NIGERIA'S ROLE IN ECOWAS KONITORING GROUP (ECOMOG) IN THE LIBERIAN CRISIS

BY

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D E C L A R A T I O N

I, Aisha Idris, do hereby declare that the data contained in this study is the result of my original research.

All the works and speeches of other authors made use of in this study have been appropriately acknowledged and duly referenced.

To the best of my knowledge, this thesis has not been submitted to any other institution or organisation other than the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for examination.



Aisha Idris

January, 1996.

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

This thesis entitled "Nigeria's Role in ECOWAS Monitoring Group in the Liberian Crisis" by Aisha Idris, meets the regulation governing the award of Master of Science - Political Science (International Relations) of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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Dean, Post Graduate School Date

D E D I C A T I O N

To the entire members of my

family. May the younger

ones have a sound education - ameen.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

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A B S T R A C T

A crisis situation is the most acute political phase in the development of an international conflict. It has always been and shall continue to be an indicator of a sharp rise in tensions between or within states and may grow into armed confrontation as it did in Liberia. Crisis situation generally can never be ruled out as long as there exist international systems where interests clashes **and** conforms with the actors in the international scene. Likewise, the possibility for peaceful solution can never be ruled out even though it greatly depends on the actors involved in the conflict.

"Nigeria's Role in ECOMOG in Liberia", is a study on Liberia, the oldest republic on the African continent and the role Nigeria played in trying to find a lasting solution to the crisis that developed since December, 1989. This include the Afrocentric foreign policy of Nigeria that came into play when the Liberian war broke out.

Nigeria has since independence recognised her human and natural potentials and this has Influenced her in perceiving Africa as the centre-piece of its foreign policy and to assume the mantle of leadership in the continent which she pursued at a great expense.

Nigeria's initiative in the formation and deployment of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) has brought to the country international recognition, particularly within the subregion and the African continent and has set the basis for a regional security system to be

established in the West African subregion and the continent. Hut this has also drawn fire internally owing to the deteriorating economic and social conditions of the majority of the Nigerian populace, who think that Nigeria's foreign policy should first and foremost be of Nigeria itself, while the external environment should come second.

The prolonged involvement of Nigeria in the peace keeping effort has been argued to be for various reasons ranging from the Afrocentric foreign policy of the country to the "hidden agenda" of the Nigerian Military Government and the stubborness of the rebel factions in the crisis, especially the National Patriotic Front of Liberia led by Charles Taylor who have provided various hurdles in the path to resume to normalcy in that country.

However, after five years of the war and peace initiative by ECOWAS, it is hoped that the Liberian crisis will come to an end after the latest peace agreement signed last August and the lesson learnt and mistakes committed during the peace keeping mission will be taken note of and corrected respectively in future peace keeping operations.

Indeed, it was part of the recommendation of this study that Nigeria must use her resources to build a solid enonomic base as a necessary first step to a strong and committed foreign policy in West Africa.

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

A.F.L.	-	Armed Forces of Liberia
A.N.A.D.	-	Accord de Non Aggression et Assistance en Matiere de Defence
C.E.A.O.	-	Communicate 'econque del'Afrique de O'eust
ECOMOG	-	*ECOWAS Peace Monitoring Group*
E.C.O.W.A.S	-	Economic Community of West African States
I.N.P.F.L	-	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
N.P.F.L.	-	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
O.A.U.	-	Organisation of African Unity
U.L.I.M.O	-	United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
U.N.O.	-	United Nations Organisations
U.S.A.	-	United States of America

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NIGERIA'S ROLE IN ECOWAS MONITORING GROUP (ECOMOG) IN LIBERIA

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM:

Peace keeping operation in the world has over the years, been carried out specifically by the United Nations. In Africa, the Congo in 1960 and Somalia in 1993 are examples. Such United Nations operations have been criticised by many Third World countries, because it lacks one of the basic principles of peace keeping: maintaining neutrality in a conflict.[1]

In the Congo, for instance, the crisis became an arena for cold war politics. Responding to the accusation that the United Nations use peace keeping to promote western interests, Dag Hammerskjold, a former United Nations Secretary General declared that "it is not the Soviet Union or indeed any other big powers who need the United Nations for their protection, it is all the others - the Organisation is first of all their Organisation."[2]

This statement and similar encouragement by the United Nations, has influenced small and medium powers in the third world, including Nigeria, to participate in and support United Nations peace keeping efforts even when they have disapproved particular turns of events or actions.

