DISSERTATION

M.Sc. (POLITICAL SCIENCE)

THE NIGERIAN PRESS AND FOREIGN POLICY MAKING:

A CASE OF NIGERIA'S INVOIVEMENT IN LIBERIA

BY

GWARZO, BELLO BASHIR

THE AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY ZARIA,

JUNE, 2000

-

The Nigerian Press and Foreign Policy Making: A Case of Nigeria's Involvement in Liberia

By

GWARZO, Bello Bashir

SIS PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL ICE, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, IN PARTIAL LMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF SCIENCE EE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE.

JUNE, 2000

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is a report of an original work carried out by me and it has not been presented by any other person for the award of a higher degree before.

All works referred to have been duly acknowledged in the form of references.

Gawrzo, Bello B.
June, 2000.

CERTIFICATION

This Thesis titled,. The PRESS AND FOREIGN POLICY MAKING: A CASE OF NIGERIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN LIBERIA, by GWARZO, Bello Bashir, meets the regulation governing the award of degree of Master of Science in Political Science of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

Dr. Sabo Bako
Internal Examiner

10/8/2000
Date

Dr. Abduallahi A. Hudu
Internal Examiner

10/8/2000
Date

Dr. Siddque Abubakar Mohammed
Head: Department of Political Science

10-8-2000
Date

Dean: Postgraduate School

12/08/02
Date

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT----------i

DEDICATION----------ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT----------iii

MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA (POLITICAL)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH PLAN

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM----------1

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM----------2

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES----------2

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY----------2

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW----------3

1.6 HYPOTHESIS----------12

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK----------13

1.8 METHODOLOGY----------15

1.9 PLAN OF THE WORK----------17

NOTES/REFERENCES----------20

CHAPTER TWO:GENESIS OF THE LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR

2.1 LIBERIA: BRIEF HISTORY----------22

2.2 UNIFICATION: THE TUBMAN YEARS----------24

2.3 THE ETHNIC CONFIGURATION OF LIBERIA----------31

2.4 GEO-POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF LIBERIA----------35

2.5 CIVIL WAR ERUPTS----------43

NOTES/REFERENCES----------53

CHAPTER THREE: THE NIGERIAN PRESS IN FOREIGN POLICY MAKING

3.1 GENERAL REMARKS----------56

3.2 ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN PRESS IN FOREIGN POLICY MAKING----------58

3.3 ORGANISATION AND BACKGROUND OF THE
SELECTED NEWSPAPERS----------63

3.4 HOW FOREIGN POLICY IS MADE IN NIGERIA----------71

3.5 GOVERNMENT PERCEPTION OF THE LIBERIAN CRISIS----------75

NOTES/REFERENCES----------95

CHAPTER FOUR: THE NIGERIAN PRESS AND THE LIBERIAN CRISIS

4.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW----------105

4.2 PRO-INTERVENTION PAPERS----------108

4.3 ANTI-INTERVENTION PAPERS----------131

4.4 GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPERS----------138

4.5 CONCLUSION ----------167

NOTES/REFERENCES---------- 169

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY----------172

5.2 FINDINGS----------174

5.3 CONCLUSION----------176

NOTES /REFERENCES----------178

TABLES

TABLE 1: VIEWS OF THE SELECTED NEWSPAPERS ON

THE LIBERIAN CRISIS----------153

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF NEWS REPORTS,EDITORIALS AND OPINION SURVEYS

BY THE TEN NEWSPAPERS (JANUARY-DECEMBER 1990)----------164

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF PRESS REPORTS, EDITORIALS,

OPINION SURVEY PER NEWSPAPER (JANUARY-DECEMBER 1990)----------166

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: PRE-CIVIL WAR PRESIDENTS OF LIBERIA ----------179

APPENDIX II: TRIBAL DIVISIONS OF LIBERIA'S POPULATION (1962)--------180

BIBLIOGRAPHY----------181

ABSTRACT

The relationship between the government and the press is complex.

"Those who do (policy-makers) need those who report and comment (the press) on what is done or should be done."

"The Power of Comment," by Douglas Hurd, British Foreign Secretary, in a speech at the Travelers Club, September 9, 1993.

This work examines the role of the Nigerian press as a domestic source of foreign policy in the final decision by the Nigerian government to intervene in 1990, in the Liberian civil war.

Many factors contributed to the final decision, some of which were external, but the debate in Nigeria as to whether the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida should spearhead a military peace-keeping force or not was largely led by, and conducted on the pages of the Newspapers. The leading ones being the ten that were selected for this work.

Their editorials were divided between outright support and round condemnation of government.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the intrepid journalists who covered the Liberian civil war and kept the world informed about events in the battle field and in the conference rooms.

In particular, the work is dedicated to the following journalists:

First, the two Nigerian journalists, **Mr. Tayo Awotunsin** of *The Champion* newspaper and **Mr. Kriis Imoghedi** of *The Guardian* who died in the course of their duty to keep the public informed.

Second, *the Concord* reporter, **Mr. Frank Igwebueze** who, together with **Miss Elizabeth Blunt** of the *BBC London*, escaped the storm in the ECOMOG camp that engulfed President Samuel Doe, who was captured in their presence by a rival faction and killed later.

Third, to **Mark Huband**, another *BBC* reporter who was abducted in a train ambush by Taylor's men and whose lucky release gave the world the first insight into the rebel command.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

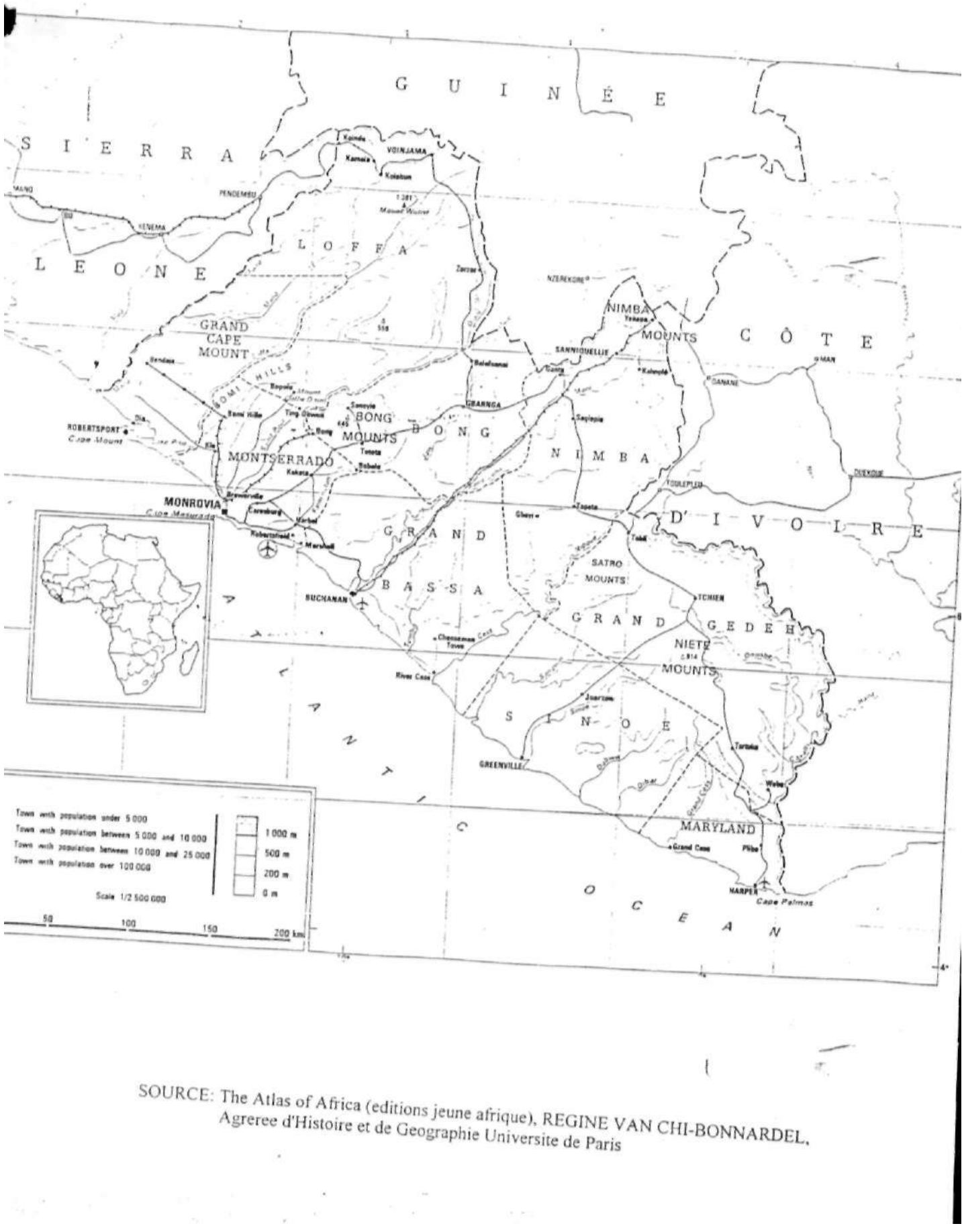
This work took a very long time to accomplish. There were many obstacles but they were overcome primarily because of the encouragement I got from my latest supervisor, Dr. Sabo Bako. Just before then, I had abandoned hope.

My gratitude also goes to the first supervisor, Dr. Oga Ajene, who did his best to set me on. Even when he was away for some other national duties he made it a point to keep the line of contact with me to continue with the project. Unfortunately, the official duty he assumed outside the University did not allow him finish the task.

I must also thank the external examiner, Professor Umar Birai, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Abuja, and the internal examiner, Dr. Hudu Abdullahi of the Department of Political Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

I would also remember forever the kindness of Miss Therese Kouame of the African Development Bank (ADB), Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, who offered to type this work at a very short notice despite her French language background and official commitments. Credit Miss Chioma Onukogu, also of the ADB, who used her extreme good senses to recommend Miss Kouame to me.

MAP OF LIBERIA (POLITICAL)



SOURCE: The Atlas of Africa (editions jeune afrique), REGINE VAN CHI-BONNARDEL, Agreree d'Histoire et de Geographie Universite de Paris

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH PLAN

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

This research work is an analysis of the Nigerian press coverage of the Liberian crisis within the first year of its outbreak, 1989-1990, and the attempts by the selected newspapers to influence the Nigerian government of the day to either intervene or not to, in order to resolve the crisis by military force through a concerted regional effort, the Ecowas Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

Nigeria had the biggest military contingent in the West African peace offensive in Liberia[1]. Nigeria's President, General Ibrahim Babangida, is said to be the initiator of the mediation efforts, and later of the ECOMOG military operation, to end the crisis.[2]

The Nigerian press found in the Liberian crisis, and the subsequent efforts by Nigeria to resolve it, a good grist for their mill. Three of them sent

corespondents to the war field. The Government press also sponsored some journalists to visit the arena.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This work examines the role of the Nigerian press in the Nigerian government's decision to intervene in the Liberian crisis.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the work is to analyse the coverage of the Liberian crisis by the Nigerian press and to find out when or what factors made them and the government in Nigeria to arrive at the decision.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This work is significant because it gives an insight into the role of the press, one of the main domestic sources of foreign policy decision-making in modern nation-states. It provides a critical analysis of the coverage by the Nigerian press of events, issues and significance of the Liberian crisis to Nigeria right from its inception in December 1989 to its escalation in July 1990. Thus, providing a framework for a national debate on whether or not

Nigeria should intervene which provides yet another framework for government policy on the matter.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on the press on foreign policy making in Nigeria is scanty. There is a however, a wide range of research by scholars on some other domestic factors that influence foreign policy making. For example, federalism, party politics, public opinion, etc. etc. Most of these studies used the press as a primary source for their work.

For example, I.A. Gambari has indicated that "major Nigerian newspapers and magazines were used as one of the primary sources for (his) work.."[3] A.B. Akinyemi also said that "apart from a few publications by political parties, which quantitatively were far less than the public pronouncements of the political parties, newspapers (where there was adequate freedom to publish) form a major source of finding out who said what and when."[4]

There is a study on "Radio as an instrument of foreign policy in Nigeria."[5] which is confined to the electronic media and is primarily concerned with the issue of propaganda as an instrument of foreign policy. Thus, its scope is limited and therefore, different from this one that specifically

focuses on the print media which have a wider margin of public opinion than the exclusively government owned radio and television in Nigeria.

Abiodum Sotunmbi's work on "Nigeria's Recognition of the MPLA Government of Angola: A Case Study of Decision-Making and Implementation" is an excellent research that aimed to "ascertain the inputs into Angolan decision, the process through which the decision was taken and its consequences on Nigeria's future foreign policy decisions."[6] He analysed or just mentioned only two government-owned newspapers in the case study, namely the *New Nigerian* and the *Daily Times*.

It is not surprising that Sotunmbi arrived at some sweeping generalisations: that the press followed government lead; that they did not have any input in the government's popular decision to recognise the MPLA; and that the press do not have the resources for indepth reporting and analysis on events beyond the country's borders; and therefore neither the newspapers nor the public, nor yet the intellectual elite influenced the decision to recognise the MPLA government.

This generalisation is unfair in the sense that the study was essentially focused on the structure and process of decision-making under a certain

administration, General Murtala Muhammed's, as well as on the external factors, i.e. South African invasion, that were antecedent to the decision.

The study inadequately treated the role of the press, which should be a subject-matter of its own.

Moreover, the domestic environment since then, has become more sophisticated than it was in the Murtala years. So both the public and the press may not be expected to be passive to events as they were in the mid-70's. Not only that, the Nigerian press have increased numerically and improved professionally. They have moved many steps forward from passive and distant spectators of events in and outside the country to active participants, close observers, commentators and interpreters of events, fully aware of the effects of such events and policies on the international community as a whole and on Nigeria in particular. They make indepth reportings, assign specific correspondents and desks, and specialists, on particular issues, and in some cases (e.g. Liberia) sent reporters for a first hand information independent of official press releases.

This development over time cannot go without a corresponding responsibility to seek to influence a policy that would favour their specific interests. These changes in the perception, interests and resources at the

disposal of the press is so great that a fresh study on their impact on the country's decision-making becomes necessary.

It is obvious that since Angola, subsequent regimes have realised that a wider section of the press and public have become increasingly interested in foreign policy wich governments cannot simply ignore, if only to gain popularity and credibility, especially the military regimes. In addition, Sotunmbi has himself acknowledged that the press have come down heavy on such issues as the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact, General Murtala's assassination, and that Murtala's being a military regime then, the press could have hardly been "free enough to exercise significant influence on the decision-making process."

One study that gave a good focus on the role of the press on foreign policy decision-making in Nigeria is Olajide Aluko's "Public Opinion and Nigeria's Foreign Policy under the Military."[7] The study attempted to examine the role of public opinion on Nigeria's foreign policy making during the Gowon military administration.

The work appraised public opinion as expressed in the press, on major foreign policy issues, namely the Rhodesian Deadlock, Expulsion of Nigerians from Ghana, and Britain's Bid to Join the European Economic Community (EEC) during 1970-72. Aluko concluded that public opinion "played little role

in the formulation of the country's foreign policy," but some of the ideas expressed in the press tried to modify government stand on those issues subsequently. This I believe is in itself some form of impact.

Yet, Aluko recognised that despite its limitations on foreign news coverage, a section of the press, like the *New Nigerian* and the *Daily Times*, is fairly good, perhaps one of the best in Africa (1973). This has made a study purely focused on the press even more imperative.

Another study that comes closer to this work is William A. Ajibola's "Foreign Policy and Public Opinion."[8] The work examined the role of the domestic environment in foreign policy making and exertion by assessing the mass media, pressure groups and parliament in influencing the British government's attitudes to the Nigerian civil war of 1966-1970.

However, since Ajibola's work was on Britain, there is therefore the need to study or examine the press in Nigeria. This is where this work differs from Ajibola's, if all other things are similar.

And in his work, "Foreign Policy and Federalism," Professor Bolaji Akinyemi also touched on the press and their role in the specific foreign policy issues he chose to explain[9]. But since the subject-matter of his study was how a federal structure (in Nigeria) affects foreign policy decision, i.e. how regional

powers exert influence on foreign policy decision-making, it is therefore not surprising that his examination of the press tended to focus on what the regionalist tendencies were as mainly expressed through the regional newspapers based on their political leanings and ownership. So the newspapers only tended to paint their editorials in their owners' colours and serving only as a "major source of finding out who said what and when."

Similarly, Professor Ibrahim Gambari's work on "party politics and foreign policy: Nigeria Under the First Republic,"[10] which dwelt extensively on domestic political structures and processes and their influence on foreign policy making was sourced primarily from the "Nigerian newspapers."

Gambari examined the impact of domestic processes on foreign policy decision-making which invariably included the press.

The weakness of his work in relation to this one, lays on its focus on political parties only, which made the treatment of the press secondary.

A case study conducted by David Whitman on "The Press and Neutron Bomb"[11] which examined the impact of a major American newspaper, the *Washington Post*, on foreign policy making is an excellent piece, relevant to the subject-matter of this research work.

The chronology of events surrounding the decision to manufacture Neutron Bomb, from day one (June 6, 1977) when the reporter's (Walter

Pincus) story appeared: "Neutron Killer Warhead Buried in ERDA (Energy Research Development Administration) Budget," in the Post, to the last day, a year later (April 7, 1978), when President Jimmy Carter released the statement, "announcing deferral of ERW (Enhanced Radiation Weapon) i.e. Neutron bomb production and deployment" had amply demonstrated how the press heavily influenced the proposal because of the adverse reports on it.

This is a study on another country's foreign policy, not Nigeria. This therefore makes the need for a case study on Nigeria's press and foreign policy imperative.

A recently published work, "The Media and Foreign Policy"[12] which is a collection of a three-year study by experts--journalists, academics and politicians in the United States is also another relevant material to this work.. Despite its wide scope and variety of cases studied it is limited to the United States alone. It is primarily an attempt to answer the questions asked for many decades: who sets the agenda, the media or the government? To what extent do the media affect the substance of national policy as distinct from its presentation? Is the media's coverage of foreign policy events and issues distorted or biased? Do the competitive pressures cause the media to act irresponsibly on vital national security issues such as terrorism or arms control? Is the media's adversarial relationship with government officials

injurious and what, if anything, can or should be done to make this relationship more constructive? Is a code of conduct needed for either or both sides, and if so, who is to devise it and, more important, enforce it?[13]

These questions not only touch on the subject-matter of this research but have gone further than its scope. Simon Serfaty pointedly answered those questions: that in the United States, the media is being seen as "a major force that influences both the substance of national (and foreign) policy and the process by which it is formulated."

The effects of this influence are: civil rights coming top on the (American) nation's consciousness; the resignation of Nixon in the Watergate aftermath; defeat of Carter in his presidential re-election bid; the impact of the bitter controversy over the Iran-Contra affair shook the Reagan administration which was only overcome by his unprecedented popularity.[14]

The limitation of this otherwise excellent work is that it is Americo-centric, relying mostly on the experience of the American government and the American media, which is "unique in history." One cannot agree with the author more when he pointed out that "these facts alone make it difficult to generalise from the American experience." It thus, stopped where this work begins-focusing exclusively on the Nigerian press and foreign policy decision-making in Nigeria.

This is more so at a time when, according to A.B. Akinyemi, it has become a "marked feature of twentieth century international politics" for non-governmental institutions, such as the press, to be interfering in foreign policy formulation.[15]

1.6 HYPOTHESIS

This work is based on the assumption that: first, whenever there is an external crisis in Africa, the Nigerian press report and comment on it extensively.

Second, whenever an external crisis is perceived to affect Nigeria's regional security and humanitarian concerns, the Nigerian press call on the Nigerian government to intervene to assist in resolving it.

Third, the Nigerian press have contributed a great deal in making the Nigerian government conscious of, and intervene in the Liberian crisis.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is designed within the decision-making framework as originally expounded by Richard C. Snyder and applied in the Korean crisis, [16] and later modified in subsequent studies and applications by scholars such as Graham Allison [17] on the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and Rosenau's theory of Linkage Politics[18] and his study on domestic sources of foreign policy.[19]

Snyder's basic theoretical postulate incorporated three variables namely, organisational roles and relations, communication and information and motivation.[20]

All these involve the "perceptions of the decision-makers" and the "decisional context" as well as the interactions of structures and processes of decisions.

Although he modified his position later to recognise the state as an "actor in a situation," Rosenau's criticism of Snyder's framework for inadequate treatment of the actors' domestic and foreign sources of motivation, are valid.

In Rosenau's view, theories of foreign policy decision-making "can never be exclusively comprised of propositions about the officials who make choices. Processes located in the environment which officials direct their decision are no less relevant than those which occur in their minds and interactions."[21]

Hilsman also contends that it is seriously misleading to underestimate the role of personalities, their policy convictions, information input and the strings of various interests inside and outside the government.[22]

In this regard, Charles Lindblom[23] and Thomas Schelling[24] also conclude that in the question of rational decision-making, agreement has to be reached through compromise, bargaining and consensus between domestic actors, e.g. the White House (the Executive), the Congress (the Legislature), the Bureaucracies and the Press.

The role of the press is central to this study and Hilsman's combination and extension of Allison's concept of rational policy and organisational process in decision-making to include the other domestic pressures such as the press is of greatest relevance in examining foreign policy making in Nigeria.

However, the limitations to this study even from its theoretical foundations are clear from the onset.

First, it is a single case study about a major foreign policy decision, given Nigeria's huge financial and military commitment in Liberia. And as Snyder cautioned, case studies should not be confined to "big decisions," because major decisions or crises are "atypical" of determinants of choices of

course of actions as they may not be associated with typical structural and process factors. But he admits that "existing empirical evidence is too scanty to say whether this is true."[25]

Snyder therefore, suggests that a research strategy should include an investigation of problems or situations not regarded as "important" as well as analysis of unintended neglect of matters that might otherwise be expected to command attention.

Such a study he points out, should as a matter of necessity consider as important, factors associated with routine decisions, accumulated effects of these decisions overtime and procedural or substantive factors that determine the recognition of problems by decision-makers.[26]

1.8 METHODOLOGY

The main approach adopted for this work is an events analysis of ten reasonably selected national newspapers. They are:

The Democrat

The Weekly Democrat

National Concord

Sunday Concord

New Nigerian

Sunday New Nigerian (now New Nigerian On Sunday)

The Guardian

The Guardian on Sunday

The Daily Times

The Sunday Times

The second approach which compliments the first is interview with some ormer officials in the decision-making line such as Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman, who was Nigeria's Foreign Minister of the time and Ambassador Shu'aibu Uthman Yolah, a retired career diplomat with a sound experience of the process of foreign-policy decision-making in Nigeria. There is also the press conference addressed by General Ibrahim Babangida, the president himself at the heat of the debate about Nigeria's involvement. He is credited with the initiative to form the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee and the ECOMOG.

