Meanwhile French companies in Senegal went the other way, extending their trading into Portuguese Guinea.

When the Republic of Senegal became independent in 1960, various emigrant groups from the Guinea and Cape Verde diaspora became involved in a variety of independence movements; they enjoyed the tacit support of Senegalese president Léopold Sédar Senghor. Eventually the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), established in 1956 by agronomist Amílcar Cabral, came to the fore. During the 1960s the PAIGC opted for armed struggle, winning support from the Soviet bloc and from former French Guinea (by then the Republic of Guinea), under President Sékou Touré, a Marxist nationalist hostile to Senghor's pro-Western line. Inevitably the relationship between Dakar and the PAIGC deteriorated and Senegal openly supported moderate nationalists hostile to the PAIGC, which by 1962 had gathered to form the Liberation Front for the National Independence of Guinea (FLING), to little avail. The Organisation of African Unity acknowledged PAIGC as the only legitimate independence movement in 1965, and the Senegalese authorities later tolerated the presence on Senegalese soil of numerous Guinea-Bissau refugees, often linked to the PAIGC, and turned a blind eye on their activities.⁵

PAIGC prevailed, and Portugal recognised the independence of Guinea-Bissau⁶ in 1974. Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, however, belonged to opposing Cold War blocs and formal contact between them was limited; but from the 1980s ties became stronger as Bissau opened up its economy and in 1997 joined Senegal in the African Financial Community, thus becoming the first non-Francophone country to adopt the West African CFA franc (XOF) as its currency.

The formation of a separatist movement in southern Senegal at the end of 1982, led by the MFDC, did not bring about a deterioration in relations between Dakar and Bissau, despite numerous Senegalese observers dismissing the MFDC as an instrument of malevolent neighbours – Mauritania, The Gambia, or Guinea-Bissau – or even of the contemporary international 'bad guys', Iraq, Libya or Liberia. Skirmishes over border delimitation between Senegalese and Guinea-Bissau forces in 1990 fuelled such suspicions but although the MFDC enjoyed some sympathy among elements of the Guinea-Bissau political elite, the Bissau government did not offer its support. Instead it took an opportunistic approach and inclined toward the most powerful party to the dispute, the Senegalese state, while using the Casamance situation as a bargaining counter. Guinea-Bissau and Senegal often collaborated in security matters and apparently there were 'extrajudicial arrests, between services';⁷ an MFDC member reported being arrested with

another activist in 1986 by the Bissau authorities and exchanged for four FLING militants based in Senegal⁸, and in March 1993 the political head of the MFDC, Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, was deported from Guinea-Bissau to Dakar. Bissau enjoyed Senegal's support, including material assistance for its army, diplomatic backup for its entry into the franc zone, and concessions over the border dispute after the International Court of Justice at The Hague in 1989 and 1991 came down on the side of Senegal.⁹ Dakar trusted Bissau enough to accept its mediation in negotiations with the MFDC, which led to a short-lived ceasefire agreement signed in the Guinean city of Cacheu in April 1992.

It was that same opportunism rather than any deep commitment to the separatist cause, that prompted Guineans at all levels to sell (or lease) weapons to the Casamance separatists. It was precisely this arms trafficking with Casamance separatists that plunged Guinea-Bissau into war in 1998.¹⁰ Under pressure from Senegal and France, which were unhappy at the increasing strength of the MFDC, President Vieira placed the blame for the arms supplies on General Mané, the chief of staff of the armed forces (although others close to the presidency may have been also involved). This act, granted that it was made in difficult economic and political circumstances, had serious consequences. In June 1998, Mané mounted an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Vieira, after which he headed a military revolt, gathering around him a disparate group that included veterans of the war of independence unhappy with their deteriorating conditions, youths in search of a future, and opponents of Vieira within the PAIGC and the legal opposition. Paradoxically a call for help from Vieira to allies in Dakar and the Guinean capital, Conakry,¹¹ strengthened Mané, as experienced MFDC combatants as well as the Guinea-Bissau population generally rallied around him in patriotic enthusiasm, heightened by anger at the pillaging, vandalism and racketeering of the foreign forces coming to Vieira's aid.¹² After the centre of Bissau was occupied by Mané's forces in May 1999 the Senegalese embassy was pillaged in a clear indication of the anger aroused by the invasion. Diplomatic offices of Senegal's strategic ally, France, which maintained (and, to an extent, reinforced) its military co-operation with Senegal throughout the conflict, were also affected. By the end of the Seventh of June War, relations between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau seemed to have suffered long-term damage.

FORGING A NEW ALLIANCE, 2000–2003

From late 2000 – only a few months after the end of the Seventh of June War – until 2006, the Guinea-Bissau army operated directly against Salif Sadio, a senior figure in the MFDC and a former ally against Vieira. Three main attacks took place, each lasting several weeks and causing significant casualties. Sadio was eventually forced to withdraw to the Gambian border. Such extensive involvement by the Guinean army against an adversary of the Senegalese state constituted striking evidence of a new alliance between Dakar and Bissau.

Presidential alliance and military co-operation

When Wade made his presidential trip to Bissau in April 2000 the situation was tense. Ever since the end of the Seventh of June War there had been a high level of

insecurity on the border between the two countries; MFDC combatants were increasing their operations and Guinea-Bissau soldiers were involved in the theft of livestock in Casamance. Several times during 2000 Casamance villagers closed the border in protest; such action threatened the Guinea-Bissau economy, dependent as it was on those Senegalese points of passage. Meetings between the two countries were increased and co-ordination measures established, with the Senegalese providing the necessary radio communications equipment. In August 2000 the newly elected president of Guinea-Bissau, Yala, visited Dakar, where in a gesture of goodwill, Wade improved terms for the sharing of any revenues that might eventually result from petroleum exploration in the common maritime zone.¹³

This good relationship might perhaps be explained by the somewhat similar backgrounds of Wade and Yala, both of whom were opposition figures elected after long years of struggle. But their personal relationship was underpinned by well-understood common interests and a shared mistrust of Mané and his MFDC allies. In truth, Mané maintained strong ties with the Casamance separatists and rumours circulated of a joint offensive to capture Ziguinchor by the separatists and the Guinea-Bissau army.

Mané had supported an opponent of Yala during the presidential elections and although he agreed to relinquish the formal command of the armed forces to General Verissimo Correia Seabra, he continued to wield considerable influence in Bissau. For his part, Yala was keen to develop his links with the army, favouring recruitment of young loyalists largely from his own ethnic group, the Balantas, and it was when he began to insinuate his followers into the officer corps that his relationship with Mané collapsed. The contest between the two ended on 30 November 2000 with the death of Mané in a shoot-out with the army, and a subsequent purge of those close to him. This episode sealed what was in effect a triple alliance between Dakar, Yala and the military elite.

The Senegalese minister of the interior, General Mamadou Niang, who had been closely involved with the Casamance situation, proceeded to increase his contacts with Bissau. Dakar directly supported Guinea-Bissau, which at the time was embroiled in a seemingly never-ending budgetary crisis, and Senegal was one of the African countries from which, in November 2002, Yala was able to collect the money to pay government salaries.¹⁴ Dakar also nurtured its ties with the Guinea-Bissau military directly, for example by financing the refurbishment of military buildings, opening Dakar military hospitals to Guinea-Bissau officers, and providing military supplies and material – and also, probably, money.