The United Nations has often used peace keeping as a tool for conflict management, than regional organisations do. However, with the lessening of the East-West tension, the restructuring of the international security system has created disruptions in the social and political order in many regions of the world and led to a higher

incidence of armed conflicts which needed the deployment of the United Nations peace keeping forces to perform a variety of tasks that differ radically from the classical concepts of peace keeping.[3]

As will be discussed in chapter three, peace keeping, as a concept, is of recent, moving from its classical or traditional outlook to a force that would actually enforce the decisions of the international community. That is, from an interpositionary force deployed to separate warring factions from firing at each other to a force that will enforce an observation of the basic codes of humanitarian order to punish violations of agreements or decisions of the security council as employed in the Gulf and in former Yugoslavia. In addition, some peace keeping missions are now engaged in political organisations of societies such as monitoring of elections and in providing effective cover for the provision of humanitarian assistance to victims of conflicts such as in Angola, Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

The United Nations came constantly under criticisms for its inability in responding to conflicts occuring in many parts of Africa which needed the world body's attention. Africa appears to have declined in importance in the calculations of the super powers.[4] For instance, the United Nations was slow in reacting to crises in Liberia and Somalia. It acted in the latter only after being repeatedly accused of neglecting Africa while entrenching itself in Yugoslavia.[5] But, as the case may be, it has not succeeded yet in both cases.

When the Liberia war started thousands of people died and thousands other were turned into refugees, International Organisations both in Liberia and abroad depicted the human tragedy being enacted in Liberia and made appeals to the United Nations to intervene. Even former President Samuel Doe of Liberia himself called for external intervention to enforce a ceasefire and break the impasse.[6] But when help was not forthcoming ECOWAS heads of states took the initiative to settle the dispute in accordance to the provisions of chapter VIII of the United Nations' Charter which recognises the validity of regional arrangements and authority in matters relating to the security of their regions in as much as they operate within the purposes and principles of the United Nations.[7]

Right from independence, Nigeria has always regarded Africa as the centre-piece of its foreign policy, even though from 1960 - 1966 it was mere rhetoric because of the weak economic base of the Nigerian state but at the same time, its economic potential was recognised at that time.[8]

After the civil war, which lasted from 1967 to 1970, the country emerged with a new outlook about the international system. Nigeria learnt that the countries she once recognised as her friends were indeed her enemies (certain African countries such as Benin Republic, Tanzania and Cote d'Ivoire gave dejure recognition to Biafra).[9] The Nigerian state also learnt that, in the international system, there is no permanent friend or enemy but only permanent interests. With this in mind, the Nigeria government came out forcefully to pursue her foreign policy objectives in which the

security of the nation was upper most. Nigeria thus realized that the security and friendship of her neighbours amounts to the security of the nation.[10]

Hence, from 1970, with the petrodollars rolling in, Nigeria set out to pursue her Afrocentric foreign policy through what she later referred to as her concentric foreign policy circles in which the national economy and economic interests form the epicentre of these circles and is extricably tied up with the security, stability, economic and social well being of Nigeria's immediate neighbours.[11] Apart from Nigeria, West Africa came second and is the closiest region to her, followed by "individual countries and inter-governmental organisations in Africa, and the rest of the world including the commitment to principle of self determination and human dignity ..... parts of the world."[12]

Hence, Nigeria has signed various bilateral agreements with most of her neighbours in the subregion as well as acted a mediatory role in conflict situations arising from the subregion, such as between Burkina Faso and Mali, and the conflict between Libya and Chad.[13]

To this effect, Nigeria championed the cause in the setting up of ECOWAS in 1975 and later a maiden peace keeping force in Chad in 1982, under the auspices of the Organisation of African Unity.[13] Though the operation did not effectively resolve the problem, it however set the basis for future peace keeping operation on the continent and demonstrated the political will of Africans to solve their own problems.