The reasons for selecting the ten newspapers used in this research work out of the plethora of Nigerian newspapers are obvious.

First, they are regarded as the "serious" and "prestige" newspapers.

Secondly, they enjoy wide readership and also claim to be national.

Thirdly, they are a good representative sample of government and private ownership.

The government press are represented by the *New Nigerian* newspapers and the *Times* group. The private newspapers are represented by *The Guardian*, *The Concord* and *The Democrat* groups.

The papers also represent liberal and conservative viewpoints. Some are conservative pro-establishment e.g. the *New Nigerian,* the *Times*, the *Democrat* and the *Concord,* and the others are liberal-anti, e.g. *The Guardian.*

They can also be divided for analytical purposes and for what the public sees them to be, in terms of Lagos-Ibadan axis and Kano-Kaduna axis, or the southern press and the northern press.

1.9 PLAN OF THE WORK

This work is divided sequentially into five chapters that begin chronologically from a general introduction to summary and conclusion.

Chapter One contains the introduction to the problem; the statement of the problem or the research question; the aims and objectives of the work; the significance and scope of the research; a review of the relevant literature; the

hypothesis or tentative answer to the research question; the theoretical framework of analysis; and the research methodology.

Chapter Two contains the historical background of Liberia and the genesis of the civil war. It also highlights the strategic and geo-political importance of Liberia in the West African sub-region in particular, and to the world in general.

Chapter Three contains the first part of the substantive work. It begins with a general remark on the press and foreign policy making as given by academics and diplomats. Then it narrowed down to the Nigerian press and foreign policy making within Nigeria. There is a section on the organisation and brief background of the Nigerian press in order to provide a framework for understanding their role and relevance to policy making in general and foreign policy in particular. Then a section was devoted to the process of foreign policy making in Nigeria which spells out the traditional, i.e. normal, machinery through which policy measures are initiated and considered for adoption and execution. The chapter ends with a section on the Babangida administration's contextual definition of the Liberian crisis and the reasons for the adoption of the policies on Liberia.

Chapter Four contains the second part of the substantive work. It consists of the detailed background of the Nigerian press and their definition of the Liberian crisis. It begins with a general overview of how the press came to know and intensify its interest about the Liberian crisis. The chapter addresses the issues raised by the newspapers in their reports and editorials: a purely Liberia's internal affair or one that posed regional security and humanitarian problem? Each question had its answer: to leave the Liberians to solve their problems; or to call on the international community (including the ECOWAS members) to do something. In both cases Nigeria had to play a role. The chapter includes a table of analysis of the content of the editorials which were positively or negatively disposed to Nigeria's intervention. There is an emphasis on the timing of the editorials and reports in order to show those newspapers that actively canvassed for a particular course of action. The reason for this is to underline the attempts by the press to influence policy. Where they succeeded it is indicated.

Chapter Five contains a detailed summary of the work, giving further insight through interviews on the subject-matter. It also contains a sequence of events culminating in the final policy statement on the establishment of ECOMOG following Babangida's proposals. The chapter concludes by confirming the hypothesis that the Nigerian press have contributed a great deal

to the debate in Nigeria and the final outcome of government policy on the Liberian crisis.

Notes / References

1. West Africa, 31 August – 6 September, 1992 pp. 1470-71. Again, Chief Tom Ikimi, Nigeria's Foreign Minister (1994-1998) said in a press conference that Nigeria had spent US$30 million since 1990 in its contribution to ECOMOG operation [West Africa, 11-17 November, 1996].

2. Dr. Abbas Bundu, Executive Secretary of the ECOWAS (until 1995), in the New Nigerian of August 4, 1990.

3. I.A. Gambari, Party Politics and Foreign Policy, (A.B.U. Press Ltd, 1980), Notes p.XII.

4. A.B. Akinyemi, Foreign Policy and Federalism, (University of Ibadan, 1974), p.3.

5. Sanya Oyinisan, M.Sc. Thesis, (unpublished) Unife, Ile-Ife, 1979.

6. A.O. Sotunbi, M.Sc.Thesis, Unife, Ile-Ife (ed.), NIIA Monograph Series, No. 9, 1981.

7. O. Aluko, Public Opinion and Nigeria's Foreign Policy under the Military; Journal of Administration, University of Ife, p. 253-268, vol. II, no.3, April 1973.

8. W.A. Ajibola, Foreign Policy and Public Opinion, Ibadan University Press, University of Ibadan, 1978.

9. A.B. Akinyemi, Op cit.

10. I.A. Gambari, Op cit.

11. David Whitman, How the Press Affects Federal Policy Making (ed.), W.W. Norton and Co., New York, London, 1986, pp 145-208.

12. Simon Serfaty and Marvyn Kalb, The Media and Foreign Policy (ed.), Foreign Policy Institute and John Hopkins University, St. Martins Press, New York 1991.

13. Ibid. p. XIX.

14. Ibid p.1.

15. A.B. Akinyemi Op cit.; James Curan et al, "Impacts and Influences.." (ed.), Mathieu and Co. Ltd, London and New York, 1987.

16. Snyder et al, Foreign Policy Decision-Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics, New York Free Press of Ghicoe (1962).

17. Graham T. Allison, Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Rotational Policy, Organisation Process and Bureaucratic Politics, Washington DC, 1968.

18. James N. Rosenau (ed.) Linkage Politics, New York, 1969.

19. James N. Rosenau, Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy, New York, 1967.

20. Snyder, Op cit, p.3.

21. James N. Rosenau, The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy, New York, 1971, p.271.

22. R. Hilsman, To Move a Nation, New York, 1964, pp 3-17.

23. C. Lindblom, The Science of Meddling Through, in Public Administration Review, Spring 1959.

24. T. Schelling, The Press and Foreign Affairs, in the Public Interest, No. II, Spring 1968.

25. Snyder, Op cit.

26. Ibid, p.4.

GENESIS OF THE LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR

2.1 LIBERIA: BRIEF HISTORY

Liberia is a country situated on the West Coast of Africa. A member of the sixteen-nation Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), it is bounded by the Atlantic ocean in the south, by the Republic of Guinea to the north, by the Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) to the west and by Sierra Leone to the east. Liberia began as a country founded in 1822 by the American Colonisation Society (ACS) which itself was sponsored originally by some missionary and charitable societies, in addition to the support and goodwill it gained from a number of American political leaders, statesmen and planters.[1]

The motives for this historical event were as varied as the supporters. Some were moved by the Christian missionary zeal to fight slavery and inhuman acts against black slaves in America. Some were moved by purely humanitarian instinct to liberate the Negroes in America from slavery or second class citizenship. Others were moved simply by the desire "to rid the United States of some 150,000 freemen of colour whose existence and example, it appeared ... threatened the institution of slavery."[2]

Similarly, the colonisation society got the blessing of the then United States President, James Monroe, in honour of whom Liberia's capital was named Monrovia, and from the United States Congress, which granted to the society $100,000 (US Dollars) for the resettlement of slaves in the newly found colony, Liberia.

The first immigrants ship of free-born Negroes, numbering 4,571 arrived the coast of Monrovia in January 1822. Emancipated slaves subsequently out-numbered the free-born Negroes and by 1867 almost all the settlers had arrived. A colony of what later came to be known as Americo-Liberians thus emerged and after years of conflicts, intermingling and uneasy relationship with the natives on the islands, the coast and hinterland, Liberia, an amalgam republic of indigenous Africans and Americo-Liberian immigrants, was formerly established. Since July 1847, it was politically led by these immigrants and their descendants,[4] until April 1980, when an indigenous African, Master Sergeant Samuel Kenyon Doe, came to power in a bloody coup d'état, that almost dismembered this family of Americo-Liberians.

Liberia used to be proud that it did not come under the direct colonial tutelage of any of Africa's former European powers. It is the tenth smallest nation in Africa and its approximate population (1989) stood at 2.5 million. The land area is 4,300 sq. km.

The clearly hostile relationship between the immigrants, who regarded themselves as "civilised elements," and the native population was the long-term factor that led to the present civil war. It was a powder keg that first exploded in 1980 and nine years later (1989) broke into a full blown war.

These immigrants "dominated all institutions of state, adopting all the attributes of their own previous slave owners, including racism, top hat, tail coats and peticoed columns for their mansions, slavishly copied from their masters in the ante-bellum American South."[5] "They ruled the country to the detriment of the aboriginal groups," with the heart of the friction between the two hostile groups being land tenure. The tribal land system was based on use and need, as opposed to the alien system of private ownership being forced by the Americo-Liberians.[6]

The supremacy of the settlers and their descendants over the tribal peoples had been maintained by the use of coercive sanctions until the Tubman era (1944-70). His policy of unification after the second world war, which replaced the use of force to pacify the sixteen tribes, was keystone in bridging the chasm.

2.2 UNIFICATION: THE TUBMAN YEARS

On January 3, 1944 the 48-year old William V.S. Tubman, became the 17th president of Liberia, in an uninterrupted line of Americo-Liberian lineage. After serving an 8-year term, he was re-elected for five more 4-year terms, three times unopposed. At 73 in 1968, he took office for the sixth time.

President Tubman, a member of the ruling Conservative True Whig party, was clearly the dominant figure in Liberia's history as a nation of Africans and Americo-Liberians.[7] Tubman's success was based on his all-embracing broadmindedness that enabled him to reach an electorate much beyond his constituency of the ruling minority Americo-Liberians. He was profoundly influenced by his family background which arrived Cape Palmas in 1834. A year later, his uncle was killed in another conflict in which his father and another uncle of his were seriously injured. One of the tribesmen warned Tubman's father out of danger during another conflict, and they later became friends. His father's advice to Tubman since then was to always try to promote better understanding between tribal people and the government. As Associate Justice on the Supreme Court, he spent his years building up a strong personal following among the common people, both lower class Americo-Liberians and tribesmen.

In 1943, it became impossible for the True Whig leaders to prevent his nomination to the presidency. He promised in his campaign to unify the entire population into one Liberia if elected, declaring that class distinctions must be eliminated and the tribes integrated into the mainstream Liberian life. Tubman won the 1943 election predictably easily. In a speech, he made a moving description of the conditions of the tribesmen, which he said he was determined to change. He said:

"In 1944, when by the vote of the constituents of the nation I was elected president, one of the first acts of the administration was to tour from the Western province to the Eastern, right through to Cape Palmas. On all of these journeys I had to be carried most of the times by hammocks on the shoulders of the tribal people. I saw the misery, hardships and oppression which this means of travel imposed; I saw men with hammocks and loads on their heads knock their toes against stones and stumps of trees, I saw them fall from under the hammocks, receiving bodily injuries; I saw some of them faint; I saw the wearied, tired and resentful throw down their loads and hammocks and escape into the bush; I heard the labourers who were carrying hammocks and loads sing, and when I asked what they were saying some of them explained that they were telling of their woes and of hardships which they encountered, the burdens of having to carry hammocks on their shoulders, the rigours of travelling through dense forests, of being bitten by scorpions and snakes,

wounded by stones and stumps of trees. We saw hundreds of people infected-by yaws, sleeping sickness and diverse diseases; we saw the interior cut-off from littoral and tribes isolated from tribes because of the lack of roads, transport and communication; we saw the urgent and imperative needs of hospitals, clinics and schools; we saw soldiers routing the people and the resultant enmity between them; we saw commissioners receiving monthly supplies of food for subsistence of soldiers, messengers and other interior personnel without giving just compensation for the same. At Executive Council meetings, we witnessed influential, noble and self-respecting chief rise and present goats, cows, rice, chickens, pal-oil, sheep, shins of animals, and elegant country cloths woven by them, their wives and children and receive nothing in return. I was shocked, and declared as a matter of policy that no official of government from the constable, the private soldier, to the president of the nation should accept any gifts without giving just compensation, or value for value. Besides that, the constitution guarantees the right of all men to be equally free and entitles everyone to equal justice before the law, equal privileges and benefits under our free system of government."[8]

His extensive tours of the country brought about tribal support for his administration. Tubman dismissed unfair district commissioners and granted petitions for justice on the spot. One of his first acts was to call for a special

conference of leaders to work out a programme for bringing the tribesmen into citizenship.

The outcome of that conference was the adoption of the Unification Policy that was followed to the letter. Tribal chiefs discussed their needs with the Government at regular meetings. One of their requests was their rights to their lands which could not be appropriated for plantation use. In 1945, the voting right by secret ballot was extended to the tribes for the first time to every man or woman who paid a hut tax. The constitution was amended and within two years tribal representatives would be elected into the country's legislature for the first time also. Hitherto, there was no constitutional provision for indigenous tribes, and their control had been in the hands of the central administration which was dominated by a different cultural group. This constitutional amendment made it possible that about four-fifths of the Senators and two-thirds of the Representatives were elected by the tribes.

The extensive new road network in addition, made possible the economic interaction and development of resources on tribal regions.

President Tubman's first term in office (1944-1952) was thus devoted to the integration of the tribesmen and granting them their bill of rights, among other things. Many among the Americo-Liberian elite resented his radical

changes which were moving at a pace they thought was jeopardising their prestigious positions. No wonder that after him came the deluge.

In fact, the incessant conflicts between the indigenous Africans and the Americo-Liberian settlers, took the greater part of most Liberian leaders before Tubman and for almost a century, they struggled to subdue the "incalcitrant" tribes of the interior. They might never have succeeded had not the inter-tribal animosities among the over-sixteen ethnic groups been more bitter and deeper than their hostility to the settlers.

Before the advent of the immigrants, there were considerable upheavals with the strong driving the weak ones towards the coast. But as they succumbed to the higher authorities in Monrovia, they became a "subject race, denied any of their rights of citizenship, their territory ruled like a possession by the strangers who had settled along their coast."[9]

In 1928, the League of Nations constituted an investigation which found the Liberian government guilty and criticised it for its method of governing the indigenous African tribes and recommending the removal of the barriers which prevented the assimilation of the tribes into national life. The commission also suggested more careful control of the Frontier Force in order to prevent

brutality in dealing with tribal uprisings. The indictment of his administration by the commission subsequently led to the resignation of then president King.

This animosity between the settlers and the indigenes was naturally rooted in the behaviour and perception of the Negroes to their reluctant African hosts. They did not regard Africa their homeland to which they once belonged. They left their home, America, because it denied them opportunity. Having escaped the degrading status of plantation workers and a familiar life of America, they were now assuming "the mantle of command and aristocracy" in their newfoundland.

The main objective in the life of the illiterate freedman and the African wrenched from the slave ship was to adopt the culture of the immigrants. To be educated, become "civilised", enter into the elite circle, adopt a christian name, and above all, become "American". Some freed Africans were apprenticed to Liberian families for just this purpose. This group became commonly know in Liberia as the "Congoes".

To these settlers, those heathens, savage tribesmen attacking them from the bush were a menace to the governing authority. So gradually, a rigid distinction was drawn in the statues of the new Republic. Up to the 1940's, legislation on the books distinguished between the "civilised" – educated

Christians and the "uncivilised" who live in the hinterland, e.g. the Samuel Doe's, which included the descendants of the early immigrants, educated or not. To this group belong the Charles Taylors.

2.3 THE ETHNIC CONFIGURATION OF LIBERIA

All the tribes into which the indigenous Africans were divided, are related to other peoples in neighbouring countries. For example, Sierra Leone and Guinea contain the Mandingo tribe that are related to the Mandes of Liberia; Cote d'Ivoire (the Ivory Coast) contains the Gios and the Manos that have their brethren in Liberia. That is why the civil war had the potential of a regional dimension, or spill over effect.

As these tribes were not major slaving kingdoms in what is now Liberia, the coastal tribes were proud that they were never enslaved, although slavery was common among other tribes in the region. The Kru of Liberia for example, were individualists, known to grieve to death or commit suicide rather than endure slavery.

The sixteen major tribes in Liberia can be classified into three main groupings.[10]

A. Kwa-speaking (Kru Branch)

They probably migrated from the South and South-East. They are thrifty and industrious superb seamen. Their contact with the outside world began long before the advent of American immigrants. This made the Kru very independent. They were the last tribe to submit to the Liberian Government, holding out as long as the 1930's. Their approximate population according to the 1962 census was 40,413. In this group are the Bassa and Dey tribes to the West and the Grebo (or Glebo) to the East. These three tribes dominate the coastal strip from Monrovia to Cape Palmas. The Kru language group also includes the Belle and the Krahn (ex-president Doe's) tribes in the interior.

B. Mande-speaking

This is the largest linguistic group which came from the North and are part of the Mande speaking peoples in Mali, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. There are eight distinct tribes that belong to this group in Liberia, made up of two branches:

1. The Western branch, comprising Cai, Gbandi (or Gbade, Bandi), Kpelle (or Kpessi, Kpwesi), Loma (or Lorma, Buzi) and Mende.

2. The Eastern branch, comprising Gio (or Dan) and Mano (or Ma, Mah)

It is noteworthy that belonging to the same language group does not make the tribes alike. Each has its own distinctive culture and characteristics separated by thick forest.

The Mande have a rich tradition of song and dance that has permeated the whole of Liberia. They claim to be the originators of the famous Poro and Sande societies, believed to be the best known and most important secret African tribal cults.

The Lorma are conscientious and reliable, which is probably why they made excellent soldiers in the Frontier Force.

The Kpelle, although the largest group in Liberia, are fragmented into many separate units and thus have never developed any cohesive tribal organisation. They are very traditional.

The Gio and Mano are said to be very primitive because of their isolation in the interior.

The Mandingo are itinerant traders from Guinea and Mali. They dominate petty trade in the interior.

The Vai are the only Mande-speaking tribe that live on the coast. They predominate in the Western end of Liberia near the Sierra Leonean border. But only four of the nine Vai chiefdoms live in Liberia. Tall, proud, intelligent people, the Vai are said to be among the most progressive groups in Liberia, eagerly seeking education opportunities. Famous among linguists for inventing a syllabic script of 160 symbols in 1814 by one them, Duala Bukele (Momolu Dualo Bukere), making it one of the only four indigenous scripts in existence. The traditional ones among them are very likely to be muslim and converts are increasing. They live in extended family headed by a patriarch.

C. The West Atlantic-speaking peoples (Southern Branch)

This includes interior tribes who came probably from Futa Jalon in the north-west. Members of this group are the Gola and Kissi (or Gissi) tribes. They are slender and light-skinned. High-strung, proud and stubborn. They are also skilled rice farmers. The Gola have been converting to Islam in some numbers, inter-marrying and mingling with the Vai.

It is important to note that the ethnic configuration of Liberia has played a part in the current civil war, probably extending it beyond the indigenous Africans and the Americo-Liberians.

2.4 GEO-POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF LIBERIA

Liberia lies just under the bulge of West Africa with 350 miles of Atlantic Ocean coast. It is drained by only the rivers flowing into the Atlantic from the Southern mountains that ring the interior African plateau. It has one of the best harbours and shipping facilities in the world which attract commercial shipping.

With a tiny population of 2.5 million before the war in 1989, Liberia is also the tenth smallest country in Africa, but with a proud history. It is Africa's first modern state and Republic, and has no colonial origin like other African countries.

It is bordered by english and french-speaking countries. To the east lies Sierra Leone, an ex-British colony and english-speaking (like Liberia). To the north lies landlocked Guinea, which relies on Liberia for a sea-outlet for

exports and imports. The LAMCO railway needs only about 20 miles extension to be able to serve Guinea's rich iron ore deposits. This strategic element was possibly behind Guinea's anxiety over the Liberian crisis as well as its participation in the ECOWAS Peace-Keeping Operation (ECOMOG) apart from the tribal affiliation, and the refugee problem.

Apart from its rich forest and wild life, particularly birds, Liberia is also blessed with bountiful mineral and agricultural resources that have attracted foreign companies.

In the hills and mountains are enclosed quantities of high-grade iron ore, making Liberia the world's third largest exporter of the mineral. Production was above 21,000,000 tons a year (1971) and accounted for almost one-third of the country's gross national product,[11] though the exploitation of the iron ore by foreign companies did not have the anticipated impact on Liberia's development. Reserves are estimated at 700,000,000 tons, some of which is low-grade and in inaccessible locations.

However, Rubber is Liberia's economic mainstay. It enriches both the state and the individual Liberian, as the country is responsible for one-third of world consumption of liquid latex, that is used for the manufacture of foam rubber and other rubber products with high flexibility. Rubber industry is also

the biggest employer of labour in the country, apart from the state, most of which are private farms. But there are six foreign-owned plantations, the famous being Firestone, which is the largest in the world, covering 75,000 acres, and Goodyear Uniroyal. By 1968, rubber trees covered 282,000 acres of land and producing 141,8000,000 pounds of rubber worth about $30,000,000. Rubber and iron ore are vital to the Liberian economy, constituting 90 per cent of her total exports. Half of government revenue accrues from customs receipts.

Other resources include diamond, discovered in 1957 on the Loffa River and Sanuequellie District which led to a diamond rush until government stepped in to take control of the areas. Exports rose in the 1960's to around $8,000,000. Oil companies had begun searching offshore for petroleum before the war started.

Despite this industrial potentialities, subsistence agriculture is still the dominant life of Liberians as four-fifths of the workforce still engage in farming and forestry with the tribal people predominating. But only about 5 percent of the land is under cultivation each year. Farming activities contribute only one-quarter of the gross national product, even with the large foreign firms in the rubber plantation. Of special note is that the gap between the elites and the traditional tribesmen was increasing at frightening proportion. This

was one apparent reason for the April 1980 coup d'etat by Sergeant Samuel Doe, an indigenous African army officer. Thus, ending Liberia's century-old 'stability'.

Liberia's geo-political importance was noticed during the second World War (1939-45). Strategic military considerations significantly led to America's growing interest in the country. It provided alternative secure route for the Lend-Lease planes and supplies to British forces in the Middle East when air routes across Europe and North Africa were cut off by the Germans. Its location made it a national refueling point for the 1940 planes coming through Brazil in the South Atlantic to West Africa and which British Airfields in Freetown and Accra were inadequate to handle because of the increased amount of traffic and the large size of the planes.

In 1940, the US Government directed Pan American Airways to build airfields in the Caribbean area, Brazil and Liberia. A site adjacent to the Firestone plantations company, 50 miles east of Monrovia, was earmarked. Roberts Field Airfield became far more vital than had been visualised, following the U.S. entry into the war in 1941. The US then set about persuading "neutral" Liberia to permit a military base on its soil. President Barclay of Liberia agreed in return for US promise of protection and construction of infrastructure which Liberia needed then: particularly roads to

the United States dollar in order to encourage American economic activity in Liberia.

Because of peculiar circumstances of its birth, Liberia's Declaration of Independence contained, unlike America's, an appeal for recognition by other nations, and not an appeal for political freedom. This is significant in its latter-day history.