The Casamance issue was at the core of this relationship. Ironically, the ties established during the Seventh of June War between the Guinea-Bissau army and the MFDC, and the new relations between Dakar and Bissau, all combined to determine a major turn in the history of the separatist movement: the emergence of a ‘moderate’ MFDC guerrilla group on the Guinea-Bissau border.

Strange bedfellows on the Casamance front

Mané’s death, the effect of which was quickly felt in the border areas with Senegal, fed earlier internal tensions in the MFDC ‘southern front’. Bissau became the focal point of what amounted to a tacit coalition between the Senegalese authorities and an MFDC faction in opposition to Salif Sadio, then head of the southern front.

Sadio, who had been close to Mané, faced opposition within the MFDC¹⁵ and Mané's death offered separatist militants hostile to Sadio the opportunity to take the initiative. They were supported by the new military chiefs in Bissau, who were close to Yala, mistrusted Sadio and were undoubtedly sensitive to Senegal's broader concerns. In the military offensives that followed, Guinea-Bissau troops co-operated with the MFDC separatists, operating in Senegalese territory with the tacit (or perhaps secret) agreement of Dakar.

In January 2001 Sadio, in a letter addressed to the chairman of the Guinea-Bissau national assembly, denounced the assault by Guinea-Bissau troops.¹⁶ Despite official denials of military action¹⁷ controversy exploded in Bissau. On 17 January 2001 the PAIGC – at that time in parliamentary opposition – asked the government to keep to its role of mediator in the Casamance conflict. In response to Senegalese concerns a committee of the national assembly requested the army not to interfere in politics and to respect institutions,¹⁸ tacit confirmation that the Guinea-Bissau military was acting in a quasi-independent manner in this affair. Fighting continued until the summer of 2001, with Sadio's MFDC opponents consolidating their hold on the area around a camp situated next to the village of Kassolol. In 2002, Guinea-Bissau forces put further pressure on Sadio and his supporters, arresting those of them living in Bissau or expelling them to Senegal, and occupying and destroying a number of refugee villages.

The Kassolol faction of the MFDC was ambiguous from the start. All its members were hostile to Sadio and some would have liked to continue the armed struggle without him, but others, tired of endless war, wanted a negotiated settlement. Over time, some of its leaders went so far as to establish contact with Dakar and receive money from that source.

In exchange for their support, the Guinea-Bissau army obliged the Kassolol faction to abstain from attacks in Casamance. As Sadio's position was progressively weakening, the southern front ceased to be a hotspot in the Casamance conflict.¹⁹ Thus, soon after its defeat in the Seventh of June War, Senegal had obtained a major strategic success in Guinea-Bissau acting with relative restraint and prudence and at the lowest possible cost by entering into an alliance with the Guinea-Bissau presidency and army and turning them against the Sadio faction.

A RESILIENT ALLIANCE: 2003–2009

It was indicative of a continued understanding between Dakar and Bissau that this peculiar alliance between the Senegalese government, the fighters of Kassolol and the Guinea-Bissau authorities held together reasonably well. It did so in the face of severe political turbulence that affected Guinea-Bissau between 2003 and 2009, spanning the period from the fall of Yala to the death of Vieira, who had by then returned to the presidency.

The fall of Yala: renewed alliance

Yala's poor management, particularly as it affected government salaries, was his downfall and armed forces chief of staff, Seabra, assumed power in a bloodless coup d'état in September 2003. The Senegalese press reported this event with a degree of concern: the daily newspaper *Wal Fadjri* affirmed that 'the new masters of Bissau [favour] the MFDC'.²⁰

Yala's fall from power did not, however, create tension between Guinea-Bissau and Senegal; on the contrary, it saw a strengthening of their ties. The coupists wanted to avoid another Senegalese armed intervention and on the day of the coup they called Wade to assure him that their action was not counter to the interests of Senegal.²¹ Wade, who at first was not convinced, promptly set off for Bissau together with President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Ghanaian President John Kufuor (the latter also chairman of the Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS]) to meet with the new ruling junta. Obasanjo's firm stand, reinforced by a threat of intervention from ECOWAS, helped Wade obtain the guarantees he sought. Thereafter the emissaries shuttled between Bissau and Dakar, which then kept a benevolent eye on the 'transition' and indeed publicly defended the putschists on the regional and international scenes.

The effects of this renewed alliance were felt on the Casamance front. In February 2004 Seabra launched a new offensive against Sadio's separatists, this time further to the east of the border zone of Fouladou, where Sadio had retreated. Officially, the operation was aimed at protecting Guinean citizens from the depredations of the separatists, but Sadio denounced it as a joint assault by the Guinea-Bissau army and the Kassolol faction.²² On 19 February, Seabra announced the end of the operation and the dismantling of the separatists' bases. He acknowledged that four Guinea-Bissau soldiers had been killed and 14 injured.²³ By 25 February, however, a military source noted that fighting had recommenced and announced the capture of another base, the deaths of five separatists and the capture of several prisoners.²⁴

The victory of the PAIGC led by Carlos Gomes Júnior in an election in March 2004 and Júnior's subsequent appointment as prime minister, marked a break in Guinea-Bissau's drive against Sadio. For the most part the PAIGC had supported the junta and the MFDC against Senegal during the Seventh of June War, and had taken their side against Yala's support for the Kassolol faction. The death of Seabra at the hands of mutinous soldiers on 6 October 2004, however, worked to Senegal's advantage. His replacement as chief of staff, General Batista Tagme Na Wai, was not unknown to Dakar: he had headed the 2001 offensive against Sadio and enjoyed a good relationship with Senegal. Indeed certain elements in the military felt that it was his popularity within the army, due in part to Senegal's assistance, that led to his appointment.²⁵ Dakar kept a close eye on the situation and on 8 October 2004 Senegalese minister of state, Landing Savané, (who hailed from Bignona in Casamance) accompanied the executive secretary of ECOWAS on a visit to Bissau.²⁶ By February 2005 Na Wai was in Dakar for the 'strengthening of military co-operation between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau' and was received by Wade in person.²⁷ A month later, Senegal dispatched vehicles and military equipment to the Guinea-Bissau army. On that occasion, Na Wai stressed that he would 'do everything to restore order and tranquillity at the border between [our] two countries'.²⁸

The clean-up revived

After the coups of 2003 and 2004 civil authority was restored to Bissau. A degree of international consensus was reached to normalise the situation, which in turn enabled the two former presidents, Yala and Vieira, to return to the political arena in the run-up to a new presidential election. Vieira relied for support on Guinea-Conakry, in particular on its president, Lansana Conté, who was a personal friend. In 2005 Conté welcomed senior

Guinea-Bissau military figures to Conakry, to meet Vieira and his advisers. By the end of the discussions an agreement had been reached, albeit somewhat opaque;²⁹ the Guinea-Bissau military guaranteed Vieira's safety, and it was under their protection and over the protests of civil transitional authorities that a military helicopter from Guinea-Conakry took him to Bissau in April 2005.