This inspiration was to later feature in 1990 during the 13th ECOWAS Summit at Banjul in which the Liberian crisis appeared on top of the agenda. Once again, Nigeria took the initiative to propose for the setting up of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee and later the establishment and deployment of ECOMOG to the war-torn zone (Liberia).

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM:

The question before us here is to what extent has the peace keeping initiative in Liberia been successful?, This study will attempt to examine Nigeria's role in the Liberian crisis; and the view that ECOMOG was formed to enhance Nigeria's big brother role on the African continent that is to seek the rationale behind Nigeria's involvement in trying to solve the Liberian problem and whether this gesture is in line with her foreign policy and has come at the right time or not.

To this effect, I shall also examine the contention that the Monitoring Group was pioneered by Nigeria in order to keep the soldiers busy so that the ruling military regime stays in power with no threats of coup d'etats.

The work will also examine whether Nigeria's dominant role in the Liberian crisis could be justified taking into consideration the internal criticism against the Nigerian government in view of the nation's declining social and economic developments and the economic hardships experienced by the Nigerian populace.

During the Gulf war of the early 1990s, Nigeria was said to have realised about 12 billion dollars out of which 250 - 500 million dollars were said to have been diverted to sustain the peace keeping

mission.[14] In fact, 80% of ECOMOG up keep is being financed by Nigeria.[15] Recent studies as revealed by Nigeria's Foreign Minister have shown that within the 5 years of ECOMOG operation, Nigeria had spent more than ₦320 billion for its upkeep, which is about $14.54 billion (at ₦22.00 to a dollar as at April/May 1995 exchange rate). This implies that about ₦64 billion or $2.9 billion is being spent annually on ECOMOG alone; but the United Nations is spending only ₦1 billion Naira or $45 4 million yearly on over 13 peace keeping operations around the globe.[16] Yet, despite this astronomical figure, ECOMOG, which was established and expected to restore peace and order in Liberia within the shortest time possible, is yet to achieve this purpose, five years after its inception. The more it stays in Liberia, the more resources it engulfs of its donor countries, particularly that of Nigeria. In fact, such countries are getting weary with the unending fracas. Ghana has withdrawn a large number of its soldiers already, Nigeria has also intended to bring back its troops in 1994 during the interim government of Ernest Shonekan, but this idea was abandoned when General Abacha came into power.[17]

The research will therefore attempt an explanation as to why the Liberian problem is yet to be resolved.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW:

Various attempts have been made by scholars in the diagnosis of ECOWAS Monitoring Group as a peace keeping mission in Liberia. Most of these views have centred on the enhancement of Nigeria's primary role in the subregion.

Former President Babangida of Nigeria, who was the brainchild behind the formation of ECOMOG has stated that the recent development and change in the global environment have rendered African states to start taking initiatives in solving their own problems: "It is imperative for us in the region", he said, "to grasp and adapt to the dynamics of this global process of change if we are to contribute and to benefit from it. This would therefore entail an expansion of the purview of the assignment we gave to the Secretariat."[18]

Margaret Vogt of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, also shared Babangida's view as well as Jawara's view on the capacity of a politically inept regional body to engineer economic integration and ensure the security of the subregion. According to her, since its formation in 1975, ECOWAS has not been able to move much forward because of the political and security environment within which it was functioning despite the tremendous amount of attention paid to economic issues. She therefore called for a rethinking of these issues in which the economic development would take place so that the atmosphere would become more conducive.

Foreign policy analysts see ECOMOG in three dimensions: one, adeliberate new direction in Nigeria's foreign policy; second, a rethinking on a regional integration and security framework in the West African subregion (WASR); and third, a desire on its part to engender a rethinking of certain traditional variables of inter-African relations.[20]

The first view is being held by scholars like Yoroms,[21] Ayam,[22] Osadolor[23] and Mays.[24] In his paper, Mays tried to show the domineering role of Nigeria in the operation; how political lessons learnt from peace keeping experience in Chad has affected her operation in Liberia.