The Declaration said inter alia: "In an original compact with this society, we, for important reasons, delegated to it certain political powers; while this institution stipulated that whenever the people should become capable of conducting the government, or, whenever the people should desire it, this institution would resign the delegated power, peacefully withdraw its supervision, and leave the people to the government of themselves. Under the auspices and guidance of this institution, which has nobly and in perfect faith redeemed its pledges to the people, we have grown and prospered.

From time to time, our number has been increased by immigrants from America and by accession from native tribes; and from time, as circumstances required it, we have extended our borders by the acquisition of land by honourable purchase from natives of the country.

As our territory has extended and our population increased, our commerce has also increased. The flags of most civilised nations of the earth float in our harbours, and their merchants are opening an honourable and profitable trade. Until recently, their visits have been of a uniformly harmonious character; but as they have become more frequent and to more numerous points of our extending coast, questions have arisen which, it is supposed, can be adjusted only by agreement between sovereign powers.

For years past, the American colonisation society has virtually withdrawn from all direct and active part in the administration of the government, except in the appointment of the Governor, who is also a colonist, for the apparent purpose of testing the ability of the people to conduct the affairs of government, and no complaint of crude legislation, nor of mismanagement, nor of maladministration has yet been heard.

In view of these facts, this institution, the American colonisation society, with that good faith which has uniformly marked all its dealing with us, did, by a set of resolutions in January, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, dissolved all political connection with the people of this republic, returned the power with which it was delegated and left the people to the government of themselves...

Therefore in the name of humanity, and virtue, and religion, in the name of the great God, our common creator, we appeal to the nations of christendom, and earnestly and respectfully ask of them that they will regard us with the sympathy and friendly considerations to which the pecularities of our condition entitle us, and to extend to us that comity which marks the friendly intercourse of civilised and independent communities."[12]

The Declaration and the new constitution were signed by eleven men, five each representing the two countries, Montesserado and Grand Bassa. The eleventh being the Chief Justice of Liberia, who presided over the convention. They decided that the flag of an independent Liberia should have eleven red and white stripes, representing the then dark continent of Africa in which one white five-pointed star symbolised the first and only Negro republic then existing on the continent – the Lone Star Republic of Africa, which late president Sekou Toure of Guinea described, in 1961 during Liberia's 139th independence anniversary celebration, as "the Star that illuminated the nights of the dominated peoples."

This twinkling star began to diminish as the dark clouds of ethnic animosities continued to gather unabated over time.

2.5 CIVIL WAR ERUPTS: 1989

On April 12, 1980 Liberia entered a new phase in its political history. The long chain of Americo-Liberian leadership was suddenly cut-off when a junior non-commissioned officer, from the indigenous African stalk, Master Sergeant Samuel Doe, shot himself into power in Liberia's first ever military coup d'etat. He stemmed from the war-like Krahn tribe. This marked the beginning of Liberia's political instability after 133 years as a "stable" Republic.

In one of Africa's bloodiest coups d'etat, Sergeant Doe ended not only the lives of leading descendants of the Americo-Liberians, but also its relative stability. Subsequent events under his rule which lasted a little over a decade (April 1980 – September 1990) represented the immediate cause of the present Liberian civil war.

He came to power to:

- Wipe out corruption in all its ramifications
- Give indigenous Liberians more say in the social, political and economic affairs of the country.

- Improve the living conditions of the military.

Unfortunately, like most young revolutionaries, Doe solved few problems and created new ones. During his one decade of rule, he instituted his own form of corruption and nepotism, quelled or forced into exile dissidents in a blatant abuse of human rights. Most of the country's intellectuals were forced out of the country.

A Liberian refugee once commented that "Doe's 10 years in power have been characterised by a wide range of abuse, including extra judicial execution of civilians and soldiers, torture, arbitrary arrests, detention without trial, conviction on fake charges after trial that lacked due process of law, constrained freedom of association, a judiciary subordinated to the executive and suppression of press freedom..."[13] Similarly, an editor of a Liberian newspaper commented that they knew what was going on but could not just publish them.[14]

The civil war, in which president Samuel Doe was captured and subsequently killed, was the result of the attempts to overthrow him by the Americo-Liberians in conjunction with members of other tribes. At various points in time, previous attempts were met with increasing repression. There

were at least eight such attempts, the most serious one before the Charles Taylor Nimba county incursion was in 1985.

The first attempt was in 1981, one year after he came to power. In the aftermath, Liberia's Vice-Head of State, Thomas Weh Syen, was executed together with five other military officers, charged with a plot to overthrow the government of Doe. In November 1983, President Doe announced that he had foiled yet another coup attempt led by his then Army Commander, General Thomas Quiwankpa. A year later in 1984, Doe again announced that Dr. Amos Sawyer, one-time chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, (he later became the Head of Liberia's Interim Government), Nicholas Podier, former Vice-Head of State in the Peoples Revolutionary Council (PCR) and Col. Larry Borteh had plotted to overthrow him. On November 12, 1985 General Quiwankpa in exile, returned home with an "invasion force" to unseat Doe because of the "fraudulent elections of October" of that year.

In July 1988, General J. Nicholas Podier was killed and dismembered, like Quiwankpa before him, after he was accused by Doe to have come into the country with the intention to overthrow the government and assassinate the president, i.e. Doe himself. Five months before that, in May 1988, Mr. Gabriel William Kpolleh, leader of the Liberian Unification Party, and outspoken critic

of Doe, and nine others were arrested for plotting to overthrow the government and assassinate president Doe.[15]

Thus, a decade (1980's) began with Doe's bloody and violent military coup and ended with greater violence that was to lead to his brutal death and massacre of Liberians.

The coup incidents, real and imagined, culminated more than nine year after he came to power and only four months away to his tenth anniversary in power, into a civil war triggered off by a one-time Minister under his regime, Mr. Charles Taylor an Americo-Liberian.

On Boxing Day (December 26) 1989, Nimba county in northern Liberia on the common border with the Côte d'Ivoire was invaded by a dozen armed men, some say about 200 men, under Charles Taylor. The group was named National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Its aim was to overthrow president Samuel Doe.[16]

In three months, the border skirmishes had "degenerated into ethnic and religious carnage, threatening to engulf the whole country,"[17] as Taylor's fighters, drawn mainly from the Gio and Mano tribes, eager to avenge years of

mistreatment by Doe and his (Krahn) tribesmen, launched attacks on the Krahn and Mandingo tribes.

Members of other ethnic groups were also not spared in the Gio/Mano ethnic onslaught for merely working in Doe's government. As the carnage continued, so also confusion ensued, with the elimination of potential antagonists of Taylor, such as the respected veteran politician, Jackson Doe, who belonged to the Gio/Mano group. The killings became uglier when rampaging young NPFL fighters invaded villages and homes, conducted searches at check-points, raped women and killed members of other tribes they did not approve of. Streets were littered with corpses and human skulls.[18]

Between April and May 1990, the ugly incident had closed on the Liberian capital, Monrovia, and other heavily populated centres. The attention of world press and world leaders, particularly in West Africa, began to turn to Liberia as thousands of refugees fled to neighbouring countries namely Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Guinea.

Then a development occurred that led to a three-cornered fighting in Liberia. Prince Yormie Johnson, one of Taylor's commanders, split from the NPFL, established his war front, the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) and began to fight both president Doe and Charles Taylor.

In what signified a total collapse of order, security and governance, Doe's forces became involved in the three-way massacre of civilians, as Monrovia, where he was holed in, came under rebel siege. Denying the people of all measures of sustenance, the rebel forces as they moved closer to the capital, cut all water, electricity and supply roots.

At this time, ECOWAS leaders met for their 13th Annual Summit (May 1990) in Banjul, The Gambia, and appealed to all parties in the conflict "to ceasefire, respect human life and avoid destruction of property and to resolve their differences through peaceful dialogue."[19] The summit immediately set up a permanent ECOWAS mediation committee to deal with all conflicts in the region, starting with Liberia.[20] The committee was made up of Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, Togo and Gambia.

Apparently irked by Taylor's intransigence and his forces' attempts to block the evacuation of ECOWAS citizens, including many Nigerians from the war-torn country, as well as the massacre that was taking place, the ECOWAS mediation committee met together with leaders of two of Liberia's neighbours namely Sierra Leone and Guinea, in Freetown, Sierra Leone on August 4, 1990, and at the end of their deliberations established the ECOWAS Peace Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Members of the ECOMOG peace-force were:

Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Gambia. The initial troop strength was put at over 2,500[21] with Nigeria topping the list with 900 troops, Guinea 500, Sierra Leone 300 and Gambia 105.[22] In 1992, Senegal and Mali joined to dilute Taylor's criticism of ECOMOG's partiality against him. ECOMOG was expected to stop the carnage and to separate the factions from the fratricidal war. Most importantly, it was expected to:[23]

i. Open routes for supply of humanitarian relief materials, including food and medicine.

ii. Establish a security zone around the capital to enable discussion of a ceasefire to begin.

iii. Take over security duties while an interim government is established which would oversee a peaceful return to normal democratic life.

After initial hitches and delays, the first contingent of ECOMOG troops landed on the Liberian coast from Freetown on August 24, 1990. The entire operation was expected to last only twelve calendar months as an interim government would be established which would conduct an internationally supervised free and fair election.

ECOMOG's landing in Monrovia opened the floodgate of humanitarian assistance based on agreement arranged between Prince Johnson and Samuel Doe. This however did not last. A few days afterwards, September 9, 1990, Johnson broke the ceasefire when he attacked Doe and captured him within the ECOMOG camp in Monrovia. Doe was subsequently under Johnson's orders.

This incident led to the transformation of ECOMOG from a peace-keeping force to a combative peace-enforcement operation and a change in the leadership structure. Ghana's overall commander, General Arnold Quainoo, was practically replaced by Nigeria's Major-General Joshua Dogonyaro, with a new title of Field-Commander.

These events antagonised Taylor, who threatened to take Monrovia by force and at any cost.

However, ECOMOG successfully stemmed him and pushed his forces from the environs of the city, thereby creating a buffer zone between Greater Monrovia and the largely rebel-held areas. For about a year since November 1990, ECOMOG had been able to maintain relative peace and ceasefire in Liberia, except for a brief period of fighting between Johnson's INPFL and the remnants of largely Doe's Army, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). In

September 1991, another group, the United Liberia Movement (ULIMO), made up of mostly the muslim Mandingos and the Doe's Krahn tribesmen emerged to continue with the fight against Taylor.

By mid-1922 however, Charles Taylor has regained his strength, capturing ECOMOG soldiers (September 2, 1992) and holding them hostage, [24] defying all threats and ultimatum of sanctiOns by ECOWAS, and refusing to disarm his men. The ULIMO on its part, is based along the Liberia-Sierra Leone border, thus underlining the regional dimension of the conflict.

Taylor has kicked against all the accords, peace overtures and proposals at various meetings in Banjul, Freetown, Bamako, Yamoussoukro and Geneva. Another accord was signed in Cotonou,[25] Benin Republic by all factions, including Taylor's at the ECOWAS 16th Annual Summit under which a planned disarmament and encampment of all warriors was proposed. In August 1995 a new peace agreement was finally accepted by all warring factions which could bring to an end the brutal war that destabilised some countries in the region, e.g. Sierra Leone and resulted in the death of an estimated 150,000 people and caused another 700,000 more to flee the country as refugees.[26] Nigeria's Head of State, Chief Ernest Shonekan announced his intention to withdraw the countries troops from Liberia during his maiden speech on August 30th 1993.[27] But due to his short tenure in office, following

political crisis within Nigeria itself, the phased withdrawal did not begin. His successor, the late General Sani Abacha, who came to power in November 17, 1993 and who was the Defence Minister and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff during the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida under whom ECOMOG was sent to Liberia, and later the Defence Minister and Chief of Defence Staff under Shonekan, continued with even greater vigour the policy of his military predecessor, General Babangida on Liberia. He also continued with the same vigour, to find a political solution to the crisis. Today, Charles Taylor, is the elected president of Liberia under a peaceful and internationally supervised election.[28]

NOTES/REFERENCES

1. Martin Lowenkopf, Politics in Liberia: The Conservative Road to Development, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University California (1976), P.14.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. The first president of Liberia was Joseph Jenkins Roberts, an American-born Liberian who ruled between 1848 and 1856, having served four terms. The last in the chain of eighteen Americo-Liberians who ruled the country was William Tolbert, 1971-1980. He was assassinated in the coup d'etat that brought Sergeant Samuel Doe to power, the first indigenous African to rule Liberia. See Appendix 1.
5. J. Gus Liebenow, Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London (1969), P.22.
6. Ibid. P.25-27.
7. Mary Louise Clifford, The Land and People of Liberia, J.B. Lippincoff Company Philadelphia New York (1971), P.95.
8. Ibid, PP.97-98.

9. Ibid, P.26.

10. Ibid, P.60. See Appendices II: Figures of 1962 population census.

11. Ibid, P.129.

12. Ibid, P.24-25.

13. African Concord, 11th June, 1990, Vol.5, No. 6, P.16.

14. Ibid, P.12.

15. West Africa Magazine, A Decade of Coups, by James Buffy, January 1990.

16. Focus on Africa, Vol. 1, No. 2, July 1990, P.18.

17. West Africa, 31 August – 6 September, 1992, P.1470 – 1471.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. New Nigerian, August 23, 1990.

22. Ibid, August 14, 1990.

23. West Africa, Op. Cit.

24. Focus on Africa, October – December 1992, PP. 22-23.

25. West Africa, 2nd – 8th August, 1993.

26. Ibid.

27. The Democrat, September 1, 1993, P.1.

28. Taylor was elected in April 1997 under a new peace agreement signed by all parties to the Liberian conflict in Abuja, Nigeria, known as the Abuja Accord.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NIGERIAN PRESS AND FOREIGN POLICY MAKING

3.1 GENERAL REMARKS

The mass media of communication, namely the newspaper, radio and television are regarded as the watchdog of the society. The daily and informal contact with the public makes them, according to Bernard C. Cohen, to be regarded as a giant prism, separating the huge mass of public affairs into discrete and salient items – individual beams so to speak – that illuminate particular areas of public policy. These individual items or stories are apparently important connecting links among primary actors in the events, as well as being the major linkages between them and the much larger number of observers and even would-be participants elsewhere in the political system.[1]

This point has been given a practical expression by a "participant" in the "political system." He is no less a person than the farmer British Foreign

Secretary, Mr. Douglas Hurd, who said that "the relationship between those who do [policy-makers] and those who comment (media) on what is done, or should be done [agenda setting], is complex... Those who need those who report and comment.[2] In short, the press is important in the process of policy making.

In Nigeria today, the press have assumed an active role in both domestic and foreign policy matters that affect the country directly, and even sometimes indirectly. A study in 1978 has shown that the government had come to realise that a wider section of the public is now interested in Nigeria's external relations.[3] This is evident in the number of articles, columns, reports and editorials on foreign issues published on the pages of the Nigerian newspapers.[4] This role is enhanced by the high degree of freedom which the Nigerian press enjoy: more than any other in black Africa.[5] For one thing there is a buoyant and increasingly vigorous private newspaper industry which supplement government newspapers.

Moreover, some of these newspapers are adopting the best technology they can afford to reach out to various arenas of diplomacy and conflict and could obtain monitor events as they happen. They also try to furnish their newsrooms with a more professionalised desk on foreign affairs with editors and columnists that specialise on international relations and foreign policy

issues. For example, *The Democrat Weekly* used to have a retired career diplomat with a flare for writing, Ambassador Mahmoud Yahya, as a weekly columnist. His column alone sold the paper to many readers including governments.[6]

3.2 ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN PRESS IN FOREIGN POLICY MAKING

According to Olajide Aluko, in the absence of parliament, newspapers are a major means of expression.[7] They provide avenue for the government to react to public opinion on an issue and even make its stand known to the world. The press is therefore an avenue for discussing foreign policy issues.

Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, a former Foreign Minister of Nigeria and an academic scholar also said that newspapers form a major source of finding out who said what and when.[8] In other words, the press are avenues for making foreign policy pronouncements. At the same time they even influence. For example, the *Daily Service* editorial[9] on the Congo crisis in the 1960s was said to have been so similar to the celebrated speech of the Nigerian prime Minister,

Tafawa Balewa, at the United Nations, that Akinyemi contended that it was like the major part of the editorial was made part of the speech.

Sometimes however, the press may not succeed in influencing a decision on a particular Foreign Policy matter though they may have immensely contributed to the debate on the issue and thus help the government to gauge public opinion before proceeding on its action. By revealing certain plans which are kept secret within government circle, the press do also make the governments to alter if not completely change their course of action or postpone it. This is also a case of influencing policy making.

In the case of Liberia, the main actors in the civil war resorted in most cases to reaching each other and to the world through the media, mostly radio stations such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) London. The press in turn, document and report such interviews and statements the next day which policy-makers and diplomats find very handy.[9] Such reports are analysed by governments for action.[10] These press clips in large measure compliment the demarches received from diplomatic missions by home governments for further policy consideration.

The press have a more subtle means of reaching-out to the policy makers.. First, the newspapers have experienced editors and reporters i

addition to specialists on Foreign affairs. They can get their way through personal friendship or investigation. For example, *The Guardian* report that military intervention was being considered by Nigeria as a solution to the Liberian problem.[11] Another example could be *The Daily Service* editorial on the Congo crisis (in the 1960's) cited earlier. Second, the government itself might be interested to know the reaction of the public on an issue, so it flies the kite by a deliberate leak to the press. The end result is the policy decision. Third, the editors or writers might be guided by the same considerations as government officials on an issue and they make their independent analysis which tallies with the official position. For example, the editorials of *The Democrat* and *the national Concord* following the worsening of crisis in Liberia in June and July, 1990 tallied with the explanations given by president Ibrahim Babangida on in his press conference later in October on "The Imperative Features of Nigeria's Foreign Policy And The Crisis in Liberia."[12]

Editorial comments play an important role in the foreign ministry's intelligence analysis of an issue. This however depends on how well-informed the editors are on the issue.

A rather loose universal practice is found to be fully applicable to newspapers. It follows from a survey of newspapers in the United States of America which provides an explanation of factors that affect the perception of

the press and their choice of foreign news items. These are: threat to world peace; anticipated reader interest; timeliness and involvement; loss of lives and property.[13] In addition, "most editors focus more on factors having significant impact or consequences, especially when security and national interest are involved." Similarly, " cannonical correlational analysis indicates that editors' perception of foreign news factors are determined by individual differences and organisational constraints in the newsroom."

This "context-oriented Vs. content-oriented explanations" of the way editors, as gate-keepers, perceive various news flashes from various corners of the world have an impact on the selection of stories they run daily.

Context-Oriented explanation says that editors rate the importance of foreign news events based on such important contextual variables as their country's trade relations, cultural relevance, political involvement and geographical proximity. Cultural affinities and economic association between countries are also determinants of news coverage[14] of an issue by newspapers.

Content-Oriented explanation on the other hand focuses more on the characteristics inherent in the foreign event itself regardless of external setting. This follows the long-standing definition of what is newsworthy: timeliness, impact or consequence, human interest and the conflict. It is assumed here that

regardless of the origin and context, a foreign event that satisfies the above criteria tends to be judged important by the editors. Thus, readers' interest comes first. So also is the nature of the events, the impact and the consequences they have on the country.[15]

The survey also shows that editors perception of foreign news factors appear to be a function of individuals and organisational difference, such as political ideology, professional experience, availability of newshole and wire services.[16]

The ten newspapers studied for the purpose of this work exhibited, most, if not all the factors enumerated above while considering the Liberian problem. *The Democrat* and *the Concord*, which are private press, defined the Liberian crisis and the need for external intervention within the context of humanitarian and regional security concerns. Another private newspaper, *The Guardian*, yet defined it as an internal affair of Liberia which the Nigerian government should steer away from. It even accused the government of pursuing a personal agenda in Liberia. It thus regarded any involvement as sinister.[17] The other newspapers, the New Nigerian and the Times groups, canvassed opinions for or against the government initiatives. This also has its impact.

3.3 ORGANISATION AND BACKGROUND OF THE SELECTED NEWSPAPERS

The importance and relevance of the ten selected newspapers to this work lie not only in their national outlook and seriousness but also in their coverage of foreign news in general and the Liberian crisis in particular. Their definition of the crisis and the context within which they defined it in relation to Nigeria's importance in the region, have great similarities with the final government's pronouncement and decision to go into Liberia. This has made possible to believe that the newspapers had made an input, if not an impact, on the Nigerian government decision.

It is important however to start by giving a brief analysis of the newspapers, their interest in foreign affairs, their historical background, their perception of issues and their cultural environment that affects their attitudes to world events.

3.3.1 *The Democrat* (daily): is a tabloid and has a full-fledged Foreign Desk headed by a Foreign Affairs Editor, who also serves the Weekly stablemate, *The Democrat Weekly* which is a Sunday broadsheet. The Foreign Editor is a member of the Editorial Board that sits daily to decide on the

content of the next day's edition. The papers coverage of foreign news is daily and is given prominence on both the Front Page, "World Headlines," and the Back Page, "African Headlines." In addition, three inside pages are devoted in the daily for other foreign reports and analysis: Page3 World File; Page 5 Foreign Reports and Briefly; Page 9 (Saturdays) Foreign Extra; Page 10 Africa File [for emphasis on Africa]. In the Weekly broadsheet, one full page, Page5, is devoted to foreign news articles and reviews such as the World Last Week, Columns and other supplementary foreign reports.

The Democrat is based in Kaduna, the city believed to be the political nerve-centre of Northern Nigeria, which served as the headquarters of the defunct Northern Region. It generally reflects as is the belief, northern pro-establishment views. Though it has a policy of non-partisanship on religious matters, it gives room for non-radical muslim view-point on domestic matters. It was established in 1983 to support the civilian federal government of president Shehu Shagari (Second Republic) under the National Party of Nigeria (NPN).[20] It was a counter-balance to the vituperative opposition newspapers of South-Western (or Lagos-Ibadan press) and later the opposition *National Concord*, whose proprietor quit the NPN because of some political differences. It closed down in 1984 after the military take-over. When it resurfaced in 1987/88 (this time the tabloid made its debut) its pro-establishment views were still maintained. In addition, the paper became increasingly supportive of the

administration of General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) whose regime took the decision to go to Liberia. This support for Babangida was evident on domestic issues. The paper exhibited a lot of independence on foreign affairs and maintained its largely anti-American and anti-Israeli stand even in the face of Babangida's rapprochement with the West generally and Israel in particular. Its stand on Liberia, which was similar to the government's position, was coincidentally out of its definition of the crisis within the sub-regional context. This is evident in the fact that it made most of its submissions and suggestions on Liberia long before the government made its view.[19]

3.3.2 The *National* and *Sunday Concord* also have a Head of Foreign Desk and each devotes between three and four inside pages specially to foreign issues. In addition, some important news items are given prominence on the front and back pages. The *National Concord*'s foreign pages are designated as "International News," which contain "World in Brief" column and occasionally, "country scope" column on other countries of the world. The Concord group, which includes a magazine, the *African Concord*, sent a reporter to Liberia at the heat of the war for on the spot coverage of the situation.