Dakar seemed to remain aloof from this manoeuvring, but understood its portent: although the Senegalese authorities continued to support Yala in the election (including financially) they realised that they could have only limited success, bearing in mind Yala's loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the army, aid donors and indeed most of the Guineans.³⁰ Vieira became a possible alternative protégé while a third plausible candidate, Malam Bacai Sanhá, who was supported by the PAIGC, still bore a stigma in the eyes of Dakar due to his past alliance with Mané. Ties were established between Wade and Vieira, with Casamance entrepreneur Pierre Atépa Goudiaby playing a central role in forging this new alliance. An important personality in the informal diplomatic game in West Africa, Goudiaby was an adviser to Wade and involved in the management of the Casamance situation. He was also a close relative of Vieira. All the evidence indicates that Vieira's campaign benefited from material support from Senegal, and also that Wade and Goudiaby helped him obtain assistance from other African heads of state.³¹

Linked to both Yala and Vieira as he was, Wade played a decisive role in the 2005 presidential elections. When Yala refused to accept third place in the first round of the election Wade sent his plane to collect him and persuaded him to accept the results and support Vieira, thus contributing to the latter's victory.³² Soon after the election Vieira pushed his advantage and asked Dakar to keep Yala away from Bissau. Wade then organised Yala's exile to Morocco, a country very friendly to Senegal. On his part, Vieira said that he was ready to do everything in his power to settle the Casamance conflict, and the Senegalese press hailed him as 'an asset for peace in Casamance'.³³ The relationship between Wade and Vieira remained close until Wade's death, and Vieira was one of eight heads of state who attended the ceremony for the UNESCO's Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize awarded to the Senegalese president in May 2006.³⁴

It followed that after the 2005 elections Senegal had two points of leverage in Bissau: the chief of staff and the president. Under Vieira, Senegal continued to support the Guinea-Bissau security forces by way of shipments of rice, military equipment and vehicles. Hence as the Senegalese presidential elections of 2007 drew near, Dakar was in a position to request a renewed effort from the Guinea-Bissau army. In January 2006 Guinea-Bissau established a committee to examine and analyse the Casamance crisis. Headed by Na Wai, it comprised about 10 officers, as well as the minister of Internal Administration, Ernesto Carvalho (who was close to Yala) and Minister of Defence Helder Proença. This committee was held responsible for 'a programme of mediation between the Senegalese government and the MFDC'.³⁵ In reality, it was a military offensive that was in the works, and it began on 14 March 2006. Lieutenant-Colonel António Injai, Na Wai's nephew, took the reins of the so-called 'Operation Clean-up', still in partnership with Kassolol against Sadio. Just as in previous offensives, Casamance refugees – some of them with ties to the separatist fighters – who had set up camp close to Sadio's bases were chased back to Senegal and their houses burned. By 23 March more than 2 000 refugees had fled Guinea-Bissau.³⁶ Mines laid by the separatists took their toll; military sources admitted to the death of 60 Guinea-Bissau soldiers.³⁷

This new offensive was criticised among civil society as well as by the parliamentary opposition in Bissau. Na Wai accused some deputies of ties with the MFDC; the ministry of Internal Administration requested lifting the immunity of one deputy; and a former minister was detained for a week.³⁸ Within this context Vieira continued to urge on the army;³⁹ it barely needed encouragement, but his support clearly revealed Vieira's sympathy for the Senegalese cause and his powerlessness when faced with an army that had a direct relationship with Senegal and over which, in reality, he could exercise little if any authority.

On 13 April 2006, the Guinea-Bissau chief of staff announced the fall of Sadio's last remaining camp at Barraca Mandioca, although Sadio himself escaped capture, crossing Casamance to set up camp next to the Gambian border. Confiscated equipment and documents were sent to the Senegalese authorities. Colonel Lassana Massaly, the deputy commander of operations, showed his zeal by claiming 'the right to pursue Salif Sadio into Senegalese territory ... to the border with The Gambia'.⁴⁰

Between 2000 and 2006, therefore, despite political upheavals and criticisms from civil society and the political classes in Bissau, the Guinea-Bissau army was involved in several attacks against Sadio, incurring significant losses. It also forced the remnants of the Kassolol separatists into an informal ceasefire with the Senegalese army. Bissau supported meetings between Kassolol and mediators carefully selected by Senegal (such as the so-called 'Wise Men of Casamance' arbitration group).⁴¹ Bissau had rendered Dakar considerable services. Guinea-Bissau's political struggles in 2009, however, dealt a new hand and Dakar had only limited success in trying to re-establish its links with Bissau.

THE AFTERMATH OF MARCH 2009: A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP

The violent deaths in March 2009 of Dakar's two allies in Bissau, President Vieira and chief of staff Na Wai, transformed the relationship between the two countries. Suddenly deprived of its connections, Senegal became worried about the growing power of men with whom it had hardly any ties. It was not by chance that this phase coincided with a progressive renewal of tension on the Casamance front.

The events of March and June 2009

On 1 March 2009, Na Wai was killed in a bomb attack and on the same day Vieira was assassinated by the military, apparently because he was suspected of involvement in Na Wai's death. The two murders are still the subject of speculation.⁴² The situation took another turn in June when two people close to Vieira – the former Minister of Defence Proença and Baciro Dabo, Minister of Internal Administration and a candidate in the presidential elections – were killed by men in uniform, and several others who had been close to Vieira were arrested. The armed forces and the government of Gomes Júnior accused Dabo and Proença of preparing for a coup d'état in league with other Vieira partisans. They hinted at the involvement of Senegalese authorities, noting that some Vieira associates had met in Dakar shortly before the events. That episode, too, remains shrouded in mystery although many in Guinea-Bissau's opposition have openly denounced a manipulation by Gomes Júnior.

What is certain is that these episodes shook the relationship between Dakar and Bissau. The deaths of Na Wai, Vieira and Proença (who had played a central role in forging the relationship between Dakar and the Guinea-Bissau army), together with the political rise of Gomes Júnior, represented a severe blow to Senegalese influence. Significantly, Wade decided not to attend Vieira's funeral, citing security reasons.⁴³ The Senegalese leadership, after having reaped some benefits from it, despaired of the autonomy exercised by the Guinea-Bissau army, going so far as to call for the deployment of an ECOWAS 'supervisory force', a suggestion turned down by Gomes Júnior and the army.⁴⁴

Gomes Júnior and Zamora Induta: suspicion and separatist renewal

The death of Vieira led to the political rise of Gomes Júnior, a prosperous businessman with close ties to the former colonial power Portugal. Zamora Induta, the interim chief of staff before being confirmed in October 2009, was a close associate and a young, intellectual officer who also enjoyed very close links with Portugal. He had attracted Dakar's attention as spokesman for the Mané junta.