Yoroms criticises Nigeria and other members of the Mediation Committee for not allowing the various approaches of handling conflict (legal-moral approach, bargaining and conflict resolution approaches) to mature before trying to impose peace in Liberia. He however supported the formation of ECOMOG and sees it as a means of achieving peace to the war-torn country.

On the other hand, Kieh[25] argued that three models of conflict resolution have been employed by the OAU in conflict areas in Africa without yielding much result. In his assessment, he stated that though the organisation has no judicial basis to intervene in the internal affairs of member states, the attempt by ECOWAS members to form the peace operation bears testimony to the determination of Africans to resolve their own problems without the involvement of external players and their efforts on conciliation, negotiation and peace keeping had yield positive results in that the warring parties have finally agreed on an interim government and future elections though this is yet to take place..

Another school of thought contends that Babangida created the scenario in which he wanted to play out a new set of rules of the game.[26] Initially, he drew attention to the instability, violence

and cross border conflicts on the continent in general and West Africa in particular; then he championed the setting up of a Standing Mediation Committee to mediate disputes and conflicts, thus pulling political weight behind the organisation leading to ECOMOG formation. This group cited Babangida's Addis Ababa speech during the 1990 OAU summit as a signal that something ought to be done in Liberia. In that speech Babangida has stated that "the general unstable situation in member-states and other political problems of this continent indicated that our Organisation has a responsibility to act and act urgently and decisively."[27] Two weeks later, the decision to form ECOMOG was taken in Banjul.

Kieh and Vogt agreed with the traditional variables in intra-African relations that ECOMOG formation has brought out the dichotomy between Francophone countries and Nigeria to the fore. Many watchers of intra African relations place much emphasis on this dichotomy because Nigeria is surrounded by francophone neighbours. However, it is not correct to say that such relation is permanent because Nigeria has bilateral relations with most of these countries especially Benin, Togo, Niger and Chad. For instance, the Niger River Basin Authority and the Chad Basin Authority with Chad.

Indeed, Anthony Asiwaju has observed that certain ethnocultural and economic similarities exist between Nigeria and those countries which are far more remarkable than the differences.

However, this cannot be said about Cote d'Ivoire the so called most prosperous West African francophone state. Its relation with

Nigeria is based on rivalry. Both Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire want to maintain dominance in the subregion. Nigeria tries to justify this owing to her being the largest black nation in Africa and the fact that it is well endowed with resources. While Cote d'Ivoire's former president Boigny wanted the leadership role because he saw himself as being Africa's oldest serving head of government and so the authentic doyen of African statesmen.

According to Essien-Ibok, it is no coincidence that Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire) supported Biafra during the Nigeria civil war and gave Ojukwu a home after the war. Thus, even when Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso was accusing the Anglophone camp for having no legal status in getting involved in Liberia, Vogt points an accusing finger on the two countries contending that ECOWAS was only seeking to halt a situation caused by them, drawing allegation of the triangular collaboration between Libya and the two countries.[28]

Vogt did not agree with Kieh that Nigeria wanted to assert her leadership in the subregion. But majority of Nigerians - politically aware section of the society - see themselves as destined to play a certain leadership role in Africa. They view themselves at the vanguard of African and subregional emancipation, hence policy makers have identified the country's foreign policy as unequivocally afroncentric.

Yet Gabriel Olusanya has argued that although Nigeria is undisputably primus inter pares in Black Africa, successive Nigerian leaders have been very careful to draw a distinction between domination and leadership, preferring to play leadership but not an imperial role.

One may agree with Essien Ibok that Nigeria's involvement in ECOMOG is quite positive but the timing is bad and that such venture needs backing with adequate resources. Going against this will, as Essien-Ibok said, only incur the wrath of the people.

Supporters of the third dimension (a rethinking of Regional Interaction and Security framework) take the view that an over emphasis on domestic economic conditions is incongruent with trends in international relations. This group argues that in the long run, security interests prevail over economic interests because the latter cannot exist without the former and what Nigeria is doing is to restate and redefine its security interests.

But Vogt cautioned that the tendency or policy to limit Nigeria's security interests to territories which are contigious with Nigeria only ignored the ripple effect of instability in the subregion. Secondly, it would be impolitic to ignore economic interests in taking security policy positions and consequently this may lead to slow response to events that may affect us in the long run as in the case of the Chadian crisis. She, therefore, concluded that Nigeria has to play her leadership role well enough and that inspite of her domestic problems, compared to other countries in the subregion she is the most effective to act as the catalist for integration.