The *Concord* group is part of the Lagos-Ibadan press. It was established in 1980 by a politician and business magnate, Chief MKO Abiola, as part of

the ruling NPN's strategy to counteract the traditional opposition newspapers in the Lagos-Ibadan axis.[20] After Chief Abiola's fall-out with the NPN over his scuttled presidential bid in 1983 elections, the Concord turned out to be anti-government (and anti-north). It is balanced on religious issues, supporting the position of its proprietor, a Southern Yoruba muslim, on a case by case basis. For example, Nigeria's controversial membership of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). It supported the successive military governments that came after the civilian administration of Shehu Shagari, until after the second bid by Chief Abiola (its proprietor) to become Nigeria's president in the Third Republic was foiled. Its stand on foreign issues as they affect Nigeria was also evidently independent of government. This can be seen in its coverage and editorials on Liberia, which heavily criticised the Nigerian government and made suggestions long before government decisions. Its contextual definition of the Liberian crisis and subsequent suggestions coincided with government stand. The credibility of its editorials and coverage of Liberia lay more on its on the spot assessment of the situation by its correspondent in the war zone.

3.3.3 *The Guardian* group, comprising *The Guardian* and *The Guardian On Sunday* has a full-fledged foreign desk and a diplomatic correspondent. The two papers devote 3 inside pages for "World Report" and analysis. Under the stable is also a magazine, *The African Guardian*, which

covers African affairs. Like the *Concord* newspapers, *The Guardian* also sent a special correspondent to cover the Liberian crisis.

The Guardian newspapers were originally designed to be a limited circulation elite read. They however, metamorphosed into a mass-circulation group of newspapers even before they hit the newsstand.[21] This is responsible for their high-quality features and uniquely indepth reporting. They belong to the Lagos-Ibadan press axis and strongly make a case for the South on political issues. Though generally anti-North, the papers however, appear to champion the christian and northern minority views against the "dominant Hausa-Fulani" group in the North. This makes *The Guardian* highly critical of the regimes which incidentally have been led by 'northern' military leaders since 1983 when the papers made their debut. It is private-owned press by a shipping magnate, Dr. Alex Ibru from mid-western Nigeria.

3.3.4 The New Nigerian newspapers comprise the daily *New Nigerian* and the weekly *Sunday New Nigerian* (now *New Nigerian On Sunday*). None of them has specially designated foreign desk or diplomatic correspondent. Apart from the centre-spread in the *New Nigerian* and an inside page in the *Sunday New Nigerian* "World Events", the two newspapers also occasionally splash important foreign news items on the front pages as well as run foreign

news features on the opinion and features pages in addition to editorials on foreign issues as the other papers do e.g. on Liberia, Chad, etc. etc.

The New Nigerian newspapers are wholly owned by the federal government. They traditionally support the government, particularly the official thinking on foreign policy such as Liberia. When it comes to the specifics however, the papers are pro-northern establishment, where they are based and founded, that is Kaduna.[22] They were an off-shoot of the Northern Regional government owned newspaper, *The Citizen*, established in 1960. The papers are sympathetic to northern and muslim views on such cases as the entrenchment of Shariah in the Nigerian constitution.

3.3.5 The Times group, comprises *The Daily Times* and *The Sunday Times*. The *Daily Times* designates two pages every day for "Dateline Africa," "World News" and "World Briefs" while the ST runs a weekly column on foreign analysis. It is noteworthy that the Times' coverage of foreign news was, until the emergence of competitive private newspapers, excellent.[23]

The Times group, comprising an empire of numerous publications, consists of two leading newspapers, *The Daily Times* of Nigeria (DTN) and *The Sunday Times*, a weekly tabloid. They are the oldest English newspapers

in Nigeria today. Even when they were affiliated to the British mother company before their nationalisation in the mid-70's by the military regime of General Murtala Muhammed, they usually supported the government of the day as a matter of policy.[24] This is both in domestic and foreign policy issues. Printed in Lagos, the papers belong to the Lagos-Ibadan axis. They are liberal.

The circulation figures of these ten newspapers are very high.[25]

From this cursory look at the newspapers, it is possible to discern that each paper tends to reflect the dominant culture of its home-base regardless of their claim to national outlook. This trend affects their views on governmental policy on domestic and foreign affairs. The ethnic overlapping in the country however, makes it possible for the various newspapers to speak for other people in the other side of the divide. For example, *The Democrat* and the *New Nigerian* which might support Nigeria's membership of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) speak, just as the *Concord* would, for the muslims both in the North and the South. Similarly, any newspaper that speaks in favour of Nigeria's normalisation of relations with Israel might be speaking for the christians in both the North and the South, who are in favour of the idea as opposed to the Muslim viewpoint.

The geo-political configuration of Nigeria has brought with it as much criticism as support of government policy on both domestic and foreign issues. Because of the diverse opinions and perspectives in their editorials and reports of events, and because of the direct linkage with the mass of the public and the cream of the elites, general opinion and perceptions tend to differ. Needless to say that such differences as expressed on the pages of the newspapers are brought to bear on decision-making.[26] This implies that the press attempt to influence decision-making, though they do not form part of the formal decision-making machinery. [27] In this regard, one finds very relevant another point made by Aluko that since under the military no organised political institutions such as parliament and political parties exist, avenues for expression have been narrowed, and this is what the press try to fill.

Simon Serfaty,[28] Aluko[29] and Akinyemi[30] all agree in varying degrees, that the press, together with other domestic forces, try to influence foreign policy as "a modern feature of non-governmental involvement in foreign policy."

Nigeria's involvement in the Liberian crisis through the ECOMOG, is a case that needs to be examined to systematically establish the role and the effect of the Nigerian press on foreign policy decision-making. It is noteworthy that the Liberian crisis was one rare case in which some Nigerian

newspapers (*The Guardian, Concord* and *Champion*) independently sent reporters to cover the situation. Two of them were believed to have died there. It is also the time that Nigerian government sponsored a large group of journalists, ten of them, from its own media covering both radio, television and newspapers to cover the situation also. They returned safely. This development has underlined the extent and magnitude of Nigeria's policy in Liberia as well as the public and the independent press interest in it.

3.4 HOW FOREIGN POLICY IS MADE IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, it is the federal government that has the exclusive legislative rights to make foreign policy for the country whether it is under civilian or military rule. The government department that is charged with this responsibility to formulate and execute foreign policy on behalf of the federal government is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sometimes called the Ministry of External Affairs. It is the primary arena of foreign policy decision-making.

Since it was officially designated as such in 1960 after Nigeria's independence, it is run by a professional cadre of foreign service personnel that make up a career in international relations and diplomacy. Its personnel work both in the headquarters at home and abroad in various diplomatic missions established by the government, and other international organisations.

The Ministry is headed by a Minister of Cabinet rank. Because of its specialisation and sensitivity, the Minister appointed as its political head is usually among the highest-ranked Ministers in the Cabinet, or the Federal Executive Council. It is one of the Ministries that have two Ministers appointed to it, one of which is a non-cabinet rank, called the Honourable Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. This is because of its large size among other reasons.

The Ministry is structured according to Directorates:[31] for (world) Regions, International Organisations, Consular Affairs, Protocol, Cultural Affaires and Information, Technical Aid Corps, Pilgrims Affairs [at one time], Africa, separately to underscore the country's foreign policy special area of concern by successive governments. Each Directorate is headed by a Deputy Director-General who reports directly to the Director-General (permanent secretary) of the Ministry.

Normally, when some event is brewing in another country, say in Liberia, the Director-General calls for briefs from the Deputy Director-General concerned who instructs career specialists in his directorate to gather and analyse information on the issue, say crisis or civil war or uprising. If there is a Nigerian diplomatic mission in that country, the officials there would have

been ready with some information in anticipation of the Ministry's message. They would furnish the Ministry with the relevant information on the spot of the crisis. The specialists in the directorate analyse and send in their briefs with recommendations for action by the government. However, in all cases the officials are guided by Nigeria's national interest first and foremost especially in making their recommendations.[32]

Armed with the brief the Director-General in a meeting with the Minister and all the other Deputies discuss the situation and the Nigerian position is recommended for onward transmission to the government. If the Minister requires a council memo [a detailed brief] for presentation to the federal executive council the Ministry gives it, making full analysis of the implications of each option suggested.

An issue might be initiated by the government, say the Head of State himself. It might also be a party manifestoe which the ruling party now wants to make good. In both cases, the Head of State, President or Prime Minister as the case may be, would give the blueprint or initiative to the Minister who in turn would call the Director-General or Permanent Secretary and hand down the matter for advice. As the professional head of the Ministry, the Director-General would discuss the same issue with his Deputies who represent all the directorates in the Ministry at a meeting. They in turn would take the relevant

aspect of the initiative or blueprint to their specialists in their directorates for analysis. Finally, each returns with recommendations again based on Nigeria's overall national interest and consistent with any previous or existing policies on the matter. They analyse the implications and send it back to the Minister. The government then takes a final decision (at the cabinet) and once a position is taken the Ministry or other Ministry's whose functions are related to that particular issue go into action. It is left for the Minister to keep on with the public and press.[33]

Sometimes an initiative might come from the opposition members of parliament, when there is one, in form of criticism. Where parliament does not exist such initiatives might come from newspaper editorials, articles of regular columnists or specialists. Whatever the case, the issue has to go through the same process[34] listed above, before a final decision is taken.

It must be noted that because the activities of the Ministry are so sensitive in the day to day relationship with the outside world, most of them are not made known to the press and the public. More than seventy percent of information about the Ministry's activities on policy matters are not known to the press.[35]

3.5 GOVERNMENT PERCEPTION OF THE LIBERIAN CRISIS

Based on Richard Snyder's theoretical postulate that incorporated three variables in decision-making process, namely organisational roles and relations; communication and information; and motivation, it is possible to analyse president Babangida's perception of the Liberian crisis.

The process involves the "perception of decision-makers," the "decisional-context" and the structures and processes of decisions.[36] The government decision can still be further analysed within the explanations of foreign policy decision-making by Rosenau[37] where he pointed out that such decisions could never be exclusively comprised of propositions about the officials who make choices but that processes located in the environment were no less relevant than those which occur in the minds of the decision-makers and their interactions.

So it is possible that president Babangida might be influenced by some other factors than those that are obvious.[38]

General Ibrahim Babangida it was who first moved ECOWAS into establishing "a permanent mediation committee to deal with all conflicts within the region, starting with Liberia."[39] He made the proposal during the 13th

Annual Summit of the ECOWAS in Banjul, Gambia in May 1990. That was five months after the outbreak of the Liberian civil war and as the situation worsened. The committee comprised four countries: Nigeria, Ghana, Togo and Mali. Again, in August 1990 when the committee met in Banjul over the escalating crisis, it was General Babangida who proposed the establishment of the ECOMOG.[40] It was made up of military contingents from Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Gambia and Sierra Leone. Other countries joined later over the years: Senegal, Mali (1992), Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Uganda (1993) and 400 observers from the United Nations.

In the first two years of its inception, Nigeria has committed more than 10 battalions to the ECOMOG, making it the biggest contributor of forces. Subsequently, the leadership of the operation which was given to Ghana initially, turned to Nigeria (September 1990) one month after its inception, which it holds to date.[41] This followed the capture of the Liberian leader, Samuel Doe, in the ECOMOG camp and his subsequent gruesome murder by a rival rebel faction, under Prince Yormie Johnson. Finally also, Nigeria is the leading country in the ECOMOG fund. Its contribution by 1992 was said to be in the region of N2.8 billion.[42] Nigeria's former minister of information, Chief Alex Akinyele, disputed this figure, but said that Nigeria's financial contribution did not at any time exceed ten per cent of ECOMOG's funding.[43] No figure of the total fund was made available. Ex-minister of External

Affairs, Major-General Ike Nwachukwu (rtd) also denied the N2.8 billion figure but said that Nigeria provided seventy per cent of ECOMOG fund.[44] The former foreign minister, Chief Tom Ikimi, later announced in a press conference in September 1995 that Nigeria spent $30 million US dollars on the ECOMOG.[45] There is no doubt that Nigeria is the single largest financier of ECOMOG. Similarly, Nigeria's diplomatic efforts in resolving the crisis was also commensurate with its military and financial commitment in the peace-keeping operation.

The Liberian crisis is still not actually concluded, though the war has ended. ECOMOG troops are still there. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible to get to the root of how and who made the decision to get involved in the conflict resolution during the Babangida administration. However, through policy statements in the newspapers and interviews with senior administration officials, particularly in the foreign office and through the speeches of president Babangida himself, it is easy to discern how government perceived the crisis and why it took the decision.

In analysing the foreign policy decision to get into Liberia, a former Nigerian foreign minister, expressed positive views regarding the inputs of the Nigerian press (as well as some domestic factors) in the administration's decision on Liberia and other larger foreign issues that affect Nigeria.[46]

The former foreign minister said that the press generally influence public opinion which rebounds on policy makers and in turn has some effect on the direction of foreign policy. This is more especially when the press extensively analyse events as they occur on daily basis. He added that to some extent they have impact depending on the issues involved, and in relation to Nigerian composition vis-à-vis the particular matter. As one other source of information, the ex-minister pointed out, the press by their extensive coverage and commentaries on the Liberian situation played some role in giving Nigerian authorities a picture of what was going on, which formed the basis of action. The other sources are the diplomatic missions (e.g. the Nigerian Embassy in Monrovia, Liberia), international media, consultations with and messages from other fellow Heads of States and government, personal contacts during the visits and summits. But he asks: "how involved can you (a country) get involved?" Nigeria could have been involved alone, but as he said it would be seen as an intervention in the internal affairs of a sister country. That could have been one of the recommendations. So, the regional approach was adopted. That is ECOMOG.

Government perspective to the crisis was in the first instance therefore defined as a local affair of Liberia (like the Nigerian press did initially) but it later assumed a greater dimension, the consequences of which spelt disaster on

the stability of the region, and government had to take decision based on the national interest.

It was the official Nigerian government's position that if the Liberian situation was allowed to spread someone could wake up "one fine morning" to decide to take over any other country, and may be helped by somebody from across the borders. For the relative peace and stability that the region enjoyed, this could be a dangerous precedent, the minister said. However, he did not rule out personal interests of individual actors, e.g. the Head of State "who is the real foreign minister" of his country. His personal inclination and disposition towards a foreign policy issue matters a lot. If a leader does not like to be involved, no matter the pressure, he cannot be forced to.[47] In the Liberian case, regional officials such as Dr. Abbas Bundu, the then Executive Secretary of the ECOWAS, played important role also in cobbling the coalition of states to form ECOMOG.[48]

If the personal inclination of a president matters a great deal in foreign policy decision, such as Nigeria's involvement in Liberia, what was president Babangida's opinion, or definition of the Liberia situation? What made him or his government to decide on peace-keeping operation in Liberia. A section of Nigerian press and public regarded him as friend of Doe's the ex-president of Liberia, Samuel Doe. Newspapers quoting official reports have indicated that

he has leased to or given, the Liberian leader, a plane and helped him with weapons[49] and food supplies.

In June 1990, General Ibrahim Babangida agreed to play a "more active role in the on-going crisis in Liberia" while receiving a delegation from the Togolese leader Gnassingbe Eyadema, a member of the ECOWAS mediation panel. He stressed that "the interest of Liberian citizens should be their (ECOWAS Mediation Members) paramount consideration in the efforts to resolve the crisis."[50] This was six months into the increasingly destructive war. This shows that after regional security considerations, in which all ECOWAS leaders are interested and committed to, humanitarian concerns of the individual leaders, particularly Nigeria, was apparently another major factor considered by the government of Nigeria. Babangida had also suggested to the visiting Togolese delegation that their mediation effort should be based on the ECOWAS Charter[50] which he explained later in his press conference on the Liberian question (see below) in October 1990.

On October 31, 1990 president Ibrahim Babangida suddenly walked into the Nnamdi Azikiwe press centre in Dodan Barracks, Lagos then Nigeria's seat of government, to the astonishment of the State House correspondents during the quarterly press briefing by his vice-president, Admiral Augustus Aikhomu.

In an address to the pressmen entitled "The Imperative Features of Nigerian Foreign Policy and the Crisis in Liberia,"[51] president Babangida tried to debunk the notion that some personal and ulterior motives by his administration were involved in Nigeria's decision on Liberia.

The president said that the principal considerations of Nigeria's international relations, after the defence and protection of the country's territorial integrity from internal and external aggression, was "to ensure and encourage peacefull co-existence." This is on the belief that crises or conflicts in neighbouring countries would inevitably have "spill-over" effect on Nigeria. According to General Babangida, this belief was consistent with Nigeria's policy of shared common interests, aspirations for peace, security and economic progress that "explains our involvement in the efforts to restore peace in Chad," which shares contiguous boundaries with Nigeria. That is one of the "ring countries." He said Liberia on the other hand, completes what has been termed the "three concentric circles governing Nigeria's Foreign and Defence Policies." And that the three "interlocking and conterminous" elements, namely sovereignty, ring-countries and region, "constitute the only realistic analysis of Nigeria's primary security boundaries." To drive this point home, General Babangida pointed out that in the sub-region of sixteen countries, "where one out of three West Africans is a Nigerian, it is imperative that any regime in this country should relentlessly strive towards the

prevention or avoidance of the deterioration of any crisis which threatens to jeopardise or compromise the stability, prosperity and security of the sub-region." He pointed out that since those considerations formed the objectives for Nigeria's pioneering efforts for the establishment of the ECOWAS itself, then "there is no gainsaying that when certain events occur in this sub-region, depending upon their intensity and magnitude, which are bound to affect Nigeria's politico-military and socio-economic environment we should not standby as helpless and hapless spectators." The Nigerian leader stressed that "if the events are of such a level that has the potentials to threaten the stability, peace and security of the sub-region, Nigeria is duty bound to react or respond in appropriate manner necessary to either avert the disaster or to take adequate measures to ensure peace, tranquility and harmony." The president explained that "many people do not know, nor appreciate either the danger or international embarrassment the Liberian crisis portends for all of us in this sub-region in particular, and to Africa and the black race in general."

Turning to the humanitarian aspect, president Babangida said: "our critics tend to ignore the appalling catastrophe which the Liberian crisis has created for us in this sub-region," pointing out that while "Nigeria has no territorial ambition in Liberia or anywhere in Africa, or world-wide," yet he said, "neither Nigeria nor the other members of the ECOMOG forced their way into the Liberian conflict in a manner remotely resembling military

adventurism." This is the linchpin of this foreign policy speech. Nigeria, said Babangida, is a member of a sub-regional group that took solemn decision to restore peace by separating the warring factions in a sister country, Liberia, which has been temporarily put out of action. He further argued that events in Liberia have led to massive destruction of property, the massacre by all parties of thousands of innocent civilians including foreign nationals, women and children some of whom have sought sanctuary in the Churches, Mosques, Diplomatic Missions, Hospitals and the Red Cross Society, contrary to all recognised standard of civilised behaviour and international ethics and decorum. He then asked, "should Nigeria and other responsible countries in this sub-region standby, and watch the whole Liberia turned into a mass grave?" Babangida stressed that "ECOWAS" is on a mission of ensuring the restoration of peace and normalcy to that sister country so that its citizens and other nationals in that Africa's first and oldest republic would live in peace and security and continue to contribute to the general progress and orderly development of our sub-region." He continued: "consequently our responsibilities in Liberia are broadly two-fold, protective and promotional and inherently in the interest of all Liberians and humanity."

Quoting the United Nations Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) that the Liberian refugee crisis was "one of the worst refugee situations the world is facing" with 600,000 outside and another half a million inside Liberia, General

Babangida concluded that: "in ECOWAS as in the Liberian crisis, there is no discrepancy between our declared historical objectives at the national or international levels."

In a further demonstration of this regional security and humanitarian concern by the Nigerian government in the Liberian crisis, soon after the two-day meeting of the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), Nigeria's highest ruling body, which considered and ratified the decision to establish ECOMOG, General Babangida explained that the delay in the evacuation of Nigerians living in Liberia which caused concern in the press and public, was because "Nigerians, Liberians or any other blackman within the continent of Africa are the same people" and that "our situation is not like that of America or other countries," in reference to the United States and other European countries evacuation of their nationals. "Liberians," he said "are our brothers. The Nigerians over there live together with them and see themselves as part of that society and we have been hoping that the situation will improve." General Babangida added that it was wrong for any government to create distinction between fellow Africans. Then he said the ECOWAS was sending its troops "because there was now a situation of total anarchy." So the priority of the Nigerian government from the on set was not just Nigerians in Liberia, it was the entire unfortunate people living in Liberia.

Diplomatic shuttles to and from Nigeria peaked in earnest by delegations and leaders of ECOWAS themselves, even before the May 25th Summit in Banjul. For example, president Doe of Liberia visited Babangida in the first week of May to "condole him over the April 22 abortive coup incident." He used the opportunity to "brief" Babangida (and president Eyadema of Togo, both of whom were members of the ECOWAS Mediation Panel on Liberia) on the "rebel activities" in his country, as he told the Nigerian press at Dodan Barracks after the visit. Even though there was no report of Babangida's response to Doe's press statement, at least publicly, nor from the ministry of external affairs inLagos, this marked the real beginning of intense diplomatic activities over the crisis.

A few weeks later, ECOWAS foreign ministers began the pre-summit conference in Banjul to draw the agenda which included the Senegal-Mauritania border crisis and the Liberian conflict, the two issues that dominated the region at that time.[52]

The ECOWAS leaders began their summit in Banjul. President Babangida was later to present his proposals on a regional panel on disputes.

The modalities, membership, terms of reference, number and time-span of the committee were all set out in the president's proposals.

In their communiqué after the summit, the ECOWAS leaders expressed "grave concern" on the "disputes" and conflicts among some member states which have had a disruptive effect on normal life...and functioning of the community." They highlighted the article on no-aggression in the ECOWAS Treaty and then established the standing mediation committee comprising Mali, Nigeria, Togo and Ghana.