With concern, Senegal noted that the deaths of Na Wai and Vieira coincided with a reactivation of the southern front of the MFDC. While Dakar kept refusing to negotiate substantially with the military factions of the MFDC and stuck to a strategy of attrition, some moderate separatists again tried their luck on military terrain, this time without Na Wai to stop them. According to one source, some of the Guinea-Bissau military resumed sales of weaponry to the separatists.⁴⁵ Some Kassolol fighters broke the ceasefire and launched an unsuccessful attack towards Ziguinchor in the summer of 2009.⁴⁶ In January and February 2010 again, separatists operated on the outskirts of Ziguinchor. By June of that year the split within Kassolol seemed final: under the leadership of Ousmane Niantang Diatta a new base was established in the border zone to the south-east of Ziguinchor, and went on the offensive. Meanwhile César Badiate, the Kassolol faction leader, who controlled the border strip to the south and south-west of Ziguinchor, stuck to the ceasefire.

While the power brokers in Bissau insisted that they were not supporting the MFDC but putting an end to offensives that had proved costly in human lives, Senegal saw the neutrality observed by the Guinea-Bissau army, now headed by Induta, in a poor light, because Dakar was suddenly deprived of a central tool in its management of the Casamance conflict.

Its suspicions were reciprocated, because the Guinea-Bissau authorities seemed to believe that Dakar may have favoured the alleged attempted coup d'état of June 2009. The relationship between Dakar and Bissau became increasingly complex. In March 2009, Induta had met with Gambian president Yahya Jammeh – whose difficult relationship with Dakar and ties with Sadio were well known – to sign a military co-operation agreement.⁴⁷ Following a border disagreement in the Varela zone in October 2009, Guinea-Bissau authorities reacted by deploying troops,⁴⁸ and an illegal incursion of Senegalese fishermen into Guinea-Bissau waters resulted in swift reaction by Bissau. These incidents revealed a touchier and more independent Guinea-Bissau than before. Faced with this situation, Dakar sought new avenues to Bissau through Malam Bacai Sanhá.

Sanhá: a new charter

At the outset Sanhá – an influential figure within the PAIGC and a supporter of General Mané against Vieira during the Seventh of June War, and Mané's candidate during the 2000 election – seemed like an unlikely ally for Dakar. Indeed it was against him that Wade had encouraged the alliance between Yala and Vieira during the 2005 elections.

Learning from his defeats in 2000 and 2005, however, Sanhá had tried to draw closer to Senegal. In December 2005, during one of the impasses linked to Vieira's manoeuvres, he went to Dakar to request the involvement of Wade, who he had then referred to as his 'big brother'. On that occasion, he asked the MFDC to lay down their arms.⁴⁹ With Vieira dead Senegal saw Sanhá as a fresh protégé, undoubtedly encouraged in its thinking by Proença, Botché Candé and Roberto Cacheu, Vieira's allies within the PAIGC who, deprived of their leader, had become close to Sanhá.

The close relationship between Wade and Sanhá became well known; so much so that a rumour spread that Sanhá, although he was not known for his faith, began to adopt Wade's own Muslim Sufi affiliation. As the presidential elections of 2009 drew near Sanhá paid a visit to Senegal, during which he declared to the Senegalese media that Wade was his 'father' and 'one of the most important figures in the contemporary history of Africa'. He then explained: 'This is why I came in person to inform him of my candidacy ... I am relying on his support. And if tomorrow I am elected president of the Republic, we will work together.'⁵⁰

Senegalese advisers were dispatched to assist Sanhá and it seems that Senegal helped finance part of his powerful electoral campaign.⁵¹ His victory in the second round of the elections of 26 July 2009 was well received in Dakar. Wade travelled to Bissau for the swearing-in of his new ally on 8 September 2009, at a ceremony organised by a Senegalese communications agency.⁵² The Senegalese Press Agency also showed its support by praising the new president.⁵³ By August 2009, Senegal had donated 100 tonnes of sugar, two cars and two buses to the Guinea-Bissau presidency. Iran, which at the time was a preferred diplomatic partner of Senegal and which Wade had put in contact with Sanhá, donated 20 cars that the presidency gave to 'former fighters in the struggle for independence'.⁵⁴ Until his death in January 2012 Sanhá, who suffered from chronic diabetes, was hospitalised regularly in Dakar, sometimes at the expense of the Senegalese state.⁵⁵ Like Vieira, Sanhá was gracious in meeting his obligations as an ally of the Senegalese president; for example travelling to diplomatic events hosted by Wade.⁵⁶

Towards a new balance?

After his election Sanhá contributed to an improved relationship between Dakar and Bissau. After negotiations following border tensions in October 2009, Guinea-Bissau troops withdrew. Sanhá feared excessive dependence on Senegal, however, and maintained his distance.⁵⁷ Most importantly the presidency played a fairly limited role in Guinea-Bissau and as prime minister Gomes Júnior, who was well regarded by donors and who controlled the PAIGC and the assembly, had greater influence than Sanhá. Hence the revision of the co-operation agreement of 1975 between the two countries, proposed in February 2010 by Senegal, did not come about.⁵⁸ Diatta's separatist fighters continued their activities and Senegal could no longer depend on the Guinea-Bissau army to exert pressure.

The situation evolved somewhat with a political shake-up in Bissau in April 2010 that brought about the fall of Induta. General António Injai, who had commanded the last assault against Sadio, was appointed chief of staff, but he did not help Dakar much. Weakened by the fall of Induta, Gomes Júnior took up the cudgels again and established a close relationship with Injai.⁵⁹ This new phase was initially marked by serious tension between the Sanhá and Gomes Júnior camps with charges and strenuous counter-accusations, but eventually led to a modus vivendi between the two parties under strong pressure from aid donors. Senegal seemed to have resigned itself to a loss of influence and tried to get closer to Gomes Júnior by offering diplomatic support. In February 2011, in a diplomatic campaign to remobilise donors, Gomes Júnior made his first official trip to Dakar, meeting Wade and obtaining his support.⁶⁰

Dakar also tried to reconnect with the Guinea-Bissau army. At the end of June 2011 the chiefs of staff of the two countries signed an agreement in Bissau, following which Guinea-Bissau pledged to 'arrest all the rebels who had taken refuge on its territory'.⁶¹ In turn, the Senegalese army undertook to train Guinea-Bissau soldiers and to contribute to the upgrading of the naval barracks in Bissau. In July 2011 Senegalese prime minister Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye visited Bissau. In September of that year Senegalese and Guinea-Bissau commanders of the border zone met in the city of Kolda, in the east of Casamance. The meeting included a concert and a football match between the military corps of the two countries to 'strengthen the brotherly and cordial relationship that unites the Senegalese and Guinea-Bissau armies' and ended with an announcement of the establishment of joint patrols, which until then had been a dead issue.⁶² Although such joint operations were far from marking a Guinea-Bissau offensive against continued operations by the Diatta fighters, in this new phase Dakar could at least count on a certain level of co-operation, although nothing more could be achieved in terms of establishing Guinea-Bissau as an ally and using its army to assist in the campaign against the MFDC.