Dan Fulani,[29] like Osadolor, contends that the significant changes in international politics as well as in the global balance of power in the post cold war geopolitical set up and the increasing importance of regionalism together with the vast repolarization, of

the hitherto centres of decision, portrays the emergence of a delicate and complex global policy in which conflicts, confrontations, competitions, rivalry and spread of influence would remain as paramount feature of multi-lateralism in the wake of the 21st century.

To this effect, he commended West African countries in their attempt at forming regional security framework which would enable economic development to be achieved meaningfully. He stated that "unlike the results hoped for in Bosnia, the ending of the carnage in Liberia has come not as a result of intervention by the United Nations or by expression of outrage by Western leaders or an arosed international opinion (but).... "because a group of West African nations have been willing to pay the price of committing their troops and meagre treasures to rescue a region from greater deprivation and a neighbour from self-destruction."[30]

Osadolor further added that a new thinking in international security is that concepts like 'common security' and 'cooperative security partnership', reflect the growing awareness that security is not attainable against one another or at the expense of the other, but only through cooperation. In other words, common security could only be achieved based on mutual confidence, cooperation and interdependence.

Gambari[31] brought out the relevance of United Nations' peace keeping experience to Nigeria's peace keeping role in Africa. He pointed out that collective security was the intellectual idea behind the formation of the League of Nations and later the United Nations, but

the idea was suspended in the later and opted for preventive diplomacy or peace keeping efforts because the General Assembly is too large, slow and cumbersome to be an effective centre of authorization and direction of collective security action. He however argued that African states should not regard peace keeping as an end in itself but should work towards achieving collective security in the region. This he said is important because of Nigeria's leadership role and the growing number of conflicts in the subregion.

Critically speaking, most of these analysts seem to overlook the significance of domestic factors of these countries as it affects or determines the formation, operation and importance of regional security arrangement. Factors like leadership for instance, the prevalence of democracy or popular participation in a country are likely to reduce or eliminate conflicts both internal and external.

Agetua Nkem's attempt at providing us with an insight into the root causes of the Liberian crisis, in his book titled "Operation Liberty: The story of Major-General Joshua N. Dogonyaro", was rather vague. He did, however, describe how ECOMOG was formed and its developments from its inception through the reign of Major-General Dogonyaro, who served as ECOMOG Field Commander in 1990 after the death of Doe.

Nkem also described the several unsuccessful attempts at peaceful settlement of the crisis by several groups like religious communities

of Liberia. In the end, he glorified ECOMOG for eventually finding a lasting and peaceful solution to the Liberian crisis. However, three years after the book was written, the Liberian crisis is yet to be resolved.

The author's assessment could also be said to be parochial in the sense that he never cared to ask himself whether Nigeria has the capacity to almost single-handedly shoulder the logistic cost of ECOMOG's operation, or whether the principles of peace keeping have been strictly adhered to or not taking into consideration the fact that ECOMOG soldiers have on certain ocassions engaged in direct combat with some rebel factions.

In short, Nkem's book is more or less a pro-government attempt to satisfy the conscience of the originators of this expensive operation.

The book edited by M. Vogt, titled "The Liberian Crisis & ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt At Regional Peace Keeping" is a comprehensive documentation of events and happenings during the Liberian crisis.

Vogt included several write ups in the work, by different individuals, scholars of international relations, political scientists and journalists, who gave a first hand account of their experiences during the course of the crisis.

Thus, a comprehensive account of the root causes of the crisis was attempted and analysis of the nature and level of international

involvement and influence on the Liberian crisis was provided. In addition, the factors that have contributed or influenced the decision of the subregional organization to deploy a multinational force to Liberia were examined by Akabogu.

Vogt shared Ibrahim Babangida's view that ECOMOG signify a "realization of the dream shared by true pan-Africanists that Africa should take greater initiative in the resolution of their problems."[32] True, but has the time come for us to really adopt this gigantic project? This is one of the issues that would be addressed in this research.