Subsequently, the Nigerian government issued a release assuring that it would ensure the safety of all Nigerians in Liberia. The release came from the Ministry of External Affairs. This time, the government made one of its most serious reactions yet to the Liberian crisis, regretting the deteriorating conditions there, "in spite of advise and efforts of well-meaning friends of that country to seek a peaceful solution" (*New Nigerian*, June 6th , 1990). Here, it is possible to read a growing exasperation by the Nigerian government over the disturbing situation in one of West African countries, as well as an attempt to do something for the Nigerians trapped there, following increased press report and criticism. Significantly, the statement added that the ministry was "closely monitoring" the situation and that the government was "fully committed to the security of Nigerians living there". The ministry reiterated its concern over

Nigerians living in Liberia, which it hoped "would not be targets of molestation or ill-treatment."

Similarly, a Nigerian envoy issued a statement denying alleged Nigerian involvement in Liberia in favour of one side. This followed a report by *The Guardian On Sunday* (June 10th,1990) that Nigeria was involved in the negotiations to find an alternative asylum. *The Democrat* (June 12th, 1990) also reported that a Liberian envoy was sent to Nigerian on what may not be unconnected with the need for an emergency intervention in the crisis. One other Liberian envoy was simultaneously appealing to the OAU and the ECOWAS for such action.

President Babangida himself, while responding to a plea by a visiting Togolese delegation, announced that he has "agreed" to play a more active mediatory role in the Liberian crisis. He also said that his government was willing to work together with other well-meaning countries in the sub-region to reconvene the suspended peace talks (*New Nigerian*, June 20th, 1990 and *The Democrat* June 21st, 1990). The announcement followed the failure of the Freetown peace talks which Eyadema blamed on the absence of a strong mediator. He was apparently referring to Nigeria. This was Babangida's first major announcement on Liberia since the Banjul Summit in May 27-30th, 1990.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) sent a peace delegation to Liberia headed by Ambassador Ahmad Haggag, Assistant Secretary-General, Coordination and Missions. He expressed concern over the refugee situation there and also applauded the peace discussions in Freetown under the auspices of the Church leaders (*New Nigerian*, June 21st, 1990). Also, Herman Cohen, the American Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, warned that Monrovia would fall in the event of any rebel attack (*New Nigerian*, June 22nd 1990).

President Babangida at this time ordered the airlift of relief materials to Liberia as a result of "a first hand account of the plight of the refugee from a special envoy of President Joseph Momoh of Sierra Leone." He gave order to the Ministry of External Affairs to be affected the next day, "tomorrow." He expressed Nigeria's anxiety for steps to "be taken immediately to avert massive bloodshed and save innocent Liberian citizens from further sufferings." Consequently, "Nigeria," he said, "would request that the ECOWAS Mediation Committed be put into effect immediately to deal with the situation." President Momoh's envoy said his country's view was that the leaders of the sub-region should intervene urgently to restore peace in Liberia. Ghana's military leader, Jerry Rawlings, sent a message to his Sierra Leonian counterpart, Joseph Momoh, expressing "deep concern" over the Liberian situation and "offered to work within the framework of the ECOWAS to

ensure a peaceful settlement of the conflict." In the message delivered by a high-powered delegation, Rawlings supported "any collective efforts leaders in the sub-region could make to bring the situation in Liberia back to normalcy."

Ghana, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire were worst affected in the refugee crisis. As press reports increased, diplomatic efforts intensified in the region. Nigerian diplomats in Monrovia at this time were hurriedly moved to Freetown. ECOWAS leaders were making moves with Sierra Leonian leader, Joseph Momoh, asking President Doe to quit the Liberian capital, Monrovia.

General Ibrahim Babangida meanwhile, told Airport correspondents in Lagos after seeing President Mathieu Kerekou (of Benin Republic) off that "Nigerians in Liberia would be evacuated if there was any threat to them."[55] He said "we have the capacity at any given time to move in and evacuate them if there is any threat to our citizens there." Babangida also pointed out that it was the "moral responsibility" for everybody in the region to stop the carnage. He referred to a move being made by the ECOWAS Executive Secretary in the region in pursuance of mediation on the crisis. Then he said, "I think we should look at it beyond individuals, look at both the country (Liberia) and its people."

On July the 5th 1990, the ECOWAS mediation panel met in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Foreign Ministers of the member-countries called the meeting "in an effort to find acceptable solution to the crisis in Liberia." The meeting invited Sierra Leone and Guinea the two non-committees members but the worst affected in the crisis. The meeting followed Dr. Abbas Bundu's "fact-finding mission" to the Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Togo as well as "conclusions" with President Babangida.

A report of the ECOWAS committee meeting showed that Nigeria and Sierra Leone were the only interest members in a military operation, which almost led to abandoning the idea as most members were reluctant.[56] Dr. Abbas Bundu himself publicly credited President Babangida for the idea of a peace-keeping force.[57] Meanwhile, a radio broadcast by the protestant mission ELWA, said Monrovia was on the verge of collapses as Taylor's forces were closing in. It also reported that President Doe had introduced proposals to the Liberian legislature for international for international intervention by the United Nations or the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and a machinery and modality for early elections in January 1991.

Two Nigerian ships set sail for Liberia on the 15th July, 1990 to evacuate Nigerian citizens. The Federal Government warned it would "not tolerate any situation where harm would come to Nigerians abroad." It reaffirmed its

commitment to finding a peaceful settlement to the crisis. Dr. Abbas Bundu again praised General Babangida, in an interview with the *New Nigerian*, for the peace initiative on Liberia as the ECOWAS resumed its peace talks. Among the Nigerian ships, one was a landing ship, the other a Fast Attack Covette (FAC) for support. The landing ship has a capacity of 1,000 troops, a battalion plus heavy equipment. The Flag Officer Commanding Western Naval Command, Rear-admiral Babatunde Elegbede, confirmed the departure, and added that other nationalities who might seek assistance from Nigeria may be helped also. He pointed out, "we cannot run away from the fact that we are a regional power." He said it was nonsense to say Nigeria was moving into the evacuation exercise very late. Significantly, the senior military officer said, "Nigeria had up to the minute detailed report on the Liberian situation, adding there were no apparent threats to Nigerian lives so far in the country."

With the first batch of Liberian refugee arriving Lagos on the 28th July, 1990 and the main rebel leader, Charles Taylor, announcing that he would not allow President Doe leave Liberia two days later, the moment of decision was around the corner. Media blitz by the Nigerian press was intensified, intense diplomatic shuttles in the region increased and harrowing news from Liberia was pouring. President Ibrahim Babangida left for Banjul, The Gambia on the 5th August, 1990 to attend an emergency meeting of the ECOWAS mediation committee in efforts to resolve the crisis. In concert with other ECOWAS

nations Nigeria was said to be considering a military intervention, as a solution to the Liberian civil war.[58]

President Dauda Jawara of The Gambia, who was also the ECOWAS chairman at the time, told the meeting that given the loss of lives and property and the refugee problem in Liberia, "we can no longer afford to let the situation deteriorate further."[59] Present at the meeting were the four members of the committee, President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, Malian Foreign Minister and Togolese Minister of Justice. Others were the Gambian leader, Dauda Jawara, the Presidents of Sierra Leone and Guinea, Joseph Momoh and Lansana Conte respectively, OAU Secretary-General, Salim Ahmed Salim, the Executive Secretary of the ECOWAS, Dr. Abbas Bundu, and a representative of the Inter-Faith Mediation Committee in Liberia, the non-governmental organisation involved in the mediation efforts.

No forum can be more representative. The attendance list underlined the significance and importance of the issue at stake and the decision to be taken.

At the end of the meeting on August 8, 1990, Dr. Bundu announced the resolution reached as contained in the communique. He said that: "An ECOWAS cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) shall be established in Liberia for the purpose of keeping the peace, restoring law and order and

ensuring that the cease-fire is respected." He also highlighted ECOMOG's operational structure which shall be placed under a commander provided by the Republic of Ghana, to be assisted by a Deputy Commander provided by the Republic of Guinea; and that Heads of State and Government wish to assure the people of Liberia that the sole purpose of ECOMOG peace-making force is to create the necessary conditions for normal life to resume for the benefit of all Liberians."[60]

Back in Nigeria, President Ibrahim Babangida met with the country's supreme legislature, the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), August 9, 1990 to consider "global developments as they affect Nigeria." Among the issues considered were the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (August 2nd 1990) and the effect on oil prices and the equally important "Liberian crisis and the just concluded mediation committee meeting at which proposals of military intervention, involving Nigerian soldiers was adopted." It is clear here, that the AFRC's official ratification of the ECOWAS resolution was merely rubber stamping the Babangida proposal (*New Nigerian*, August 9th, 1990).[61] Thus making it the decision of the government of Nigeria over the Liberian crisis.

Soon after, Nigeria's Foreign Minister, Rilwanu Lukman, began the drive to sell the decision to the outside world. This is because after the decision, the task of the Federal Government was naturally to explain itself and

solicit international understanding and backing, and possibly, financial contributions to the ECOMOG force that duty feel on the Foreign Minister. He addressed "the heads of the Foreign Missions accredited to Nigeria" and called on their governments to support the ECOWAS initiative, specifically towards achieving the target of US $50 million – special Emergency Fund to finance the military operation in Liberia and the immediate humanitarian needs of the Liberian people. Before then, Lukman had met with the Ambassadors of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The meeting with the heads of foreign diplomatic Missions to Nigeria was also meant to "erase the belief that ECOWAS intervention was a design to serve one party or punish the other" (*New Nigerian*, August 10th, 1990).

After the AFRC meeting, President Babangida announced that Nigeria and each of the ECOMOG contributors, "will bear the responsibility" for their troops (*New Nigerian* August 10th, 1990). The ECOMOG contributor-nations were at its inception, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Guinea and The Gambia. The first two (Ghana, Nigeria) were among the original members of the ECOWAS mediation panel on Liberia, the second two (Sierra Leone, Guinea) are the ring-countries neighbouring Liberia and they share ethnic and cultural affinities while The Gambia was the chair of the ECOWAS at this time and it was relatively more neutral.

Notes / References

1. Bernard C. Cohen, Mass Communication and Foreign Policy, in J.N. Rosenau's Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy (ed.), New York Free Press, 1967, pp.195.

2. "The Power of Comment", by the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Douglas Hurd, a copy of speech in The Democrat [Kaduna, Nigeria], October 4th, 1993, P.3.

3. A.O. Sotunmbi [M. Sc Thesis] "Nigeria's Recognition of the MPLA Government of Angola: A case Study of Decision-Making and Implementation, Unife, Ile-Ife (ed.) 1981, P.35.

4. Ibid.

5. O. Aluko, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy," in The Quarterly Journal of Administration (ed.), April 1973, vol VII, no.3, Unife, Ile-Ife, P.253.

6. Mahmoud Yahya is a retired career diplomat. To demonstrate that the government policy-makers, particularly General Babangida, read such columns on foreign affairs, I asked him and he confirmed that newspaper articles do really influenee government decision because he decided to stop ..... because of the indignation officials do show to him on some of his comments e.g. the William Keiting affair, a British journalist working as correspondent for the financial times in Lagos, Nigeria. He was deported for his reports on the whereabouts of the gulf war windfall.

7. O. Aluko, Op. Cit.

8. A.B. Akinyemi, Foreign Policy and Federalism (University of Ibadan, 1974), P.3.

9. In an interview with Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman in (1993) the Nigerian Foreign Minister (1990-91) during whose time the Liberian Policy was taken, he said he made sure clippings of foreign news items of newspapers were made for him everyday so that even when he returned from trips abroad he would find them handy to read.

10. See Mahmound Yahya, Op. Cit.

11. The *Guardian On Sunday*, (Front Page report) June 22nd, 1990 [and The Guardian editorial at the end of July].

12. As a member of the Editorial Board and Foreign Affairs Editor of The Democrat newspapers [1990-96] I can say that there was absolute independence of judgement in the papers editorials on the Liberian crisis. As for the Concord, independence is evidence because of the reports and editorials it published that were very critical of the government inaction in comparison to other governments on the evacuation of nationals. Moreover, most of its editorials were made for earlier than the government decision.

13. Factors Affecting Gatekeepers' Selection of Foreign News: A National Survey of Newspaper Editors, by Tsan-Kuo Chang and Jae-won Lee, in the Journalism Quarterly, Autumn 1992 – 69/3.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

v) There were pressing problems at home, and Liberia seemed a deliberate diversion.

vi) After the intervention got underway, lack of accounting on casualties, costs, etc. and the suspicion that this was going to be an open-ended operation, reinforced the paper's opposition to the intervention.

18. This might be because of its long-established affiliation with its mother company in London before it was largely taken over by the federal government.

19. Appraisal of the Feasibility of Reactivation and Expansion of the Operations of New Africa Holdings Limited (Publishers of The Democrat) by Development and Management Consultants Limited, January 1986, P.15. Interview with Alhaji.

20. Umaru Dikko [Minister of Transport, NPN Chieftain 1979-1983] in the Citizen Magazine, February 1-7, 1993 vol.4, no.5, by Malam Haruna Muhammed.

21. An insider's view. Ref. note 12 above.

22. Umaru Dikko, Op Cit.

23. "The Original Idea of The Guardian newspapers" by Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi, in the Daily Times of December 24th, 1990, P.36.

24. See the *Daily Times*, 10th June, 1965, p.9

25. The *New Nigerian*'s maiden editorial, January 1st, 1996.

26. J.D. Puchala, International Politics (Harper and Row, 1971), P.34 and P.207.

27. Simon Serfaty, in Media and Foreign Policy (ed.) St. Martin's Press, New York, 1991, P.4.

28. Ibid.

29. Aluko, Op Cit. P.253.

30. Akinyemi, Op Cit., P.3

31. Interview with Ambassador Shu'aibu Uthman Yolah (31st October / 1st November, 1998), Kano. He is a retired career diplomat and after retirement served at the Nigerian Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPPS), Kuru.

32. Interview. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Snyder et al, New York Free Press of Ghicoe, 1962.

37. J.N Rosenau (ed.), New York, 1971.

38. They include personal friendship; financial gains accruing from the operations; the need to keep some dangerous officers away from home. Simlarly, there is a great deal of territorial safeguard that the government

wanted to maintain which make it not to give chance for foreign troops e.g. American to be stationed in the area.

39. West Africa, 31st August – 6th September, 1992 P.1471.

40. Ibid.

41. The Nigerian commanders were, in order of succession: (1) Major-General Joshua Dogouyaro, (2) Major-General Rufus Modupe Kapolati, (3) Major-General Ishaya Bakut, (4) Major-General Tunji Olurin, (5) Major-General John Shagaya (6) Major-General John Luienger (7) Major-General Victor Malu, (8) Major-General Timothy Shelpidi, (9) and

The first Ghanaian commander was: (1) Brigadier-General Arnold Quianoo.

42. The African Guardian, September 21st, 1993, P/22-23.

43. *New Nigerian*, July 17th, 1993, P.1

44. The African Guardian, Op. Cit.

45. West Africa, 11-17 November, 1995.

46. Interview with Alhaji Rilwanu former Minister of Foreign Affairs [1990].

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. *The Guardian On Sunday*, May 27th, 1990, lead story.

50. The Charter provides for non-interference in member's internal affairs, and mutual assistance on defence which is a security guarantee of the region in times of crisis.

51. Published as reports, then the full text by nearly all the Nigerian newspapers within days of the press conference.

52. Normally, the Foreign Ministers conference draws the agenda just before the Summit. The agenda included the Babangida proposals.

53. Full text published in the *Guardian on Sunday*, June 3rd, 1990.

54. *New Nigerian*, July 2nd, 1990.

55. *The Guardian On Sunday*, July 22nd, 1990.

56. *The New Nigerian*, July 17th, 1990.

57. *The New Nigerian*, August 4th, 1990.

58. Ibid, August 7th, 1990.

59. *The Democrat*, August 9th, 1990.

60. Ambassador S. U. Yolah told me in an interview that in foreign policy matters like the Liberian operation, the Foreign Ministry had greater freedom and independence of judgement in making its position to government than the Ministry of Defence which in most cases is only to work out the logistic and other operational framework for action.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NIGERIAN PRESS AND THE LIBERIAN CRISIS

4.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Nigerian press became interested in the Liberian crisis as it increasingly took a dangerous dimension on both the humanitarian and regional security aspects. This is clearly evident in the news reports and editorial commentaries that the newspapers splash almost daily about the crisis.

The crisis came to the public through the medium of an international broadcasting service, the London-based British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) when Charles Taylor phoned on New Year's Day in 1990 and introduced himself as the leader of the "National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) with the aim of overthrowing president Samuel K. Doe."[1] Later, a British journalist, Mark Huband, was abducted by the NPFL forces in a train ambush, and his subsequent release "gave the world the first eye-witness account" of Charles Taylor's operations and the strength of his forces.[2]

The Nigerian press initially, and in most cases later on, obtained their news reports from secondary sources such as the BBC and the government-owned News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) which itself relies heavily on the major international news agencies like the Reuteurs, Agence France Press (AFP) and others around the world.[3] However, their selection of the news items depended entirely on their editors' perception. This in turn is based on certain factors, which affect editors' perception and selection of (foreign) news. The factors are not unique to the Nigerian press. They are universal and researchers in some countries have shown how important they could be in newspapers coverage of foreign news.[4]

Reports and editorial commentaries of the ten newspapers studied in this research work spanned from the first day any newspaper ran a story about the Liberian crisis to the last day of any newspaper report or commentary on it in the year 1990. *The Democrat* newspapers take the credit for being the first to open and the last to close the chapter within the period. Its first report was on January 3rd, 1990 and its last on December 28th, 1990. It is also the first to publish an editorial on the crisis.

It is also important to not that all the newspapers heavily relied on foreign news agencies such as Reuters and Agence France Press (AFP) which provide the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) with such foreign reports far and

wide, as well as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) based in London, which has become the primary source of foreign news for the Nigerian newspapers, particularly interviews and on the spot coverage of events by its correspondents in nearly all parts of the world. It is noteworthy also that Charles Taylor introduced himself to the world through the BBC in a telephone call when he launched his offensive on Nimba county. Despite their heavy reliance on foreign media, it is instructive however, that far into the crisis, when Nigeria had become deeply involved, some three newspapers, the *Concord, Guardian* and *Champion* sent their reporters to Liberia for independent coverage. This is probably the first time in the history of Nigerian press coverage of international crisis. Later, journalists from 10 of government print and electronic media went on a tour to Liberia. Let us see how the newspapers defined and perceived the crisis.

For analytical purposes the newspapers are grouped into three: pro-intervention papers, which wanted an international / Nigerian involvement; anti-intervention papers which warned the Nigerian government against involvement; and the government press which supported any policy by government on the issue.

4.2 PRO-INTERVENTION PAPERS

a. The Democrat

Exactly one month after the outbreak of the crisis in Liberia, beginning with Charles Taylor's incursion on Nimba county on December 24th, 1989, *The Democrat* published an editorial simply entitled: "LIBERIA"[5] which is the first by any newspaper since the crisis erupted in which it traced the history of the Liberian republic, the leadership of the Americo-Liberians and their overthrow by Sgt. Samuel Doe, his repressive rule marked by at least seven coup attempts. It pointed out that the current crisis has turned Liberia into a "pathetic" situation "with unarmed civilians and villagers on the run." The paper predicted that if it continued, the country may collapse or fall prey to "further American machinations."[6] This, according to *The Democrat*, "could be inimical to the so far relatively peaceful West African sub-region." The paper then provided figures of refugees fleeing Liberia into neighbouring West African countries: 12,000 to Guinea, and twice that figure to the Côte d'Ivoire.

The editorial from the onset set the tone and line of *The Democrat* on humanitarian and regional security concerns, which it consistently and continuously toed throughout the one year period. This set the basis also for its

proposals to, and support for what became a regional, and Nigeria's leading role in the effort to resolve the crisis.

In June 1990, the paper published another editorial, "Liberia's chequered peace," commenting on the peace initiative organised by the Liberian clergy, the Interfaith Conference in Freetown, Sierra Leone, between the government and the rebel forces. It observed the conference ended in a "stalemate" and that the peace broker might soon be the United States (*The Democrat* is traditionally anti-American). It alluded to the call by Liberians, who saw the US as a historical ally, for an international peace-keeping force. To underline its opposition to President Doe however, which was also the mood of the Nigerian public, the paper said that "it is not easy for Doe to gain the sympathy of the most Americans," but that Taylor "was no better replacement or saviour." Though it did not like the United States as a peace broker but it said "in the interest of humanity and the innocent victims of the civil strife," the US should act, thus further pointing to its humanitarian concern in the crisis.

July was a critical period in the crisis. It marked the climax of the carnage, confusion and worsening humanitarian situation in which countries which did not evacuate their nationals began to do so in earnest. Liberia was grinding to a halt and governance was running out as killings became

indiscriminate. Embassies were turning into refugee camps for their nationals, particularly ECOWAS members.

The Democrat published an on-the-spot BBC report on "How the embassies fare". Guinea was said to be doing "marvellously" well for its nationals, while Ghana, and particularly Nigeria, were doing virtually nothing for their trapped nationals. While the Nigerian embassy staff were said to have all gone to Freetown in neighbouring Sierra Leone, for talks on the Liberian situation, Ghana's Ambassador was said to have totally refused shelter for Ghanaian nationals who ran to the embassy.

It is instructive that other three countries, Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea, became the principal members of the ECOMOG operation. They were also singled out by Charles Taylor for accusation as supporting President Doe, and thus questioning their neutrality.

On August 1, 1990, *The Democrat* published another editorial on the deteriorating condition in Liberia which has become tragic. Headlined "Savage and Barbaric," the editorial commented on the stories it previously carried on its front page Foreign Briefs column about the massacre of 200 people, mostly women and children, at the Tubman Boulevard church, where they were seeking refuge, as well as the killing of another 30 people at the JFK Hospital

and the abduction and killing of 200 others in hospitals, while corpses littered the streets in the capital, Monrovia.

These incidents were largely referred to by President Ibrahim Babangida in his press conference later in reply to criticism by a section of the press and the public opposed to Nigeria's involvement.

The Democrat denounced all the three rival factions, namely President Doe, main rebel Charles Taylor and the breakaway Prince Yormie Johnson. The paper supported the European Community Ambassadors' call in Monrovia for a concerted international involvement to stop the crisis. The editorial suggested that since "there is no legitimate government in control in Liberia, the international community join hands, under any guise (the ECOWAS; OAU; UN) to send troops to restore sanity" there.

This editorial came three days before the ECOWAS mediation committee on Liberia met in an emergency in Banjul (August 4, 1990) at which the ECOMOG was established following Nigerian leader's (Babangida) proposal. Interesting enough, General Babangida as well as the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, Dr. Abbas Bundu, again pointed those very circumstances as compelling reasons for their decision to establish ECOMOG.