ASPECTS OF THE ALLIANCE AND ITS DETERIORATION

The deep ties between the two countries, in particular their economic linkages, acted as a constraint on Bissau's political options. Taking stock of the critical though discreet role Senegal has played in Guinea-Bissau's political life since 2000 and identifying its structural dimensions does not mean that Dakar decides in Bissau. The internal dynamics of Guinea-Bissau held to their own logic and from 2009 were fed by substantial changes in Guinea-Bissau's international affairs. The growing influence of Angola has been a major factor. At the end of the 2000s the Wade regime was having trouble finding allies of weight in Bissau while Luanda established a close relationship with Gomes Júnior, weakening the ties that Dakar had forged with the Guinea-Bissau state apparatus and its army.

Senegal as an economic pole

Some commentators had depicted the Seventh of June War as an action against the joint forces of neo-liberal globalisation and *la francophonie*, driven by Senegal and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU).⁶³ Certainly, the violent events of 1998–1999 that followed Guinea-Bissau's painful economic liberalisation in the 1980s

might be subject to such an interpretation: the population welcomed Mané's seizure of power not least because those years had been so difficult. Far from reversing the growing inscription of Guinea-Bissau in West Africa's regional economy, the decade following 2000 confirmed that trend. The dynamic economy of Senegal has been a major factor in this process.

Guinea-Bissau's attraction to its Francophone neighbours was not new: ever since the colonial era the Senegalese economy has been a driver of commercial and human circulations in the region. Although Portugal continued to be an important partner, Guinea-Bissau's links with West Africa grew increasingly strong. Portugal used to be Guinea-Bissau's main supplier, providing 56.6% of the country's imports in 1990 and 40.5% in 1994. By 2005, however, it was only the third-largest supplier, accounting for 12.7% of imports, far behind Senegal (34.6%) and Italy (20.4%).⁶⁴ Senegalese businessmen, as well as commercial interests from other business communities connected with Senegal – Mauritania, Lebanon or Guinea-Conakry – have been settling in Bissau. The country's entry into WAEMU similarly contributed to the reworking of its banking profile: after the Seventh of June War there was no Portuguese bank in Bissau and by 2009 three of its four commercial banks (Ecobank, Banque Régionale de Solidarité and Banco da União) were West African.⁶⁵

Dakar's seaport and international airport, its relatively large business enterprises and markets, as well as its universities and training centres, have all gone to make Senegal accessible, influential and attractive. Some businesses in Guinea-Bissau are branches of companies based in Dakar, the most important being telephone operator Orange, a branch of the Senegal-based Sonatel. Dakar provides many of the technicians working in Bissau in telecommunications, information technology and the management of petroleum or port facilities.⁶⁶ Students from Guinea-Bissau go to Dakar (even Casamance, where two universities were established in the second half of the past decade).⁶⁷

This trend was all the stronger during the second half of the 1990s and most of the 2000s, when Senegal experienced a period of exceptional growth while Guinea-Bissau moved from crisis to crisis.⁶⁸ From 1995 to 2008 Guinea-Bissau's gross domestic product was almost stagnant, with an average annual growth of 0.03%, whereas the Senegalese economy grew by 4.9% on a yearly average. The devastation of the Seventh of June War and the pillaging of Bissau exacerbated the situation in Guinea-Bissau, as Bissau's business elites lost much capital, which benefited businessmen from neighbouring countries, beginning with Senegal. The degradation of Bissau's port and its channel reinforced the role of the ports of Dakar and Ziguinchor in handling Bissau's external trade, and traffic was further facilitated when the João Landim bridge project on the road from Ziguinchor to Bissau was completed in 2004. Tellingly, the Guinean border town of São Domingos was notable for its remarkable growth in the 2000s.⁶⁹ Furthermore, for the young citizens of Guinea-Bissau, critical of their own national heritage,⁷⁰ Senegal was in many ways a model country. The phrase 'Dakar, little Paris!' was often heard in Bissau and Senegalese immigrants became role models for many youngsters in Guinea-Bissau hoping to emigrate.

All this translates into language choices. Non-governmental organisations, banks and businesses based in Bissau have increasingly demanded that their employees master French. Throughout Guinea-Bissau society the attraction of French has gained strength: the Alliance Française of Ziguinchor is full of Guineans learning French and many of the high-level military and civilian officials who did not already speak French, hasten

to obtain the basics so that they can participate in West African diplomatic life.⁷¹ Wolof, the Senegalese lingua franca, has also acquired a presence in Bissau – today it is possible to find youths who have learnt the language without having left their country, through contacts with Senegalese businessmen, shop owners, carriers or traders in Bissau. It has been the attraction of Senegal and West Africa, more than of France, that has led to the rise of the French language in Guinea-Bissau.

This long-term trend has certainly annoyed Lisbon. The continuation of French military support to the Senegalese army during the Seventh of June War, was often seen by Portuguese observers as evidence of a desire by France to extend its zone of influence using Senegal as a link, although French diplomats have maintained that France did not wish to become at odds with an important European partner such as Portugal just to protect the few interests it had in Guinea-Bissau.⁷² Indeed, although recognising that France remained close to Senegal, Portuguese diplomats now seem to think that it has been Dakar rather than Paris that has had ambitions in Guinea-Bissau. Senegal's policy agenda has not been embodied in the same figures as that of Portugal, which has indicated sympathy for Gomes Júnior, a man connected to Portuguese business interests and one who, from the Portuguese standpoint, brought hope of stability and development.

The early 2000s: favourable years for the Senegalese state

Although Senegal has become an economic and cultural centre of increasing importance to Guinea-Bissau, its specific influence in the early part of the past decade owed much to the politics of personal patronage and protection that the Wade regime exercised over critical elements of the Guinean state. The effectiveness of these policies was reinforced by the new prosperity of the Senegalese state, which grew in strength in the early 2000s. With international support (prompted by the transition to democracy in 2000) allied to economic growth, greater fiscal clout and reforms carried out by his predecessor, Wade enjoyed significant and growing state resources.⁷³ In 2005 the Guinea-Bissau budget amounted to XOF 48.3 billion, of which 20.3 billion came from foreign aid, whereas the Senegalese budget was XOF 955.8 billion, only 75.6 billion of it in external donations.⁷⁴

While Guinea-Bissau was mired in instability and bad governance that discouraged external support, Senegal possessed sufficient resources to exercise considerable political influence. Testimony to this was its policy of military co-operation for the benefit of the Guinea-Bissau army, which at the time was in disarray. Dakar's leverage in Bissau increased further with the difficult relationship between Guinea-Bissau authorities and aid donors during Yala's incumbency as well as in the second Vieira presidency, which was marked by severe governmental instability. Senegal was able to assume the position of 'big brother' to Guinea-Bissau, defending it in the international arena and pleading with donors to support the country. More prosaically, Wade several times made available his personal aircraft to enable presidents Yala and Vieira to attend international meetings.

End of the 2000s: the turn to Angola

Although Senegal benefited from leverage in Bissau in the 2000s, it was particularly successful because Guinea-Bissau was diplomatically isolated and the Senegalese government's resources were strong enough for it to exercise such influence. The situation

changed progressively during the second half of the 2000s: Guinea-Bissau, which had been marginalised for some time, appeared on the international scene at the end of a series of crises and a paradigm shift. At the same time Senegal was facing new difficulties. Dakar's influence in Bissau was reduced. After a new political and military upheaval in Bissau in April 2010, Angola, which involved itself in Guinea-Bissau from 2007, took over as the country's main diplomatic partner.