Moreover, little consideration was given to the fears and views of average Nigerian citizens who saw ECOMOG's vis-a-vis Nigeria's involvement in the crisis as being too expensive and as an attempt to expend money where it is not necessary or where other less expensive solution(s) could be adopted to arrest the situation without compounding our own domestic problem to alleviate other people's problem.

In a book edited by Colin Gum,[33] Walter Schwarz has identified two different laws that were operating in Liberia during the Tubman's era viz: one for the metropolitan areas such as Monrovia and its environs and the second for the communes of the hinder land and other native suburbs. This, he said, clearly indicate the disparity between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous populace.

Similarly, foreign investors, he added, were allowed to invest in the economy, while the indigenous groups were denied the incentive to do so. In addition, the Universal Adult Suffrage of Tubman was more or less for the privileged because it only allowed those who owned houses or the fairly rich to participate.

Though the author gave a brief history of Liberia, its politics and economic relations, and is critical of Tubman's policies, he however failed to identify the linkage between the ruling class and foreign economic and political domination in which a future crisis was bound to develop as is the case now.

Biokole and Ameachi Uchegbu, in different write ups,[34] agreed that Nigeria should not have involved itself in the Liberian crisis as it did in the formation of ECOMOG, because of the logistic costs of the operation which rests heavily on Nigeria. They both argued that the crisis is a domestic affair and ECOMOG should not have been created at the expense of the already dilapidated Nigerian economy.

Biokole particularly made reference to the Maroko people in Lagos who were deliberately left homeless by the government and yet the same government showed concern over the plight of Liberians.

In a nutshell, most of the analysts of the Liberian crisis seem to glorify Nigeria's role in the crisis rather than critically assessing the impact of such "domineering" role on the economy and public sector in general.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION:

Over the years, countries in international organisations have been involved in the peaceful resolution of international conflicts. Accordingly, a substantial body of literature has emerged but is United Nations-centric in nature. The role of regional organisations is under-researched and little attention is accorded to domestic conflicts which is becoming more and more complex and increasing alarmingly on the African continent. Secondly, where such literature exist, they are not comprehensive enough, they are mostly available in seminar papers, magazines and other source of media information. There is therefore the need for a well researched and documented up-to-date work on it.

Furthermore, most of the literature available on ECOMOG operation centred on the political aspect of the operation, little or no attention was directed towards the economic impact or consequences of the operation on the Nigerian public sector. Nigeria's role in the conflict resolution was so much glorified as to render its leaders insensitive to the common demands of the people.

The quest to address the problems or discrepancies of and lessons learnt from ECOWAS peace initiative so that future peace-keeping operations would yield more positive result, not only in the subregion but also in Africa and other parts of the globe forms another basis of the research.

Taking into consideration recent developments in the international scene characterised by the fall of the communist bloc and the attempt

by European countries to look more inward to themselves as envisaged by the Maastricht Treaty - there is the need to address the misunderstanding of the distinctive roles of peace keepers and peace makers in the ECOMOG operation in order to improve the workings of the regional security framework as a way to improve our own situation ourselves.

To further quote Erskine, "peace-keeping and peace making as a technique has become highly professionalised and African regional and subregional organizations with security responsibilities should learn to embark upon it accordingly."[35]

1.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION:

The research method was an exploratory one. This was done through the use of secondary data, through library research, particularly seminar presentations, journals, newspapers and other sources of media information, in addition to oral interviews with returnee Nigerian soldiers and a few Liberian refugees. This is because the phenomenon in question is a recent issue and is still in progress.

The research will be divided into five chapters and each chapter into units. The first chapter entails the introduction of the research problem, a review of literatures available on the field of study, the methodology adopted and the justification of the study. In chapter two, a brief history of Liberia is attempted and the background to the Liberian crisis, while chapter three will concentrate on the afrocentric foreign policy objectives of Nigeria

with regards to the Liberian crisis and the analysis of the principles and problems of peace keeping operation. A background of Nigeria's foreign policy, essentially its afrocentric foreign policy posture was made and the reasons given by Nigeria as to why it intervened in Liberia.