The editorial's thinking and argument are worth quoting extensively. "I fall the three warring factions could be decapitated and their military adventures thwarted by an international force, we welcome it, for the sake of the poor citizens." The paper reiterated that "they (warring factions) should be cleared from the scene." It further argued that "in effort to save human lives, political considerations such as non-interference in internal affairs of countries should not be allowed to constraint reasonable actions." This obviously meant military action by members of the international community, "under any guise."

The significance of this editorial, and that of the *National Concord* (below) in the history of Nigerian press and foreign policy making is similar to that of the *Daily Service* in 1960 during the Congo crisis which was widely believed to have influenced the Nigerian position on which the Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was said to have adopted in his recommendation on the Congo crisis to the United Nations.[7]

On August 9, 1990, the paper led its front page with the decision of the mediation committee to establish on "ECOWAS peace-keeping force for Liberia" to end the 8-month civil war which was spilling over to the neighbouring West African States."

Quoting Dr. Abbas Bundu, the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, the paper said "an ECOWAS cease-fire monitoring group (ECOMOG) shall be established in Liberia for the purpose of keeping the peace, restoring law and order and ensuring that the cease-fire is respected.

*ECOWAS shall be placed under a commander provided by the Republic of Ghana, to be assisted by a Deputy Commander, provided by the Republic of Guinea.

* Heads of State and Government wish to assure the people of Liberia that the sole purpose of the ECOWAS peace-keeping force is to create the necessary conditions for normal life to resume for the benefit of all Liberians."

On September 4, 1990, an Interim Government was formally set up as ECOMOG held its fort in Monrovia against rebel activities. On September 10th, the worst came when President Doe was killed by rebels under Prince Johnson after he was captured by them in the ECOMOG camp in Monrovia.

The next day, *The Democrat* published its fourth editorial on Liberia's nine-month civil war. It recounted ex-president Samuel Doe's past and while not mourning his death, but on humanitarian grounds, "shuddered to think that

his tribesmen and members of his family are being hunted down." The paper said this speaks bad of the future of the "already grounded country." It suggested, for the umpteenth time, that all factions "should down their arms, relinquish their claims to the presidency and allow a disinterested party, under a government of national unity to come to the stage and reorganise the country before handing over to a popularly elected government." In fact, the paper said that its Liberian policy hinges on a true national government based on those objectives. This was similar to the ECOWAS peace plan. The paper supported the ECOMOG and its responsibility, pointing out that otherwise "it is the Liberians who will continue to die. "Meanwhile, about 500,000 Liberians were reported to have fled the country.

The Democrat published yet another editorial[8] on the crisis within the ECOWAS over Liberia which resuscitated the traditional rivalry between the English and the French speaking members. Entitled "ECOWAS: To be or Not to be?" The editorial came out on the day of another Banjul meeting aimed at ironing out the differences between the two groups over ECOMOG. Burkina Faso and the Côte d'Ivoire led the opposition while Nigeria and Ghana led the pro-ECOMOG side. *The Democrat* pointed urged in its oft-repeated regionalist call, that the Banjul summit should work... towards an acceptable compromise that is in the best interest of the Liberian people. It concluded by

urging the summit to ensure the survival of ECOWAS and ensure a peaceful resolution of the Liberian crisis.

The paper closed the year-long Liberian crisis with another editorial on December 11, 1990, entitled "When ECOWAS Smiled." The editorial gave kudos to the Bamako Summit which many people thought could mark the end of the sub-regional organisation as a result of the "seeming division among member nations over the presence of ECOMOG" in Liberia. The paper said the meeting turned out to be a big success with thirteen out of sixteen members attending, including the main Liberian rebel leader. Stamping the seal of approval on ECOMOG, the paper pointed out that "but for ECOMOG, Liberia perhaps may have been different today." It said the lesson to be drawn from ECOMOG, "with correct understanding and positive cooperation from the international community, is that Africa is in a position to solve her problems."

In drawing analogy between the success of ECOMOG and the failure of OAU's Tchadian peace-keeping initiative, *The Democrat* said it was due to the involvement of "extra-territorial factors," i.e. the United States. It saw ECOMOG as "a new diplomatic thrust in Africa." The paper then made its usual humanitarian appeal that "the Liberian crisis is a symbol of self-interest pursued along brutal lines and crimes against the people."

In a clear manifestation of how it defined the Liberian crisis and the context within which it defined it, *The Democrat* described as "suicidal and unpardonable" for African countries to "hide under the non-interference provision when thousands of people were being murdered by self-seeking, merciless adventurers," and at the same time for them to come down hard in condemning "racist South Africa." Its last line in fact spoke of its stand as a whole. "Liberia was the recent African shame and only ECOMOG saved the day."

b. Concord

Like *The Democrat,* the *National Concord* gave an early account of what was happening in Liberia. A few weeks after the crisis began with the invasion of Nimba county by Charles Taylor's NPFL forces, the *National Concord* in January published a story, inside pages, predicting that "civil war looms in Liberia."

It is difficult from the onset to discern where the paper stood but the mention of civil war by the paper indicated that it looked at it as an internal, though serious, affair in Liberia.

In its first editorial on the crisis three weeks later, entitled "The Liberian blood-bath," the paper said the Nimba county incursion and the civil strife had claimed about 600 lives and the spectre of the bloodbath yet to be dispelled. It said further that the "insurgency," which all but degenerated into a civil war, was the tenth attempt to unseat Doe since he seized power in 1980. Predictively, the paper said this time one may not be the end of the "coup attempts, exiled invasions and such other issues in Liberia."

Like all the other Nigerian newspapers, the *National Concord* heaped all the blames on President Doe and his actions that "read like a Chronicle of unrelenting brigandage." In what might be defining the crisis as an internal affair of Liberia but which has a bearing externally, the editorial said "we must make it clear that we are, in principle, firmly opposed to the violations of any country's sovereignty and territorial integrity," pointing out however that "the latest clashes in Liberia must be understood in their proper historical and political context." It is in this light that the paper suggested the steps that Doe must take, "allowing all Liberians to freely determine their destinity."

In another editorial "Liberia's embattled press," following the fire in the Daily observer building in Monrovia set by unidentified persons who were angered by a story the Observer published, the *National Concord* blamed President Doe for his crude attempt to silence the country's press, citing other

cases of arrests of journalists. It said that "the very same reprehensive practices, which the world has persistently condemned in South Africa, are being daily replicated by the government of an independent African country," thus establishing the international dimension of the crisis. The paper urged "governments, journalists and lovers of freedom all over Africa to denounce in unmistakable words, the climate of intolerance and repression," that was engulfing Liberia. Thus putting aside the issue of sovereignty and internal affairs of Liberia.

In another editorial, entitled "Doe, give peace and chance," the *National Concord* gave a lurid account of the situation in Liberia, similar to *The Democrat* (January 24, 1990) and *Daily Times* (September 11, 1990) accounts, and the humanitarian and regionalist approach. It began by summarising from that perspective the situation in "the West African country, Liberia," which "speaks of anarchy across the land," crediting its reports to "the continuing stream of refugees and fleeing foreigners." Preparing grounds for its subsequent suggestions, the *National Concord* said the International Red Cross society, an external but non-political organisation in Liberia offered to mediate in the conflict but without success. It then appealed to President Doe "to spare (the) citizenry from further bloodshed and destruction, by coming to the conference table."

The main thrust of the editorial however, was a suggestion and an urge for "the leaders of other West African countries to now set up the table between Doe and the dissidents and save the good people of Liberia from further ruin." It is instructive that this editorial, like *The Democrat* of June 22, 1990, came before the ECOWAS Summit in Banjul set up the mediation committee.

The editorial appeared on May 8 while the summit of Heads of State met three weeks later, on May 27, 1990.

On June 15, 1990, the *Concord* again published another editorial, "Resolving the Liberian impasse" following the agreement by the Doe government and the rebels to enter into direct talks. The editorial commended the gesture of peace by both sides and urged them to "submerge their pride, place their own narrow personal interests and do anything that would restore peace, security and orderly governance to the good people of Liberia." This is a further reference to *Concord*'s humanitarian concern. The paper then suggested that Doe resign and leave the country, if he so wished; the composition of an interim government that would conduct elections and evolve a new national leadership within one year; a framework for a cease-fire to be worked out; reconstitution of the Armed Forces and proper documentation of

all weapons "in order to restore an atmosphere of security to the crisis-torn country."

And on June 16, 1990, the *National Concord* came out with a front page story that might have changed its previous stands. In an exclusive report by the *African Concord* reporter, Frank Igwebueze, who went to Liberia to see things for the *Concord*, the special edition of *Weekend Concord* [Saturdays] published an exclusively nationalist dimension to the Liberian crisis as suggested by its headline: "Liberia: Nigerians in Danger." The opening paragraph says it all: "The lives of thousands of Nigerians in Liberia are in danger. They are being threatened by the rebels of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, who see the government of Nigeria as being sympathetic to the government of President Samuel Doe."

Details in the subsequent pages and the edition of the *African Concord* Magazine (June 18, 1990) were given of the situation in Liberia "as it concerns our citizen," most of whom were eager to run home but "cannot do so like citizens of other countries whose governments sent planes and ships to evacuate them." *The Democrat* published a similar story crediting the BBC but which did not change its initial stand on the Liberian crisis. But with this dimension, the *Concord*, like the *Guardian* (below), began to criticise the apparent complicity by the Nigerian government "in backing Doe as a result of

President Babangida's fraternal friendship" with him which the rebels found unpardonable.

On July 15, 1990, however, the weekly *Sunday Concord* published a story that "evacuation of Nigerians from Liberia begins."

In an editorial, the *National Concord* reacted to the reported attack on the Nigerian embassy by rebels and previous threats on the lives of Nigerians trapped in Liberia.

The paper emphasised on the Nigerian factor in Liberia which Taylor alleged, and said this "has engaged Nigerian public attention over the last few months." One sees the *Concord* shifting away from the broad regional and humanitarian interpretation of the crisis to a concern for Nigerian nationals and the Nigerian government's responsibility towards them in Liberia. A responsibility which the government vowed to discharge in responding to the verbal threats against Nigerian citizens but which the paper's editorial, much like *The Guardian*, described as having "come so late in the day," and in fact doubted the "effectiveness" of the warnings and the "practicability" of the evacuation exercise. Henceforth, the *Concord* took a swipe against the Nigerian government. In fact, the editorial queried the Federal Government's "unrealistic" plans when it charged that the Nigerian National Shipping Line

(NNSL) had "no vessels of the kind" that the government announced would be used for the exercise.

In a clear departure from the interim government solution, the paper concluded by advising the Nigerian government on "the only way forward", that is to persuade Samuel Doe to leave Liberia for peace to return after which a "consultative engagement" could be held with the "emerging government" in Liberia after Doe, "in the long-term interests of our citizens, and those cherished principles that underscore our foreign policy." This probably meant the principle of non-interference and promotion of international peace and cooperation.

In conclusion, the paper criticized the Nigerian government's handling of the situation, blaming it for the "embarrassing predicament, on the lack of foresight and the errors of judgement" which it said "characterised our responses to the Liberian crisis." It charged that "while expert opinions and newspaper editorials earlier had repeatedly urged more imaginative and decisive response to the crisis in that country, these voices were not headed." This editorial has noticeably come at a time close to the ECOWAS mediation committee's meeting in Freetown.

On August 2, 1990, the paper published yet another editorial, "Arresting the Liberian genocide." Surprisingly, in a demonstrable shift of its policy once again, back to its initial appeal on humanitarian and broader regional consideration, the *Concord* restated "the gravity of the savagery into which that once peaceful country is now daily sinking." This come after reports of the massacre of 600 civilians sheltering in the Lutheran Church in Monrovia by government troops. Defining the worsening situation in terms of "inter-tribal genocide," the paper said the situation cannot be allowed to further deteriorate, citing significantly the statement by the European community envoys in Liberia that the country "can no longer enjoy the world's recognition and respect as a civilised and sovereign nation."

It heaped blames on President Doe but at the same time refused to accord any credibility to either Taylor or Johnson. The *Concord* then repeated an earlier editorial, but with more specific calls on the African nations and the international community not to be "indifferent to the worsening situation in Liberia." It went ahead to suggest in clear terms that "a multi-lateral intervention force, put together by either the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) or the United Nations should be called upon to restore law and order, establish and interim governing council and then hand over to an elected civilian government."

The *Concord* concluded by expressing a dislike for what may be considered an intervention in the internal affairs of a country but said, "regrettably," the situation made "the option inevitable."

The *Sunday Concord* then came out with a Front Page story, "Nigeria leads rescue mission to Liberia which was in a much better light than reports of previous Nigeria's actions to rescue its trapped citizens. The story also gave the first indication ever of an ECOWAS intervention plan for Liberia. It said: "Lagos was abuzz with red hot indicators at the weekend that Nigeria may take up arms in concert with some other ECOWAS countries to rescue their citizens trapped in war-torn Liberia. The story revealed that the "military option as solution to the stalemate in efforts to evacuate the trapped citizens came as surprise in the wake of a meeting of ECOWAS leaders scheduled for tomorrow at the instance of Sir Dauda Jawara of Gambia."[9]

It is noteworthy that despite the *Concord*'s editorial of July 15, 1990, berating Nigeria's complicity with Doe and criticising the government's "late" action to evacuate its trapped citizens, which it said was being insensitive to "newspaper editorials and experts opinions," it yet published more reports of scholars in the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) and other in-house columnists that not only supported but encouraged any concerted

intervention or "military option" as "necessary for ECOWAS to establish a firm grip on Liberia."

In effect, *Concord*'s stand on Liberia is generally that of call for an international, continental or regional efforts to stop the fighting in Liberia most of which came before the August meeting or ECOWAS leaders in Banjul, The Gambia, which decided on the ECOMOG. The humanitarian and regional aspect which the *Concord* (and *The Democrat*) appealed to, have been used by the Nigerian government to justify its decision to be involved in the crisis. This points to the interactive and perceptive reflexes of editors and decision-makers on foreign policy. By September, after ECOMOG has already set foot on Liberia, the *Concord* still went ahead to support Nigeria's stand and involvement in Liberia through the ECOMOG.

On September 13, 1990, it published and editorial, "That ECOWAS may not die," in which it lamented the in-house division in ECOWAS between the francophone members "perhaps with the prompting of France" and the Anglo-phone countries, "which made up almost wholly" the ECOMOG troops. But its main thrust was the regrettably "scare notice" given the Liberian situation by the international community. Thus, underlining the need for intervention in Liberia. On that positive and supportive line, it said, "taking a more sympathetic look at the magnitude of the violence, some countries within the

West African sub-region decided to form the ECOWAS monitoring group (ECOMOG)."

It went on to single out Nigeria's role for commendation and said: "led by soldiers from Nigeria and Ghana, the group was asked to enter Liberia, end the bloodshed, return the country to peace and democracy and then withdraw." The paper tacitly "concluded that ECOMOG was the result of eminently good intentions." And in what may be more than just support, it approved of the West African peace mission, having called for such much earlier in one of its editorials when it said: "at a time when the rest of the world had turned its back on the suffering people of Liberia, a group of nations at considerable risk to the lives of their soldiers and at the same cost to their economies, decided to intervene..."

It is significant that the *Concord*'s regionalist and humanitarian tendency on the Liberian policy had even let it to juxtapose the crisis with the Gulf crisis, which erupted on August 2, 1990, following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The paper accused the international community of having "scarcely noticed the carnage (in Liberia going on for nine months) and focusing its attention on regions considered more strategic to super power interaction." It further charged that "when the world finally glanced at Liberia, it was only to evacuate its citizens as quickly as possible and leave the country to sort out its

problems." Ironically, the paper had once in its editorials accused the Nigerian government for belatedly evacuating its citizens and engaging in "diplomatic blunders." This can however be explained by its concern for the national interest first and foremost also.

In *Sunday Concord*'s first editorial on Liberia, despite its good and extensive coverage of the crisis, entitled "ECOMOG's new mandate," following the capture and killing of President Samuel Doe and the subsequent change of ECOMOG's operational guidelines, the paper emphasised on the leading role of Nigeria in ECOMOG and the transformation of the group from a peace monitor to a peace enforcer, though describing it as "unfortunate, given the ugly and deteriorating situation. ECOWAS was simply left with no other viable option" as argued similarly by its sister the *National Concord* (above).

The *Sunday Concord* however suggested that the burden should be shared "equitably amongst all the countries of the region" being in its argument the only option to ensure that peace is quickly restored to Liberia with the "minimum casualties." This is in the *Concord*'s groups general efforts to strike a balance between the national interest and responsibilities in the Liberian crisis. To further demonstrate this, the paper concluded by calling for "the full and immediate evacuation of all Nigerians still stranded in Liberia" which has become the duty for which the Nigerian public and press have

accused the Nigerian government of derelicting at the earliest signals. Its last word was that the evacuation should constitute the foremost "priority" of the Babangida administration.[10]

To once again demonstrate the definition of the crisis by the *Concord* in the context of regional responsibility and security as well as the humanitarian concerns, the paper published and editorial, "Babangida's charge to African leaders," during his visit to Uganda. It was not devoted to the Liberian conflict, but the paper alluded to it when it lamented the inability or unwillingness of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to "decisively resolve any of these festering conflicts... (by) often seeking refuge in the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states." The paper even suggested that the OAU should "work out a machinery for its effective involvement in and meaningful mediation of these nasty wars."

Despite this nationalistic fervour, the *Concord* however, did not hide its ethnic bias against the Nigerian government. Its anonymous columnist, SNOOPER, bore this tendency when he accused the Nigerian Ambassador to Liberia of neglecting his station and fleeing Liberia, leaving Nigerians to die, but he was not removed from office because he was "well-connected to *Arewaland*," i.e. the North and it said that the "*Arewanan*'s" God-fathers

would not allow "this quotaman" to be touched despite petitions by his ministry's colleagues against him.

Another editorial by the *Sunday Concord*: "ECOWAS leaders look beyond Liberia," commented on "the need to maintain the necessary degree of political understanding and trust," which were necessary ingredients for the economic viability and future "integration" of the sub-region in the face of the "rapidly evolving... integrated market" in "every other region of the world." The editorial, which appeared two days to the Bamako Summit of all sixteen member-states of the ECOWAS over the Liberian crisis which all the factions to the conflict were expected to attend, urged the leaders "first to spare no effort in bringing in the Liberian crisis to an end." It called the attention of those countries that allegedly "armed the rebel factions" to "the deaths and destructions which the Liberian people have suffered in these past months and give peace a chance."

In another editorial, "Liberia: Our Right to know," the *National Concord,* still maintaining its support for ECOMOG and Nigeria's involvement in the Liberian crisis, however picked holes with the way information was being hoarded by the government in its "noble,.... Military expedition" to Liberia. It described recent government's defence of its Liberian mission as belated, coming three months after the military campaign

began. It criticised governments handling of press relations in foreign policy making, citing the United States government-press relations during the Gulf crisis as what should have been in Nigeria also. Similarly, Ghana, an ECOMOG member, has done "appreciably well" in this regard the paper said, by keeping its public informed of the casualties and the amount of money the Liberian expedition would cost it (about 60 million US dollars by the end of 1990).

The paper said that lack of information on such issues "is not as it should be" and it tended to give credibility to "news reports of European radio stations." It pointed out that "even the details of the progress being recorded by ECOMOG come largely from the news report of the European radio stations." It urged the government to arrange "a formal and effective" way by which "Liberia-related information can be supplied to the Nigerian people on regular basis." It went further to suggest that an "official spokesman" on Liberia be designated "at the presidency" to be briefing the press.

Perhaps, to the credit of the *Concord*, a press secretary to the ECOMOG Field Commander was not long afterwards appointed by the government: Mr. Nkem Agetua, former State House Correspondent of the *New Nigeria*. He was stationed at the Presidency in Lagos.

In its last editorial on Liberia for the year, 1990, the *National Concord* spoke about "the Liberian Rehabilitation Fund." This followed President Babangida's announcement shortly after a meeting with Liberia's interim president, Amos Sawyer, that such a fund was going to be established and members of the public would be expected to contribute to it.

The paper, as usual, supported the idea on humanitarian grounds. It recounted Liberia's ordeal, and said that though Nigeria must lead in the assistance programme, as it led in "pacifying" Liberia, it should not do anything that "portrays her as taking sides with any of the parties." And it still criticised the international community for looking the other way while Liberia was ruined. Now, it said, the community should come in, adding conclusively that the chaos and devastation in Liberia was "unprecedented in independent West Africa."

4.3 ANTI-INTERVENTION PAPERS

a. The Guardian and The Guardian On Sunday

The Guardian newspapers on their part presented a different perception of the Liberian crisis despite acknowledging the gruesome humanitarian situation here. To these prestigious newspapers, there was a tacit friendship

between Nigeria's General Babangida and the discredited president Samuel Doe of Liberia. On that basis they were not in support of any concerted action, talkless of Nigeria's involvement in the crisis, because it was only meant to keep Doe in power.[12]

The first report on the Liberian crisis appeared. *The Guardian On Sunday* which said "Once again Doe survives an invasion." Then subsequent stories spoke about humanitarian conditions, e.g. "Amnesty appeals to Liberia to halt killing" and "Côte d'Ivoire wants assistance for Liberian refugees."

The first editorial was on January 26, 1990 one month after the outbreak of the incursion. Entitled "Liberia: Another Reprieve for Samuel Doe," the editorial traced Doe's coming to power, the circumstances, the rule he perpetrated and its consequences, one of which was the Nimba county uprising, one among many. His ability to crush it, sending 50,000 into refugee status in neighbouring countries should be seen by him, as the *Guardian* argued, as a reprieve and therefore make peaceful dialogue possible. It prophetically cautioned that if he did not then he should not push his luck too far.

The *Guardian On Sunday* reported on its front page "Nigeria's move to settle Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire Row" being the first paper to touch on Nigeria's

angle over the Liberian situation i.e. the first to specifically mention the Nigerian government connections to the Liberian leader Samuel Doe and to hammer on it continuously.[13] And to set its tone on a firmer ground the paper led its front page again with a starting revelation over Nigeria's secret linkage with Liberia. Headlined: "Questions over secret Aid Airlift to Liberia," the paper in an exclusive investigation spoke of clandestine airlift of food and arms supply to help the collapsing Doe's regime against advancing Taylor's forces. The investigation went as far as quoting diplomats[14] projecting the collapse of Doe and that the arms assistance from Nigeria could only delay his going and suggested that government should entirely hands off Liberia.

It is significant that the reported airlift followed President Doe's solidarity visit to the Nigerian leader, General Babangida, on the botched coup d'etat of April 22, 1990, led by Major Gideon Orkar.

So, as most papers continued to report on the harrowing scene in Liberia *The Guardian* group continued to highlight the clandestine relationship between Monrovia and Lagos (then).[15] For example, "Doe seeks asylum in Nigeria-To be turned down, Freetown is likely destination," and "Nigerian Envoy says Nigeria is not involved in Liberian crisis." "How Nigeria bought over Liberia's debt."