Guinea-Bissau had been an international issue in the late 1990s but it was in the second half of the 2000s, after a degree of stability had returned to crisis-ridden Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, that it became a cause for concern.

The slow emergence among West African political elites of a growing sense that regional political instability should be contained did much to bring Guinea-Bissau to the forefront. Senegal played its part in this process, involving itself in the Guinea-Bissau issue within the ECOWAS diplomatic sphere. Dakar derived some supplementary leverage because it could speak with the support of ECOWAS and in particular of Nigerian President Obasanjo, with whom Wade had built a good relationship. Nigerian oil income thus regularly contributed to supporting ECOWAS actions in Guinea-Bissau, which strongly reflected Senegal's concerns. But the arrival on the stage of new players did something to diminish Dakar's influence.

This new interest in Bissau accelerated during the second half of the decade. The explosion of clandestine seaborne migration from West African coasts aroused the interest of the EU and in particular of Spain, a new player in Bissau. During the same period the trafficking of cocaine and of Guinea-Bissau children raised equally strong international attention. Al-Qaeda also made an appearance: it was in Bissau that Mauritanian jihadists were arrested in January 2008 after having assassinated French tourists in Mauritania. All these developments were interpreted by international institutions and developed countries as symptomatic of a failed state: Guinea-Bissau was seen as becoming a source of major risks (through drug trafficking, clandestine immigration and international terrorism) for the whole world. Accordingly in December 2007 it was registered in the programme of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, and the UN reinforced its presence. In 2009 it turned the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, established in 1999, into a fully representative office. In February 2008 the EU also became involved through a support programme for reform of Guinea-Bissau's security sector.

The development of an international paradigm of strengthening rather than merely 'adjusting' African states has been reinforced by a general strategic reclassification of Africa in the economic and diplomatic arena. Guinea-Bissau's relatively under-exploited natural resources (bauxite, phosphates, petroleum, fisheries and forestry) aroused increasing interest. As elsewhere in Africa, China added to its presence in Guinea-Bissau; similarly involved, with varying agendas, were South Africa, Brazil and Venezuela. Plans for establishing or reopening embassies in Bissau were further evidence of the ongoing strategic reclassification.

Certainly, Guinea-Bissau is not a major concern for the international community, but by the end of the 2000s it had had attracted sufficient interest for the authorities to diversify their diplomatic portfolio and also strengthen the state, in the sense that salaries could be paid, internal debt reimbursed, external debt renegotiated and the like. Bissau therefore depended less on Dakar than before. Guinea-Bissau's budget increased significantly over very few years, from XOF 48 billion in 2005 to more than XOF 120

billion in 2009.⁷⁵ Certainly, international involvement in Bissau did take Senegalese concerns over Casamance in consideration, and the proliferation of traffic in weapons destined for the MFDC was seen by the international community as a symptom of the weakness of the Guinea-Bissau state – a weakness that it became involved in correcting. Senegal's quasi-monopoly over Bissau had, however, been broken precisely at the time that Senegal was experiencing a relative weakening. Wade's diplomacy was becoming ever more confused and his controversial candidacy for a third presidential term weakened Senegal's international standing, while budget growth was dropping. Almost inevitably the balance of power was less favourable to Senegal in 2012 than it had been 10 years earlier.

It was the involvement of Angola, however, that was the most significant factor. Calling on old ideological camaraderie as well as diplomatic ambitions and economic and financial plans,⁷⁶ Angola had by the end of the 2000s quickly become a major player on the Guinea-Bissau scene. Beyond taking a medium-term view of the mining sector, Luanda provided Guinea-Bissau with significant budgetary aid, as well as credit lines for the private sector. Luanda also proposed the construction of a deep water port, which would call into question the role of Dakar and Ziguinchor as points of transit for commerce in Guinea-Bissau and possibly in the wider West African region; Angola also backed Bissau in the international arena, for example by pleading its cause before the EU and the UN.

Finally, although ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), to which Angola belongs, collaborated after the events of April 2010 to try to stabilise Guinea-Bissau (together preparing a road map for the reform of the security sector), the relationship between the two blocs quickly soured. In September 2010 Luanda and Bissau signed a bilateral agreement for the provision of Angolan military and police assistance. In the same month, at an extraordinary ECOWAS summit, Wade insisted that the envisaged stabilisation force composed exclusively of soldiers from ECOWAS member countries, to try to counter an eventual Angolan deployment.⁷⁷ Sanhá and Wade had pleaded in vain since mid-2010 for an ECOWAS intervention force, a proposal forcefully rejected by the Guinea-Bissau army, but Angola was able to dispatch a small military contingent to Bissau in March 2011. Officially, the Angolan soldiers provided military co-operation for the benefit of the Guinea-Bissau army, but they were also guarantors of the civil power: during an attempted coup d'état in December 2011, Gomes Júnior took refuge in the Angolan embassy.

Angola, as protector and partner of Prime minister Gomes Júnior, seemed now to have assumed the main leverage in Bissau. 'Eh, Angola is so big,' sang President Sanhá during the ceremony for accreditation of the Angolan military mission, taking up a famous Angolan song.⁷⁸ Dakar tried to use its influence in ECOWAS to add some weight, for example by using as leverage the promise of an ECOWAS contribution to pension funds for the Guinean military. Senegal appeared resigned to its diminishing influence, however: in the presidential election of March 2012 in the wake of Sanhá's death in January, Dakar seemed to have accepted the likelihood of a victory of Gomes Júnior and did not follow up on requests for assistance from opponents seeking Senegalese support.⁷⁹

Using a combination of tools similar to that of Dakar but with heavier resources to back it – diplomatic support, material aid and personal ties and patronage – Luanda also established a relationship with Gomes Júnior but also with Injal, the armed forces chief of staff. Could new political troubles in Guinea-Bissau enable Dakar to re-establish its influence? If Angolan involvement were to last, could the attraction of Guinea-Bissau

to the Francophone and Senegalese arenas be tempered, or indeed reversed through the magnetism of the Angolan pole? Already Guinea-Bissau immigrants, legal and illegal, have begun moving towards Luanda.

CONCLUSION

A realistic analysis of the diplomatic game during Wade's two presidential terms from 2000 to 2012 shows that Dakar deployed a firm and coherent policy with a very realist inspiration to influence politics in Bissau. Thanks to this approach, Wade was able to secure, through changes of leadership in Bissau, Bissau's involvement in the management of the Casamance crisis, which for decades had been one of Senegal's core issues. Far from being a pawn of France (or servant of *la Francophonie*), Senegal played an independent game using France for linkage and support.