In the fourth chapter which constitute the heart of the study, a critical and extensive discussion will be made on Nigeria's involvement in ECOMOG's formation and deployment and the uneasy road followed in the bid to find a lasting peace to the war torn country. As such, the various peace agreements signed during the past five years and the role played by the Field Commanders in the resolution of the Liberian conflict will be discussed, as well as the successes, problems and lessons learnt from ECOMOG operation.

The final chapter will tie up the issues discussed in previous chapters and recommendations will be given.

1.6 LIMITATIONS:

As in any study or research, there is bound to be some limitations, the source of my data may not be as comprehensive enough or might be too sensational. This is likely to reflect in the data collected. However, effort is being made to overcome these defects.

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C H A P T E R T W O

P E A C E K E E P I N G

2.1 PRINCIPLES OF PEACE KEEPING:

This section will look at the principles of peace keeping as observed by the United Nations from which ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) derives its initial legal backing and to see whether ECOMOG has adhered to them or not. That is to point the areas of divergence between the United Nations peace keeping operational principles and that of ECOMOG.

Over the years international and regional organizations have included in their charters, the need for resolving conflicts, civil or inter state, peacefully. To this effect, myriad models of conflict resolution have been developed, the most commonly used ones are negotiation, conciliation and peace keeping.[1] In certain cases, all three models are employed in sequence or interchangably, depending on the situation and nature of the crisis or conflict.[2]

The negotiation model: This model is commonly and widely used in conflict resolution. It is based on the belief that direct face to face discussion between the belligerent groups is essential in resolving the conflict. Secondly, the role of a third actor is emphasized so as to act as a referee between the protagonists when they present their agendas, this will aid in the understanding of the position of the other and begin to bargain for what each aimed at.

The Conciliation model: In the current dispensation when the 'cold war' is no more this model is increasingly employed in settling conflicts. The stand point of the model is that international organizations have a role to play in resolving conflicts, for the simple fact that they are neutral (or supposed to be neutral). In addition, international organizations can formulate terms of settlement without bias against any of the parties. Moreover, the terms of the settlement are often based on the realities of the conflict rather than on abstract legal principles.[3] However, this does not deny the parties to the conflict to have the right to reject or modify the terms of settlement.

Peace keeping model: Our main focus in this chapter is the peace keeping model. The concept of peace keeping was fully developed by the United Nations in the 1960s as a substitute to collective security.[4] The rationale was that, during the days of the cold war in which the United Nations operate it became difficult to get the two superpowers to agree on collective security measures. This created a problem for the United Nations which was somehow paralysed by this ideological stalemate and thus, unable to fulfil its main objective of maintaining international peace and security.[5]

In later years, regional organizations like the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Organization of American States, adopted the peace keeping model as a prudent and practical approach to conflict resolution.[6]

By definition, peace keeping entails ".... the prevention, containment, moderation and termination of hostilities between or within states, through the medium of a peaceful third party intervention, organized and directed internationally, using multinational forces of soldiers, police and civilians to restore and maintain peace".[7]

In other words, peace keeping is not intended to defeat an aggressor but to prevent fighting, act as a buffer, keep order, or maintain a ceasefire. The traditional peace keeping force is more of a police than of military. Peace keeping force must have the consent of at least one of the protagonists and the toleration of the other(s). Peace keepers must also be neutral and impartial in their relationship to the combatants.[8]

According to Lieutenant General Erskine, peace keeping is:

> "a conflict control mechanism designed to diffuse tension and provide a peaceful, resolution of dispute or conflict. The... troops who constitute the peace keeping mission provide the peaceful environment by monitoring the ceasefire and ensuring that there are no violations to the agreement by the parties to the conflict."[9]

When such condition ensured, negotiations, through governmental political and diplomatic machineries could then be arranged between the parties under the auspices of international bodies like the United Nations, Organization of African Unity or even ECOWAS as in the case of the ECOMOG operation.

Peace keeping and peace making could sometimes be complementary. For instance, UNIMOG succeeded in providing a stable peaceful environment between Iran and Iraq qhich facilitated talks between the foreign ministers of the two countries under the auspices of the United Nation. Similarly, United Nation Emergency Forces (UNEF) aided in stabilising the situation in Sinai that led to the signing of the Camp David Accord and the eventual peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979.[10] Another example is the coalition that fought the Gulf war in 1991.