Another editorial of *The Guardian* came six months after the crisis broke out. It says "Liberia: The way forward." The paper referred to the peace talks between Doe's government and rebels in the US embassy in Freetown and said it was important to see the talks in progress while there was a "lull, although no formal cease-fire has been declared." It suggested that Doe stand down but not meaning that Taylor automatically replace him.[16] It called for broadening of the table to include not just Doe and Taylor but "other groups with identifiable interests that need to be accommodated and protected." It finally suggested a "transition government in which neither Doe nor Taylor will figure," and that the government should be in power for no longer than eighteen months during which to work out national reconciliation, organise multiparty elections and supervise the restoration of democracy. It made no reference to the ECOWAS peace plan following the Banjul Summit in May, though it contained most of its elements and proposals.

In its second editorial on the crisis in a week, *The Guardian* spoke about "Nigerians in Liberia" and recalled the letters of death threat sent to Nigerians by Taylor's men but said, accusingly, that the Nigerians could not leave the "unsafe environment" because their government (in Nigeria) made no arrangements to evacuate them. It also pointed out that the alleged collusion between the Nigerian government and Doe's government were reasons for the threats to Nigerian lives by Taylor. The paper appealed to both parties in the

war to leave Nigerians out of their conflict. It worried that as other sister countries had sent ships to evacuate their nationals, Nigeria had not done so, which the paper cited as being evidence of Nigeria's support for Doe, in order to create a facet of stability in Liberia.

The paper then called on the government to speedily arrange for the evacuation of Nigerians as a matter of responsibility. That all was not really well. On June 27, 1990, the paper published a back page report that: "Nigerian diplomats in Liberia hurry to Freetown."

Then *The Guardian On Sunday* published a front page report (June 22, 1990) which practically showed the newspapers' opposition to any peace intervention in Liberia, particularly by Nigeria. The report said: "Liberia ECOWAS Peace-Keeping Force Plan Dropped, members reluctant." In the report, the paper said that the "idea floundered and finally died over the composition of the force, which saw Nigeria and Sierra Leone as the only interested members."

Later, *The Guardian* published another editorial, "The Liberian Impasse," coming seven months after the civil war erupted and four weeks after Taylor's advent on Monrovia. Without highlighting the humanitarian conditions, the paper however, reiterated its interim government solution. It

said that in "the current impasse, if with the collapse of the Freetown talks a military solution cannot also be found immediately, the Liberian people and countries that have any form of leverage with the combatants would have to find a way to persuade them to agree on a formula for peace and an amicable settlement. The paper was not for external intervention, particularly from Nigeria.

Another editorial by *The Guardian* asked: "An ECOWAS Force for Liberia?" somewhat in amazement. It described the decision as "a bad precedent," likening it to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It says ECOWAS should have stuck to their earlier move of finding peace, short of armed intervention. The paper predictably feared that ECOWAS may be bogged down in the quagmire. It however prevaricated by concluding that the impasse, anarchy and bloodletting situation "would seem to present a Hobson's choice for ECOWAS."

In a subsequent disparaging editorial that followed, entitled "Quagmire in Liberia, *The Guardian* described the situation as "fineness" in which the ECOMOG, that was armed with a mandate to separate belligerents and preside over a peaceful transition to democracy, was not becoming "a party to the conflict." The paper said considering the Doe's and Taylor's opposition to it and the human and material costs in staving for a long-time in Liberia to

enhance the interim government, "ECOWAS has little choice than to continue its exertion to bring all the parties to the conference table." The paper is now saying "I told you so" showing that its predictions and fears are being confirmed.

The Guardian's next editorial was on "Doe's death," which it described as a "bloodrite of passage through life." The paper recounted his ten-year rule of "crippling limitations and bloodbath," pointing out that his "nemesis lay in his greed for political power, his willingness to go to any length to keep to it." The paper said that "few people shed tears for Doe, the manner of his death being poetic justice." In relating his death to the peril that has befallen Liberia, *The Guardian* said "the tragedy" of it and of others like him, is that in their lust for power "they bring their societies down with them."

This was followed by another editorial the following day, titled "Liberia after Samuel Doe." Covering half page, *The Guardian* dwelt extensively on the immediate aftermath of his death and the prospect for peace (or lack of it) in the country.

In supporting the ECOWAS mission rather surprisingly this time, the paper described ECOWAS objectives as "noble" but disparaged as "misguided" the process of its establishment and the role it played, counting

the failures more than the successes. It suggested a "rethinking altogether," and the involvement of experienced organisations in peace-keeping such as the United Nations. A further, and perhaps more practical suggestion, was the urge for the evacuation of Nigerian citizens in Liberia.[17]

As a follow-up to this, *The Guardian* published yet another editorial, suggesting ways to resettle "The refugees from Liberia," which was directed at the Nigerian government. This is an attempt also to influence decision. It was concerned with Nigeria's citizens particularly who would obviously "seek refuge in their country." The paper said that relief measures ought to have been in place so that no one was caught unprepared.

The Guardian's last editorial on the crisis in the year was on December 7, 1990, entitled "Liberia after the cease-fire." The paper expressed satisfaction that the fragile cease-fire was holding, and described the recent Bamako Summit as "a just and realistic international response to the agony of the Liberian nation and people." It then called for the formation of an interim government that is "mutually acceptable," an oft-repeated call by the paper.

4.4 GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPERS

a. The Daily Times/Sunday Times

The Daily Times group is largely federal government owned with many other publications under it. It usually support any government of the day, even before it was appropriated by the government in the mid-70s. This was a matter of its editorial policy.[18]

The Daily Times first reported the Liberian crisis on January 13, 1990, on page 14, titled: "Liberia: Refugees flee fighting." By touching first on the refugee issue, the paper took a humanitarian angle on the crisis.[19] The report said about 11,000 residents of Liberia's strife-torn Nimba county have fled into neighbouring Guinea, while government troops have evacuated hundreds more in recent days, quoting travellers accounts.

In an editorial commentary, the *Daily Times* spoke of "Doe's Nightmares" and said his regime had experienced nine coup attempts with the latest one being "more than just coup attempt." The paper predicted that "in its unfolding dimensions, what has been widely tagged a coup d'état may end up being a regional insurrection of secessionist dimensions." That is also a sound editorial judgement, indicating the quality of staff in the paper.

The paper has from the on-set, set the tone of its Liberian analysis on humanitarian concern and regional security. This can be deduced in the paper's points that: "the level of loss of human lives" and the "estimated 30,000 refugees," and two accusations and counter-accusations between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, which accused Liberia of "committing genocide against its own citizens," some of whom have their kinsmen there in the Côte d'Ivoire, particularly the Gio and Mano. In many places, the editorial heaped blame on Doe and concluded by saying that "the power hunger of one man is not worth all the Liberian blood that has been and seems likely to continue to spill if Doe continue in his present approach."[20]

In another editorial the following day, without mentioning Liberia, the *Daily Times* commented on "ECOWAS and its debtors", in which the virtues of Nigeria's position in the region were extolled and "as the single most active economy in the sub-region must continue with its present approach of showing leadership in ECOWAS matters." This is a good preview edition of future policy decisions by Nigeria on the Liberian crisis.

Again in March 1990, the paper published another editorial, the second in a two part series, entitled "Foreign Policy After South Africa II," in which it advised that in "West Africa," where Nigeria's "greatest outward thrust should not exceed," according to it, "we must safeguard against political instability

and economic recklessness by having our house in order and encouraging these sister states to see that the distance between Abidjan and Lagos is closer than between Abidjan and Paris."

This regionalist approach to Foreign Policy by the newspaper bore vivid traits on its perception of the solution to the crisis in Liberia later, which favoured a concerted regional effort in the region led by Nigeria.

In another editorial, "Nwachukwu's Second Coming," the *Daily Times* reminded the new Minister of External Affairs, marking his return to the Ministry, that "in West Africa, all appears not well with ECOWAS, the sub-regional economic body." The paper specifically mentioned the Liberian crisis with which the "discordant voices in the organisation have a lot to do." The editorial served only as a reminder, in my view, and not a stimulant or influencing factor in foreign policy, because it came four days after the paper made a front page report that Nwachukwu has singled out Liberia as his priority area in his new office. That is quite in the tradition of the paper.

In its characteristically pro-government stance, the *Times* group had in most cases waited for government to act before commenting editorially in support of the action. That is why the *Times* papers have not been suggesting what should be done but supported what was done[21] over the Liberian crisis,

though they have consistently reported the refugee problem and the possible spill over effect of the war in the region.

Typical of this posture was an editorial, "Refugees on our hands." While the thrust of the editorial was to remind the government of the need for it to resettle the Nigerian citizens who are now refugees, as well as other Liberians in Nigeria, the paper however touched on the regional implication of the crisis (context-oriented) and hence Nigeria's role in it. It said that "the arrival of the estimated 7,000 refugees from Liberia quickly dramatises one of the serious implications of the Liberian situation for us as a nation." To drive this point home, the paper said later that "in spite of our specific involvement in Liberia, our status in the ECOWAS sub-region and indeed in the whole continent proves specific responsibilities on the matter of the refugees from Liberia."

It concluded thus, "incidentally, regional importance and global significance cannot be attained without, among other things, having to play host to refugees now and again."

"For ECOWAS Sake," was another editorial published by the *Daily Times*, in which it recalled "the recent plea by both Nigeria's President Ibrahim Babangida and his Togolese counterpart, Gnassingbe Eyadema, to all members

of the Economic Community of West Africa States to close ranks and ensure that peace returns to Liberia."

It said the plea, "could not have come at a better time," when the regional grouping is facing the danger of split over the issue, between the Anglophone and the Francophone countries. The editorial came just after an unsuccessful summit called by the Côte d'Ivoire which Nigeria and others boycotted and a few days before another summit in Banjul, The Gambia, which the paper said was "properly summoned by ECOWAS current chairman," President Dauda Jawara of Gambia, over a similar issue on Liberia. It is significant that the Nigerian government described as "improperly called" the botched Yamoussoukro meeting in the Côte d'Ivoire, in explaining its boycot.

The paper described the botched Yamoussoukro Summit as "illegally convened," without the authority of ECOWAS chairman, and further alleged that the summit "was aimed at subverting the activities of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)." It said "whatever reservations may be expressed about ECOMOG we do not see anything wrong with the manner of its formation or the broad objectives to which it is committed." Making a call "to understand the full implications of the Liberian conflict," it lamented the situation in which some member states of the ECOWAS are "unfortunately... allowing their colonial affiliations to bedevil... (what) ought to be resolved by

Africans." The paper also called on the United Nations to pass a resolutions backing the ECOMOG so that it should achieve its objectives which it said "should be the wish of all well-meaning people for the suffering people of Liberia."

At the time the new interim administration of Liberia was about to assume office under Dr. Amos Sawyer, the *Daily Times* published an editorial: "For Peace in Liberia." The paper says this "fresh wind" breathed "into ECOMOG's broad sail," was no mean achievement and that the development should make all those still opposed to the ECOMOG peace initiative in Liberia begin to see things in a new light." The paper most significantly said it does not "subscribe to... intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states," nor does it urge Nigeria to assume the "role of a bully in the sub-region" but it believes that "where crisis in any one state assumes such a dimension that it poses a threat to the peace and stability of the entire sub-region as few could deny the Liberian situation did it ceases to be just the internal affair of that country and becomes the concern of all in the sub-region." Herein lies clearly the *Times* group's perspectives and the context in which it defined the Liberian crisis and Nigeria's involvement in it. It then advised that "Nigeria... should play the leading role in the Liberian reconstruction efforts in the spirit of our characteristic brotherliness."

A week later, the *Daily Times* again commented editorially on: "Liberia Pax Africana," in which it hailed the Bamako Summit of ECOWAS (on November 28th, 1990) over the Liberian crisis, where a peace accord was signed "by all contending forces to end the 11-month civil war." The meeting agreed on an immediate cease-fire, expansion of the ECOMOG forces to include countries that were able to join and that the future of the peace-keeping force be determined by the ECOWAS and future interim government in Liberia. The rest of the editorial was encomiums paid to African and ECOWAS leaders for their astute diplomacy in the Bamako Summit.

b. New Nigerian

The *New Nigerian* Newspapers, which comprises the *New Nigerian* and the weekly *Sunday New Nigerian* (later *New Nigerian On Sunday*), much more than *Daily Times* group, are federal government owned. They usually supported the government, yet like any other newspaper often covered events as they occurred in Liberia, though careful enough not to embarrass the government as did other private newspapers e.g. *The Guardian, Concord* or even *The Democrat* which is more sympathetic in disposition to government among the private newspapers.

New Nigeria's coverage of the Liberian crisis became prominent about five months after the outbreak of hostilities. The usual centre page carried foreign reports including Liberia. But on May 29, 1990, the *New Nigerian* led its front page with the ECOWAS Summit in Banjul, The Gambia, in which it reported that President Babangida had proposed the establishment of a "Standing Committee" on disputes in the sub-region. According to the report, the modalities, membership, terms of reference, number and time-span of members were set out in the Babangida proposal. This indicates the papers authoritative status in leaking government decisions and activities.

Notably, as the crisis simmered, the paper devoted more space on its front, back and centre pages on the Liberian crisis, particularly when the Nigerian government is involved. In an apparent attempt to influence public opinion in favour of the government decision, the paper interviewed scholars who gave tacit approval to the ECOWAS move on Liberia, as being discussed in Banjul, on the same day as the meeting was taking place.

On August 9, 1990, four days after the Banjul Summit, the *New Nigerian* published a front page story that Nigeria's highest decision-making body, the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), was going to meet that day to discuss "global development as they affect Nigeria." According to its sources, such global issues included the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and its effects

on oil prices, "the Liberian crisis and the just concluded mediation committee meeting at which proposals of military intervention involving Nigerian soldiers was adopted."

The following day, August 10, 1990, the paper reported on its front page that the federal government "seeks world support for peace in Liberia," following the Foreign Minister's (Rilwanu Lukman) address to "the heads of the various foreign missions accredited to Nigeria," calling on their governments to support the ECOWAS initiatives on Liberia. On the same page, it led with a story: "peace-keeping force in Liberia participating countries to bear costs," reporting Nigeria's President Babangida as saying after the AFRC meeting. This has also shown that the AFRC meeting ratified Banjul decision, a Babangida proposal itself.

Subsequently, in an editorial tersely entitled: "Liberia" which was similar to *The Democrat*'s first editorial on the crisis in January, the *New Nigerian* after eight months after the outbreak of the war, and one week after the decision to establish ECOMOG, described the Liberian crisis as "a pain in the neck for the nations of the West African sub-region." It went on to analyse the significance of the conflict in the strategic and security interests of the region, fearing a spill-over effect. The paper then agreed that "the neutral force under the auspices of ECOWAS should indeed move in." Not surprisingly, the

New Nigerian "also welcomed Nigeria's call on the international community, particularly members of the United Nations Security Council to lend a financial hand to the ECOWAS peace initiatives."

This was followed by another editorial a week later, which was boldly published and entitled "Pax ECOWANA." To give it the added importance, it was published as a special front page comment. In the first paragraph, the strategic, geo-political and demographic importance of Nigeria were given, which automatically put the country in a leading position of the continent that can be ignored only "at our own peril," the paper passionately pointed out. This falls within the context-oriented explanation of editors' judgement of foreign news items.

Coming at this time, the editorial was only defending government's position, as it touched on the critics of the country's military involvement. It said the ethnic dimension of the war could lead Liberia's neighbouring countries to take up warms to defend their kith and kin that were being massacred. Furthermore, the paper pointed out that Nigeria's involvement was neither unilateral nor aimed at enforcing a "Pax Nigeriana," but in fulfilment of her responsibility as a member of ECOWAS which collectively reached the decision.

It concluded that whatever the consequences of the decision, it is "a price we have to pay to save Liberia, and ultimately save the whole of West Africa from a sub-regional explosion." The paper then, in an apparent approval of the decision, wished "ECOMOG God's speed."

Even the *Sunday New Nigerian* began to devote its front page on the Liberian crisis at this time, though it hardly published editorials, just like most Sunday weeklies.

After the capture and subsequent death of President Doe in the hands of his captors, the *New Nigerian* published an editorial, the "Demise of Doe," which it described as "tragic" and the loss of lives there as "the worst ethnic pogrom in the West African sub-region." It also commended ECOMOG's "peaceful umbrella," under which the Liberian interim government of Dr. Amos Sawyer would seek shelter.

Again came another editorial by the *New Nigerian*, "the Liberian quagmire," which the paper itself counted as its third within a month on the Liberian civil war. It said "the continuous examinations of all discernible options" was necessary because of the deteriorating security situation there. Here the paper is carefully expressing fears about possible b.... in taking the military option. The papers tone and style is understandable.

Significantly, the paper found the time now to "direct the attention of foreign policy makers of Nigeria not to allow the temporary cease-fire to slip away." This probably followed ECOWAS lead in the decision to transform ECOMOG peace keeping posture to a combative force as a result of the capture of President Doe in ECOMOG's camp. The paper also called on the government of Nigeria to ignore the radical groups urging its unilateral withdrawal from ECOMOG. This came after President Babangida declared that the withdrawal of ECOMOG from Liberia was not possible.

Interestingly however, the paper pointed out to the authorities, as did the *National Concord* before; the need to evolve a skilful information management strategy of convincing Nigerians why and how it got involved in the Liberian quagmire. It concluded that Nigeria "should not chicken out at the eleventh hour."

In its only editorial on the crisis in the year, the *Sunday New Nigerian* (SNN) re-echoed the call on the warring factions, jointly made by President Ibrahim Babangida and his Togolese counterpart, Gnassingbe Eyadema, to give peace a chance, and other ECOWAS members to stop channelling arms to the warriors. Entitled "Go back to the negotiations table," the SNN was worried that, and wondered why, despite the good objectives of ECOWAS as a

regional unifying force "the Liberian crisis should be allowed to threaten its existence." The paper blamed the crisis, and its attendant anarchy, on former President Doe, who suffered the consequences of his refusal to step down as earlier advised. It also pointed out the disunity of member states regarding "the mode of intervention in this crisis." It then predicted that it would be a "sad commentary not only on ECOWAS but on the whole of Africa if we are incapable of resolving a crisis like this."

Surprisingly however, the paper apparently wavered on its support for ECOMOG unlike its stalemate. The *New Nigerian,* by commenting on the in-house crisis within the ECOWAS when it subtly said though it did not question the motives of the Anglophone countries, it was convinced that they could not do without their francophone counterparts.

On its part, the *New Nigerian* continued unwaveringly to support government's policy on Liberia. In one of its longest editorials ever, covering more than half its front page, the paper described "Nigeria's Business in Liberia," (the title of the editorial) as "an achievement which should earn the commendation of all reasonable people." This editorial came following ECOMOG's major success in staving off Taylor's aggression on Monrovia and this providing a breathing space for the new government of Sawyer.

The editorial also came after President Babangida's major (Foreign policy) speech to the press on Nigeria's involvement in Liberia and the country's general foreign policy. Pointing out the criticisms levelled on government by critics of ECOWAS and especially Nigeria's participation in the multinational force." More emphatic than ever, the paper believed that ECOMOG operations were "justified" seeing the continued violent confrontation claiming innocent lives.

The *New Nigerian*'s last editorial on Liberia for the year (1990), commented on the "Truce at Bamako," which it described as "heartening development," with reference to rebel Charles Taylor's acceptance to cease-fire. It said if the cease-fire holds, Africa would have displayed its "ability to resolve conflicts through diplomatic channels." The paper commended the African leaders who brokered the cease-fire and the factions who accepted it.

In conclusion, from the newspapers reports and editorials analysed above, it is possible to say that whenever there is major foreign policy crisis which affects Nigeria, the Nigerian press become actively engaged in reports and commentaries about what the government should, or should not do. They also provided a lively debate on the issue by the public.