The politics of Senegal in Bissau, supported by strong economic and cultural influences, has been similar in some aspects to the relationships France maintained over the years with its African partners: military co-operation, access to health care, diplomatic brokerage, and financing selected candidates during elections – a kind of patronage with a quasi-'familial' dimension⁸⁰ with handpicked Guinea-Bissau stakeholders. Senegalese foreign policy is marked by a trait typical in diplomatic relationships within Francophone Africa: money circulates informally between power brokers from one country to another (sometimes to the benefit of the political opposition) and serves to finance election campaigns or regulate crises (eg failure to pay government salaries, gifting of military malcontents, and building consensus between political figures).⁸¹

This policy functions through 'back-channel' paths such as the businessman Pierre Goudiaby, and through an extremely stable and expert diplomatic corps, free from the administrative principle of periodic renewal.⁸² Finally, although it has limited resources, Senegal runs a vast international network and is making itself available as a diplomatic link with other potential partners (France, the EU and ECOWAS, but also Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Libya and Iran), enabling it to deploy some weight in Bissau. This influence reached its peak in 2006 with the victorious offensive of the Guinea-Bissau army against Casamance's chief rebel, Sadio.

Although Senegal played its diplomatic cards well enough, this policy worked only for a while. After a prosperous first term (2000–2007), in which Senegal enjoyed diplomatic influence and saw its power grow, Wade's second term was marked by relative deterioration. The death in March 2009 of its two key Guinean allies, Vieira and Na Wai, weakened Senegal's influence. Finally, Dakar owed something of its influence in Bissau to Guinea-Bissau's isolation at the end of the Seventh of June War. Ultimately, Wade knew how to use Guinea-Bissau's marginalisation at the beginning of the 2000s to acquire influence. He deployed the same approach to the military regimes that subsequently came to power in Mauritania and Guinea-Conakry: poorly regarded, marginalised and in search of recognition, they were reasonable targets for Senegal and its limited resources under Wade, who could commit for their benefit his influence and prestige to play the role of friend and mediator with the international community.

Bissau shook off some of its diplomatic isolation in the second half of the 2000s. Seizing the opportunity left open by the military shake-up of April 2010, Angola has

established itself as the new friend of Guinea-Bissau, forming a relationship as primary patron, with Carlos Gomes Júnior, favoured as the default option by the international community, but also with António Injai. Senegal continued to work its connections and alliances in Bissau, but it is not sure that it will ever regain the kind of influence exercised in the early years of Wade's mandate.

POSTSCRIPT

This text was finalised at the beginning of March 2012, when Senegal and Guinea-Bissau were each organising presidential elections. On 25 March 2012 Wade was defeated in the second round of Senegalese elections by Macky Sall, one of his former prime ministers. A week earlier, on 18 March, Gomes Júnior, Guinea-Bissau's outgoing prime minister, won 49% of votes in the first round of that country's presidential elections. In Bissau, numerous military men and politicians feared that Gomes Júnior's likely victory in the second round would allow him to assume his personal hegemony, all in the name of the necessary reforms and with the support of the international community – in particular Portugal and Angola. On 12 April 2012, encouraged by the blocking of the election by opponents who refused to validate the results of the first round, the military suspended the electoral process and arrested Gomes Júnior, whom they accused of having been involved with Angola in a plot against the national army. With the support of the main opposition parties and opponents of Gomes Júnior within the PAIGC, the military established transitional authorities that Gomes Júnior and the parliamentary majority PAIGC refused to recognise.

For Senegal, which seemed to have accepted its diminished influence, Gomes Júnior's likely victory and his favoured relationship with Angola, this new shake-up provided the opportunity to play a role once more. Along with Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire – other ECOWAS countries unhappy with Angola's involvement in West Africa – Senegal supported the transition opened by the military's action where Angola and Portugal rejected it and advocated the immediate restoration of Gomes Júnior's authority and the continuation of the electoral process. ECOWAS stressed the need to take into account the *de facto* power of the victorious coupists, but it is clear to observers that several influential West African states, including Senegal, are happy to see Angola and its ally Gomes Júnior in trouble. The Gomes Júnior camp unhesitatingly accused ECOWAS (or some of its members), and even France, of having organised the coup d'état.

Under pressure from the Guinean military, Angolan troops withdrew from Bissau and ECOWAS deployed a 600-strong force which included a small Senegalese contingent.⁸³ Thus, a little more than 10 years after *Opération Gabou*, Senegalese soldiers were setting foot in Bissau once again, this time to be well received by the Guinean army. In the international arena, allied with some key partners in ECOWAS, Senegal was involved in defending the Guinea-Bissau transitional authorities. It was to Dakar that the transitional president, Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo, made his first diplomatic excursion on 14 June 2012.

The outcome of the transition is still uncertain. The PAIGC eventually signed the transition pact on 16 January 2013, but it is not sure yet how this will translate in terms of power distribution, not when new elections will be held. Gomes Júnior is still in exile in Portugal and CPLP countries maintain their criticism of ECOWAS and the transition authorities. Although the authorities and the Guinea-Bissau army have the country under

proper control, they are diplomatically isolated and require resources that ECOWAS and WAEMU cannot provide all by themselves. The events, however, confirm the strategic importance of Bissau for Senegal, and the capacity of this small country for diplomatic action – which it is able to support with its limited military resources,⁸⁴ using ECOWAS as its channel.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The material in this paper results from research conducted by the author on behalf of and with support from the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, and the Centre d'Etudes d'Afrique Noire of Institut d'Études Politiques de Bordeaux, before he joined the International Crisis Group. This paper does not represent in any way the views of the International Crisis Group. The author thanks Camille Bauer, Marina Temudo, Momar-Coumba Diop, Daniel Bach, Jean-Claude Marut, Richard Moncrieff, Aristides Gomes and Victor Pereira for their valuable comments.
- 2 For the Casamance conflict, see Marut J-C, *Le conflit de Casamance. Ce que disent les armes*. Paris: Karthala, 2010; as well as Foucher V, 'On the matter (and materiality) of the nation: interpreting Casamance's unresolved separatist struggle', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 11, 1, 2011; and Foucher V, 'Senegal: the resilient weakness of Casamance separatists', in Boas M & KC Dunn (eds), *African Guerrillas: Raging Against the Machine*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007.
- 3 Bayart J-F, 'Africa in the world: a history of extraversion', *African Affairs*, 99, 2000, pp. 217–267.
- 4 Barry B, *La Sénégalie du XV^e au XIX^e siècle. Traite négrière, islam et conquête coloniale*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988.
- 5 This included the movements of heavy artillery pieces on Senegalese ground. Interview, former member of the army branch of the PAIGC, Bissau, June 2010.
- 6 In accordance with PAIGC policy, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde had formed a union at independence, which was dissolved in 1980.
- 7 Interview, official of the Guinean ministry of the interior, Bissau, October 2009.
- 8 Interview, official of the MFDC, Mandinari (Gambia), March 2000.
- 9 On 14 October 1993, the two countries signed an agreement for the joint management of the disputed zone. The agreement resulted in the establishment of the Agency for Management and Cooperation (*Agence de Gestion et de Coopération*) between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau (<http://www.agc.sn>).
- 10 On the Seventh of June War, see Martins M, 'Le conflit en Guinée Bissau: chronologie d'une catastrophe', *L'Afrique politique*, 1999, pp. 213–218, as well as the special edition of *Soronda: Revista de Estudos Guineenses*, December 2000.
- 11 Dakar supported its putative ally against the MFDC and apparently considered attacking the MFDC from behind, whereas Guinea-Conakry's assistance was more personal: President Conté, had been a friend of Nino Vieira since the days of the 'liberation struggle'.
- 12 Djalo T, 'Lições e legitimidade dos conflitos políticos na Guiné-Bissau', *Soronda: Revista de Estudos Guineenses*, December 2000, pp. 29–32. A black market was established during the war, as soldiers sent consumer goods pillaged in Bissau to Dakar and Conakry. Interview, former receiver, Bissau, October 2009.
- 13 Wade brought Guinea-Bissau's share of the potential income from 15% to 20%.