TABLE I. Showing the salient points of the editorial contents of the ten selected Nigerian newspapers indicating their **positive, negative** and **neutral** position to any international and/or[2] Nigeria's intervention to resolve the Liberian crisis [1990].[3]

NEWSPAPER	DATE and No. Of EDITORIAL	EDITORIAL TITLE AND COMMENTARY	POSI-TIVE	NEGA-TIVE	NEU-TRAL
The Democrat	January 24	**Liberia**: Situation pathetic. May fall prey to American machinations which is inimical to the relatively peaceful West African sub-region.	X		
	June 22	**Liberia's chequered peace**: Stalemate in the Interfaith Conference in Freetown. In the interest of humanity let the US, the peace-broker, act.	X		
	August 1	**Savage and Barbaric**: Liberia's situation is tragic. There is no legitimate government in control, the international community (should) join hands under any	X		

		guise to send troops to restore sanity there .				
	September 11	**Doe's Death:** Situation bad for the already grounded country. Liberians would continue to die, if not because of ECOMOG.	X			
	November 28	**ECOWAS: To Be or Not to Be:** The Banjul Summit should work towards an acceptable comprise that is in the best interest of the Liberian people.	X			
	December 11	**When ECOWAS Smiled:** But for ECOMOG, Liberia would have been different today. With correct understanding and positive cooperation from the international community Africa is in a position to solve its problems.	X			

National Concord	February	**The Liberian bloodbath:** We must make it clear that we are, <u>in principle,</u> firmly opposed to the violations of any country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The latest clashes in Liberia must be understood in their proper historical and political context.	X			
		<u>Liberia's embattled Press</u>: <u>Governments,</u> journalists and lovers of freedom <u>all over Africa to denounce</u> in unmistakable words, the climate of intolerance and repression.	X			
	May 8	**<u>Doe, Give Peace a Chance</u>:** The <u>leaders of other West African</u> countries should now set up the table between Doe and the dissidents and save the good people of Liberia from further ruin.	X			
	June 15	**Resolving the Liberian Impasse:** Doe to resign, have interim government,	X			

		ceasefire, elections, and disarmament in order to restore an atmosphere of security to the crisis-torn country.				
	July 22	**The Way Forward:** to persuade Samuel Doe to leave Liberia in the long term interest of our citizens and those cherished principles that underscore our foreign policy. While experts opinion and newspaper editorials had, earlier and repeatedly urged more imaginative and decisive response to the crisis in that country, these voices were not headed.	X			
	August 2	**Arresting the Liberian Genocide:** A multilateral intervention force, put together by either the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) or the United Nations should be called upon to restore law and order, establish an interim governing council and then hard over to an elected civilian government.	X			

	September 13	That ECOWAS May not die: Taking a more sympathetic look at the magnitude of the violence, some countries within the West African sub-region decided to form the ECOWAS monitoring group [ECOMOG]... The result of eminently good intentions.	X		

NEWSPAPER	DATE and No. OF EDITORIAL	EDITORIAL TITLE AND COMMENTARY	POSI-TIVE	NEGA-TIVE	NEU-TRAL
National Concord (Cont'd)	December	**Liberian Rehabilitation Fund:** Nigeria must lead in the assistance Programme as it led in]pacifying Liberia.	X		
Sunday Concord	September	**ECOMOG New Mandate:** "...Unfortunately, given the ugly and deteriorating situation, ECOWAS was simply left with no other viable option.	X		
		Babangida's Charge to African Leaders: work out a machinery for its effective involvement in and meaningful mediation of these nasty wars.	X		
	November, 26	**ECOWAS Leaders Look Beyond Liberia:**	X		

			The need to maintain the necessary degree of political understanding and trust... first to spare no efforts in bringing the Liberian crisis to an end.				
		December	**Liberia: Our Right To Know:** [About] the noble...military expedition.	X			
	The Guardian	January, 26	**Liberia: Another Reprieve for Samuel Doe:** He should not push his luck too far.			X	
		June	**Liberia: The Way Forward:** Lull, although no cease-fire has been declared... [broadening of the table]... Other groups with identifiable interests that need to be accommodated and protected... a transition government in which neither Doe nor Taylor will figure.			X	
		June	**Nigerians in Liberia:** unsafe environment. Alleged collusion between Nigerian government and Doe's government. No evacuation efforts by Nigeria in order to create a facet of stability in Liberia.		X		
		July	**The Liberian Impasse:** If with the collapse of				

		the Freetown talks a military solution cannot also be found immediately, the Liberian people and countries that have any form of leverage with the combatants would have to find a way to persuade them to agree on a formula for peace and an amicable settlement.			X	
	August	**An ECOWAS Force for Liberia?** A bad precedent.		X		
	August	**Quagmire in Liberia:** [ECOMOG] a party to the conflict.		X		
	September	**Doe's Death**: A bloodrite of passage through life. Few people shed tears for Doe, the manner of his death being poetic justice.			X	
	September	**Liberia after Samuel Doe:** [ECOMOG] noble.... ....misguided. A rethinking altogether... UN peace-keeping.		X		
	September	**The Refugees from Liberia:** Relief measures ought to be in place.			X	
	December, 7	**Liberia After the Cease-fire:** Bamako			X	

		Summit a just and realistic international response to the agony of the Liberian nation and people.			
The Daily Times	February	**Doe's Nightmares:** In its unfolding dimensions, what has been widely tagged a coup d'état may end up being a regional insurrection of secessionist dimensions.	X		
	March	**ECOWAS and its Debtors**: [Nigeria] the single most active economy in the sub-region must continue to its present approach of showing leadership in ECOWAS matters.	X		

NEWSPAPER	DATE and No. OF EDITORIAL	EDITORIAL TITLE AND COMMENT	POSI-TIVE	NEGA-TIVE	NEU-TRAL
The Daily Times (Cont'd)	March	**Foreign Policy After South Africa II:** [In] West Africa, [where Nigeria's] greatest outward thrust should not exceed, we must safeguard against instability...	X		
		Nwachukwu's Second Coming: In West			X

			Africa~~,~~ all appears not well with ECOWAS, the sub-regional economic body. Discordant voices in the organisation have a lot to do with the crisis in Liberia.				
			Refugees on our Hands: Regional importance and global significance cannot be attained without among other things playing host to refugees now and again.	X			
			For ECOWAS Sake: Whatever reservations may be expressed about ECOMOG we do not see anything wrong with the manner of its formation or the broad objectives to which it is committed.	X			
		November	**For Peace in Liberia:** Where crisis in any one state assumes such a dimension that it poses a threat to the peace and stability of the entire sub-region as few could deny the Liberian situation did – it ceases to be just the internal affair of that country and becomes the concern of all in the sub-region.	X			
		November	**Liberia: Pax Africana:** Hailed the Bamako Summit.	X			

The New Nigerian	August, 11	**Liberia:** a pain in the neck for the nations of the West African sub-region. The neutral force under the auspices of ECOWAS should indeed move in.	X			
	August, 18	**Pax ECOWANA:** A price we [Nigeria] have to pay to save Liberia and ultimately save the whole of West Africa from a sub-regional explosion.	X			
	September	**Demise of Doe:** Tragic [in] the worst ethnic pogrom in the West African sub-region. Peaceful umbrella [ECOMOG].	X			
	September	**The Liberian Quagmire:** Foreign policy makers of Nigeria not to allow the temporary cease-fire slip away. We should not chicken out at the eleventh-hour.	X			
	November	**Nigeria's Business in Liberia:** An achievement which should earn the commendation of all reasonable people. [ECOMOG operations] "justified."	X			
	November	**Truce at Bamako:** a heartening	X			

		development... ability to resolve conflicts through diplomatic channels.			
Sunday New Nigerian	October	**Go Back to the Negotiations Table:** A sad commentary not only on ECOWAS but on the whole of Africa if we are incapable of resolving a crisis like this.	X		

SOURCE: A Content Analysis of the editorials in 1990 of the ten selected newspapers used in this work, carried out in 1992/93 at the Kashim Ibrahim Library, ABU Zaria, the Bayero University Kano main Library and the Kano State Library, Kano.

NOTES ON TABLE I.

1. There were a total of 43 editorials published by seven out of the ten newspapers studied. Those that did not publish editorials do not usually publish editorials because they are (mostly Sunday) weeklies. However, they could be more detailed in their reports of news events.

The editorials that are marked **neutral** are those that mainly spoke on general African conflicts not being specific on Liberia though they comment within the context of the worst crisis of the time, i.e. Liberia. Alternatively, they

comment specifically on the Liberian crisis but from the internal perspective e.g. Doe's problems and his death OR on the purely normal diplomatic options which are generally not defined as undue interventions.

2. It is the same whether the papers referred to international or Nigeria's intervention. They separate the two when necessary. E.G. the Guardian's urge for UN peace-keeping intervention because, it says the UN is more experienced in such matters (and perhaps more neutral as the paper would like to believe). Otherwise, it is assumed that there is not likely to be an international peace-force right in the heart of West Africa without Nigeria's prominent, if not leading, role.

3. Some of the paper's editorial records were not available, e.g. the *Daily Times* of the whole of August 1990; and five editions of the *National Concord* of October and four editions of December of that year.

TABLE 2: Number of news reports, editorials and opinion surveys by each of the ten newspapers on monthly basis indicating the intensity of the Nigerian press coverage of the Liberian crisis. [Jan-Dec 1990].

PAPER	JAN REO	FEB REO	MAR REO	APR REO	MAY REO	JUN REO	JUL REO	AUG REO	SEPT REO	OCT REO	NOV REO	DEC REO

| | | |

KEY: R = Reports
E = Editorials
O = Opinion survey

TABLE 3: **Summary of press Reports, Editorials and Opinion Survey on the Liberian crisis in the ten major Nigerian newspapers: January – December 1990.**

NEWSPAPER	REPORTS	EDITORIAL	SURVEY	UNIT VALUE OF EDITORIAL SUPPORT (%)		
				+VE	-VE	NEUTRAL
The Guardian	124	10	2	0%	40%	60%
The Guardian On Sunday	15	0	0	NO EDITORIAL		
National Concord[1]	136	10	2	100%	NIL	NIL
Sunday Concord	12	2	0	100%	NIL	NIL
The Daily Times[2]	68	7	3	90%	NIL	10%
The Sunday Times	17	0	0	NO EDITORIAL		
New Nigerian	111	7	1	100%	NIL	NIL
Sunday New Nigerian	10	1	0	100%	NIL	NIL
The Democrat	179	6	1	100%	NIL	NIL
The Democrat Weekly	2	0	0	NO EDITORIAL		

SOURCE: A Content Analysis of the ten selected newspapers for this work, done in 1992/93 at the KIL, ABU Zaria, BUK main Library, Kano, and the Kano State Library, Kano. The unit value of editorial position in percentage was obtained by multiplying the total number of editorials of each newspaper by 100.

1. No record for five editions in October and four editions in December, 1990.
2. No record for the whole of August, 1990.

TOTAL %of Editorial Positions	No. of Editorials	+ve	- ve	NEUTRAL
TOTAL No. of Editorials by all the Ten Newspapers	43	32	4	7
Total Percentage	100%	84.29%	5.71%	10%

4.5 CONCLUSION

The tables above showed the intensity of the coverage by the Nigerian press of the Liberian crisis and the value in percentage terms of their editorial positions in the debate about the Nigerian government intervention.

The Guardian newspapers did not support government intervention. The unit value of their editorial position was 40% opposed to government intervention. Where they did not openly criticise government, they were nevertheless, neutral for humanitarian concerns, that was after the ECOMOG had already been formed. It was in fact, calling for Nigeria's honourable exit out of the "quagmire." In other words, they were negatively neutral to the government decision.

On the other hand, The Democrat was 100% in support of government action even when other newspapers wanted evacuation of Nigerians first before intervention. Its support for the intervention was to save Liberia and not just Nigerian nationals that were caught in the crossfire.

The National Concord also supported government 100% but accused it of poor planning and organisation of evacuation and information dissemination.

The Daily Times recorded 90% support for government lead to intervene and even where they did not appear supportive, they were positively neutral.

The New Nigerian group also gave 100% support to government without any reservation.

Notes and References

1. ***Focus on Africa***, Vol.1 No.2, July 1990, P.18

2. Ibid.

3. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) is a chief source of information for Nigerian media.

4. Factors Affecting Gatekeepers' Selection of Foreign News: A National Survey of Newspaper Editors, by Tsan-Kuo Chang and Jae-won Lee, p. 554-557, in the Journalism Quarterly, Autumn 1992 – 69/3.

5. This tallies with successive Nigerian governments policy to make the region free from any external forces. See note 38, ch.3 above.

6. A.B. Akinyemi, Foreign Policy and Federation (University of Ibadan, (1974) P.3

7. In reality, this is one of the "national interests" that the Nigerian foreign ministry officials would normally consider first in making policy

suggestions. That is the safety of Nigerian nationals abroad, particularly in troubled areas. The other is trade and economic interests of the country, etc. etc. Whether they did this or not may not be known now because the issue is still not concluded. But the newspapers have on their part done so

8. Interview with Dr. Olatunji Dare, editorial page editor of The Guardian newspapers. See Note 17 in chapter 3 of this work.

9. This establishes the point made in chapter 3 above that some newspapers can have their way through the foreign service machinery and thus get leaks of some information. Sometimes this makes the government to change or postpone an action. This is a form of influence in itself.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. A similar position taken by the other newspapers, notably *The Democrat* and the *Concord*, despite the different approach to Nigerian government possible decision. The disparaging opinions were too obvious for government to ignore.

13. Obviously, *The Guardian* had failed to influence the decision of government and since ECOMOG [led by Nigeria] is already in action, the paper is now seeking to influence the composition [or even direction] of the operation. It called for UN peace-keeping. Actually, the UN later sent observers. Other countries sent token number of soldiers to dilute the criticism that ECOMOG was entirely a Nigerian [or even a Babangida] affair for his own reasons.

14. In this case, the paper did not have to seek to influence decision. It could always wait to support government's position. But the usual thing is that before government took a decision the newspapers, say the Times, could present options that might be consistent with government's general policy. However, once government takes a stand [decision] the paper supports it.

15. Within the framework of the content-oriented theory about editors' judgement of story lines, the *Daily Times* action can be understood. That is, what makes news? In this case, human suffering and the large number involved. Geographical proximity [West Africa] might also come in here.

16. See Douglas Hurd on The Power of Comments on Note 2, chapter 3 above.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

The aim of this work, as stated earlier in Chapter One, is to examine the role of the Nigerian press in the debates on the government's involvement in the Liberian crisis.

Three hypothesis were tested. The first one was that whenever there is an external crisis the Nigerian press report and comment on it extensively. The second one assumes that whenever an external crisis affects Nigeria's security and/or is fraught with humanitarian concerns, the Nigerian press call for Nigerian government's intervention to alleviate or resolve it. The third hypothesis which is central to the work assumes that the Nigerian press have contributed a great deal in influencing the Nigerian government to be conscious of and to intervene in the Liberian crisis with a view to resolving it.

The work attempted to provide a critical analysis of the Nigerian press coverage of the events, issues and significance of the Liberian crisis to Nigeria, thus providing a framework of debate on whether Nigeria should or should not

intervene, which in turn was a necessary ingredient for government's policy action.

The work examined ten selected Nigerian newspapers. The criteria for the selection included wide readership, seriousness and the variety of interests they serve within Nigeria's geo-political configuration. Above all, they are the best in foreign news coverage in the country: each has a competent foreign desk and editorial judgement. In addition, the Nigerian foreign policy decision-making process was examined as well as those salient features which the decision-makers consider in making their recommendations for adoption as policy. This is the national interest, regional security, African interest and maintenance of world peace.

The work is based on the decision-making theory as expounded by Richard Snyder and Graham Allison, as well as James Rosenau's theory on the role of domestic forces in foreign policy-making. All the three, including those who added other postulates to the main theories, agreed that institutions like the press [and the public] play an important role in influencing decision-makers' perception or rationale in considering policy options.

The methodology adopted in analysing the data was a blend of content analysis and field interview.

5.2 FINDINGS

All the three hypotheses have been proved. They are all linked up sequentially, with the first one leading to the second and the third one proving the asumption. Thus:

The Nigerian newspapers have extensively covered various foreign news events as shown by works of other scholars in the literature review and elsewhere in subsequent sections. In the case of Liberia they went further with some of the private newspapers sending their reporters for an on the spot coverage of the crisis. Others went there subsequently from the government press.

In all, 43 editorials; 674 reports and 9 opinion surveys were published by all the newspapers within the first year of the breakout of the crisis. The breakdown is provided in table 3, in chapter Four of this work.

The work also showed government reaction to these various newspaper publications; evidence that the newspapers were up and doing on Liberia, leaking and sometimes suggesting courses of action.

The Democrat and the *Concord* group have been consistent in their urge for government intervention. The Democrat published 6 editorials on this position and the *Concord* 10 and the *Sunday Concord* 2. They were 100% in support of the government. *The Guardian* group on the other hand have consistently opposed any intervention, publishing 10 editorials, 40% of which were in clear opposition.

The *New Nigerian* and the *Times group* were 100% and 90% respectively in support of the government to continue with its well-considered policy on Liberia in concert with other members of the ECOWAS. The *NN* published 7 editorials and the *SNN* one; the *DTN* had 7 editorials.

There are other incidences that can be sited to establish the hypothesis. For example, the *National Coneord* and *The Guardian* consistently and heavily criticised the government for denying the nation the right to know about the happenings in Liberia, particularly on the casualty figures and the financial commitment.

Concord suggested the appointment of an official spokesman on Liberia in the presidency to regularly brief the press. To its credit, the government appointed a press secretary to the ECOMOG Field-Commander and stationed him in the presidency.

Another example to site is General Babangida's important press conference on Nigeria's foreign policy with special reference to the Liberian crisis. This was also prompted by press criticism of government on the issue, as he himself acknowledged in his address.

5.3 CONCLUSION

From the above findings, it can be concluded that the Nigerian press have contributed a great deal in the debate as to whether the Nigerian government should or should not intervene in the Liberian crisis and have provided a framework for government policy action on the matter.

However, the role of the press did not preclude the influence of other domestic factors such as the military itself, the diplomatic service and the international merchant class in Nigeria, who saw some economic benefits coming through the government contracts. All these factors are beyond the scope of this work.

Suffice it to say that in its agenda-setting role, the press may not tell people what to think, but they try through news, columns and editorials to tell people what to think about[1].

This is because if people look and listen enough to a common voice, that voice is likely to have influence.[2]

---

[2]

NOTES/REFERENCES

1. Two decades of Agenda-Setting Research- an examination of the hypothesis that the press does not tell us what to think but does tell us what to think about- in the Journalism Quarterly, Winter 1992 – 69/4, front page.

2. Ibid. p.808, editorial comment.

APPENDIX I: PRESIDENTS OF LIBERIA UP TO THE CIVIL WAR

Joseph Jenkins Roberts	1848-1856
Stephen Allen Benson	1856-1864
Daniel Bashiel Warner	1864-1868
James Spriggs Payne	1968-1870
Edwards James Roye[1]	1870-1871
James S. Smith[2]	1871-1872
Joseph Jenkins Roberts	1872-1876
James Spriggs Payne	1876-1878
Anthony William Gardiner[3]	1878-1882
Alfred F. Russell[4]	1883-1884
Hilary Richard Wright Johnson	1884-1892
Joseph James Cheeseman[5]	1892-1896
William David Coleman[6]	1896-1900
Garretson Wilmot Gibson[7]	1900-1904
Arthur Barclay	1904-1912
Daniel Edward Howard	1912-1920
Charles Dunbar Burgess King[8]	1920-1930
Edwin Barclay[9]	1930-1944
William Vacaranat Shadrach Tubman	1944-1971
William Tolbert[10]	1971-1980

1. Deposed.
2. Succeeded Roye, accepted truncated term of office.
3. Resigned
4. Completed unexpired term of Gardiner.
5. Died in office.
6. Completed unexpired term of Cheeseman; elected in own right; forced to resign.
7. Completed unexpired term of Cheeseman; elected in own right; forced to resign.
8. Forced to resign.
9. Completed unexpired term of King.
10. Killed in a military coup that cut the long chain of Americo-Liberian leadership and brought about the first indigenous African leader, Sergeant Samuel Doe 1980-1990 (updated).

SOURCE: The Land And People of Liberia, by Mary Louise Clifford, J.B. Lippincoff Company Philadelphia New York (1971), p.9.

APPENDIX II: Tribal Division of Liberia's Population, 1962

Tribe	Size	Percent
Kpelle	211,081	20
Bassa	165,856	16
Gio	83,208	8
Kru	80,813	8
Grebo	77,007	8
Mano	72122	7
Loma	53,891	5
Krahn	52,552	5
Gola	47,295	5
Kissi	34,914	4
Mandingo	29,750	3
Via	28,898	3
Gbandi	28,599	3
Belle	5,465	.5
Dey	5,396	.5
Mende	4,974	.5
Miscellaneous	2,299	.5
Total Tribal	984,120	97
Alien African	8,875	1
No tribal affiliation	23,478	2
Total population	1,016,473	100

SOURCE: The Land And People of Liberia, by Mary Louise Clifford, J.B. Lippincoff Company Philadelphia New York (1971), p.95.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

1. A. B. Akinyemi, Foreign Policy and Federalism,

(University Press of Ibadan, 1974).

2. I. A. Gambari, Party Politics and Foreign Policy,

(A.B.U. Press Ltd., 1980).

3. W. A. Ajibola, Foreign Policy and Public Opinion,

(Ibadan University Press, 1978).

4. David Whitman, How the Press Affect Federal Policy Making (ed.),

(W.W. Norton and Co., New York, 1986).

5. Simon Serfaty and Marvin Kalb, The Media and Foreign Policy (ed.),

(Foreign Policy Institute and John Hopkins University, St. Martins Press, New York, 1991).

6. Snyder et al, Foreign Policy Decision-Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics, (New York Free Press of Glincoe, 1962).

7. Graham T. Allison, Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Rational Policy, Organisation Process and Bureaucratic Politics, (Washington DC, 1968).

8. James N. Rosenau (ed.), Linkage Politics, (New York, 1969).

9. Bernard C. Cohen, The Press and Foreign Policy.

10. James N. Rosenau (ed.), Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy, (New York, 1967).

11. James N. Rosenau, The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy,

(New York, 1971).

12. R. Hilsman, To Move A Nation, (New York,1964).

13. Martin Lowenkopf, Politics in Liberia: The Conservative Road to Development, (Hoover Institute Press, Stanford University, California, 1976).

14. J. Gus Liebnow, Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege,

(Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1969).

15. Mary Louise Clifford, The Land and People of Liberia,

(J. B. Lipincoff Company, Philadelphia, New York, 1971).

16. J. D. Puchala, International Politics, (Happy and Row, 1971).

JOURNALS

17. The Quarterly Journal of Administration (ed.),

April 1973, Vol. VII, No.3, University of Ife, Ile-Ife.

18. Public Administration Review, Spring 1959.

19. In the Public Interest, No.II, Spring 1968.

20. Journalism Quarterly, Autumn 1992 – 69/3.

21. Ibid., Winter 1992 – 69/4.

MAGAZINES

22. West Africa, 31 August – 6 September 1992.

23. Ibid., January 1990.

24. Ibid., 2-8 August, 1993.

25. Ibid., 11-17 November, 1995.

26. African Concord, 11 June,1990.

27. African Guardian, September 21, 1993.

28. Focus on Africa, vol.1, No.2, July 1990.

29. Focus on Africa, October-December, 1992.

30. Citizen, February 1-7, 1993.

SPEECHES

31. The Power of Comment, by Douglas Hurd, British Foreign Secretary, published in The Democrat, Kaduna, October 4, 1993.

32. The Imperative Features of Nigerian Foreign Policy, by General Ibrahim Babangida, President of Nigeria, October 31, 1990.

MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS

33. Appraisal of the Feasibility of Reactivation and Expansion of the New Africa Holdings Ltd., publishers of The Democrat newspapers, by Development and Management Consultants Ltd., January 1986.

34. The Original Idea of The Guardian Newspapers, by Dr. Yomi Ogunbiyi, Daily Times, December 20, 1990.

35. Alhaji Umaru Dikko's interview, Citizen magazine, February 1-7, 1993.

UNPUBLISHED THESES / MONOGRAPHS

36. Sanya Oyinisan, M. sc. Thesis, Radio as an Instrument of Foreign Policy in Nigeria, Unife, Ile-Ife, 1979.

37. A. O. Sotumbi, M. SC. THESIS, Nigeria's Recognition of the

MPLA Government of Angola, Unife, Ile-Ife (ed.), NIIA Monograph series, no.9, 1981.

NEWSPAPERS

38.The Democrat, January-December 1990.

39.The Democrat Weekly, January-December 1990.

40.The National Concord, January-September 1990; November 1990.

41.The Sunday Concord, January-December 1990.

42.The Guardian, January-December, 1990.

43. The Guardian on Sunday, January-December 1990.

44.The New Nigerian, January-December 1990.

45. The New Nigerian on Sunday, January-December 1990.

46.The Daily Times, January- July 1990; September-December 1990.

47.The Sunday Times, January- December 1990.

INTERVIEWS

48. Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman, Nigeria's Foreign Minister (1990), Kaduna 1991.

49. Ambassador Shu'aib Uthman Yolah, a retired carreer diplomat, Kano, 1998.

50. Ambassador Mahmoud Yahya, a retired career diplomat, Kaduna 1994.

51. DR. Olatunji Dare, The Guardian newspaper, Kaduna, 1995.