- 14 Lusa, 'Guiné-Bissau – Kumba Ialá distribui um milhão de euros a Governo, FA's e MAI', 29 November 2002.
- 15 Some separatists attacked him for his authoritarianism, brutality, lack of consideration for civilians and his disregard for the movement's political wing. In addition, like many MFDC militants, Sadio was a Muslim from Buluf, north of the Casamance River, and was accused of favouring his own people. From September 2000 there was factional violence between militants of the MFDC in Guinea-Bissau; Mané was involved in the release of Sadio followers arrested by the Guinea-Bissau authorities. *AFP* (Agence France-Presse), 'Rebels in Casamance postpone meeting following internal strife', 2 January 2001.
- 16 *BBC Monitoring Service*, 'Casamance faction leader accuses Guinea-Bissau government of "open war"', 18 January 2001.
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- 20 'Inquiétudes pour la Casamance', *Wal Fadjri* (Dakar), 15 September 2003.
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- 25 Interviews, Guinea-Bissau military, Bissau, October 2009.
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- 28 *PANA*, 'Don d'équipements du Sénégal à l'armée bissau-guinéenne', 1 March 2005.
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- 30 Yala made his relationship with Senegal a campaign issue, for example stating that if he were elected, Wade would provide \$10 million to the Guinea-Bissau army. Lusa, 'Guiné-Bissau: Kumba Ialá reassume-se como candidato às presidenciais', 26 May 2005.
- 31 *Jeune Afrique*, 'Nino le caméléon', 1 August 2005. Interview, former Guinean minister, Paris, December 2011.
- 32 *BBC Monitoring Africa*, 'Ousted Guinea-Bissau president flown to Senegal for talks ahead of crucial poll', 23 May 2005.
- 33 *BBC Monitoring Africa*, 'French radio interviews Guinea-Bissau President-elect Joao Vieira',

- 22 September 2005; 'Nino Vieira président, un atout pour la paix en Casamance', *Wal Fadjri*, 25 July 2005.
- 34 Supporters included several old allies (eg Chirac, Obasanjo, Obiang Nguema from Equatorial Guinea) and other clients (Mamadou Tandja from Niger and Marc Ravalomanana from Madagascar). APS (Agence de presse Sénégalaise), '8 Chefs d'Etat seront présents à la cérémonie de remise du Prix Houphouët Boigny', 12 May 2006.
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- 37 PANA, 'Près de 60 soldats bissau-guinéens tués par le MFDC', 1 April 2006.
- 38 PANA, 'L'ancien ministre de l'Intérieur de la Guinée-Bissau arrêté', 3 April 2006.
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- 44 Interview, African diplomat, Bissau, October 2009.
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- 48 AFP, 'L'armée de Guinée-Bissau en alerte près du Sénégal (source militaire)', 14 October 2009.
- 49 *Le Soleil*, 'Situation politique en Guinée-Bissau: Malam Bacai Sanha demande au président Wade de s'impliquer davantage', 5 December 2005; 'Malam Bacai Sanhá : "La rébellion doit déposer les armes en Casamance"', *Wal Fadjri*, 5 December 2005.
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- 51 Sanhá took special care of his communications with the Francophone world: a PR firm in Paris published a *Lettre de la Lusophonie* in which Sanhá was invariably presented in a favourable light.
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- 54 *Africa 21 Digital*, 'Presidente do Senegal oferece quatro viaturas ao seu homólogo guineense', 24 August 2010.
- 55 *Les Afriques*, 'C'est l'Etat sénégalais qui a pris en charge les frais d'hospitalisation du président de Guinée Bissau', 27 October 2010.
- 56 For example the *Festival mondial des Arts nègres* or welcoming Haitian students to Senegal after the earthquake in Haiti. *Le Soleil*, 'Me Abdoulaye Wade aux étudiants haïtiens – "Vous êtes chez vous en terre africaine du Sénégal"', 14 October 2010; 'Ouverture 3^{ème} FESMAN: simplement grandiose!', *Le Point du Jour* (Dakar), 11 December 2010.
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- 72 Interviews, French diplomats, Paris, June 2011. Cited by Wikileaks, an American diplomat pointed out in 2005 that while Senegal was satisfied with its relationship with Yala France would rather follow the Portuguese line on the Guinean case. US Embassy Paris, '*MFA official discusses CAR, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea*', 25 April 2005, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2005/04/05PARIS2789.html>.
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- 74 The data used is from Banque de France, http://www.banque-france.fr/fr/eurosys/zonefr/page2_2008.htm. For comparison purposes, Guinea-Bissau had 1.5 million inhabitants and Senegal almost 10 times more (13 million).
- 75 APA (Agence de presse africaine), 'Economie: Les députés approuvent le budget de l'Etat qui s'élève à près de 120 milliards de FCFA', 10 December 2009.
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- 77 'Conseil des ministres: Le chef de l'Etat maintient le prix de l'huile à son niveau actuel', *Le Soleil*, 1 October 2010, <http://www.lesoleil.sn>.
- 78 'MISSANG instalada em Bissau', *O País* (Luanda), 29 March 2011.
- 79 Two of Gomes Júnior's opponents, Serifo Nhamadjo and Afonso Tê, the political heirs respectively of Malam Bacai Sanhá and Nino Vieira, went to Dakar during the electoral

campaign, but were apparently not well received. Interview, high-level Senegalese official, Dakar, April 2012.

- 80 Note that Malam Bacai Sanhá called himself the brother, then the son, of Abdoulaye Wade.
- 81 President Wade himself mentioned that during his time in opposition he had received money from President Omar Bongo of Gabon. Wade A, *Une vie pour l'Afrique. Entretiens avec Jean-Marc Kalfleche et Gilles Delafon*. Paris: Michel Lafon, 2006, p. 202. In October 2009 the outgoing representative of the IMF in Senegal, Alex Segura, reported to the IMF that he had been offered a suitcase with EUR 100 000 and \$50 000 as a parting gift – the result of a mistake, said the presidency. The money was returned. In autumn 2011 French lawyer Robert Bourgi asked for a substantial contribution from the Senegalese presidency to Jacques Chirac's 2002 French presidential campaign.
- 82 Abdoulaye Dieng, Senegalese ambassador in Bissau, reserve general of the Senegalese army, has held office since 2002. It is difficult not to compare this situation to the long tenure of some French ambassadors in particularly strategic African countries: Michel Dupuch in Abidjan 1979–1993, or Maurice Delauney in Libreville 1967–1972 and 1975–1979.
- 83 Probably to avoid reviving memories of the Seventh of June War, Senegal deployed only non-combatant troops: an engineering unit and a medical unit.
- 84 Senegal asked France to provide transport for its men to Bissau.

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