The United Nation charter does not specifically provide for peace keeping. However, the former secretary-general, Dag Hammarskjold has referred to it as "Charter VI and a half" falling somewhere between provisions of chapter VI which provides for pacific settlement of disputes and chapter VII which enables enforcement actions by the Security Council in the occasion of a threat to peace or breach of peace or act of aggression.[11]

Peace keeping is also a reflection of one of the first purposes of the preamble to the United Nation charter which calls for the "establishment of conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of law can be maintained".[12]

Article 33(i) has emphasized the need for parties to a conflict to seek solution through negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means of their choice.[13]

The major aim of peace keeping is, therefore, to create the appropriate security environment within which the conflict under dispute can be negotiated and resolved. The concept of "peace keeping" was fully developed by the United Nations even though the concept predates the U. N. system. It was first developed and used by the Organisation in the 1940s with the deployment of small observer missions in the late 1940s to the Balkans, Indonesia, South Asia and the Middle East.[14]

Alan James described a peace keeping body as a "traditional looking military force composed of a number of battalions under the authority of a commander. The battalions will have been detached from or supplied by various national armies and the commander is appointed by and be responsible to the international authority which has arranged the operation."[15]

In essence, therefore, a peace keeping operation is aimed at diffusing tension so that the conflict situation is stabilized to enable a peaceful settlement of the dispute on a conference table and not in the battlefield.

It should be noted however that this traditional peace keeping outlook has been changing over time. There is a growing school of thought that believe that peace keeping should move "beyond the Sheriff posse"; that is from the position of acting as only an interpositionary force deployed to separate warring factions and preventing them from firing at each other, to a force that would actually enforce the decisions of the international community,

enforce an observation of the basic codes of humanitarian order to punish violations of agreements and or decisions of the security council, as employed in the Gulf and recently in former Yugoslavia.[16]

Peace keeping missions are also engaged in political organization of societies such as the monitoring of elections as in Namibia and Cambodia and to provide effective cover for the provision of humanitarian assistance to victims of conflicts, such as in Angola, Yugoslavia and Rwanda.[17]

There are two major types of peace keeping operations practiced by the United Nations. The first is the observer mission which composes of officers who are not allowed to carry arms nor use force even for self-defence. The second type of peace keeping operation composes of officers and men who are allowed to carry arms and use force for self-defence. Both types operate under certain guided principles.

Basically, there are seven principles that guide the successful peace keeping operations of the United Nations[19] which other organizations like ECOMOG ought to adhere to.

In the first place, the United Nations peace keeping missions are established based on the resolution of the security council which forms the mandate and derives its authority from Article 24 of the United Nations charter. This Article states that it is only mandatory that the five veto powers support the operations or the

mission. The security council which serves as the highest authority has the prerogative to extend or terminate the operations of the mission subject to the recommendations by the secretary general.[20]

In this case, certain issues are taken into consideration based on the report by the secretary general. These include that he explains in detail how he intends to set up the mission; appointment of a field commander; force level and number of contributing countries and the legal status of the mission. Others include the cost of maintaining the mission that is, the administrative and logistic support for the mission.

All parties to the dispute must agree on the operation of the peace keeping. That is, the peace keeping force must be present with the consent of the protagonists or at least one of them and the toleration of the other. On the other hand, the peace keepers must be neutral and impartial in their relationship to the combatants. K.J. Sundberg has emphasized that "peace keeping is not an expression of national policy, but by definition a neutral function".[21]

The protagonists should agree to a ceasefire and abide by the terms of agreement. This should be the ideal situation, because "peace troops are not fighting forces .... (but) .... operate only with the consent of all parties directly concerned".[22] This has been the United Nations position, though with the exception of Korea in 1950.[23]

ECOMOG mounted a peace keeping force without the consent of one of the parties - the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) - and this has contributed to Charles Taylor's unwillingness to respect the subsequent agreement signed in various peace accords within the last four years of the crisis.

Another principle is that the Security Council is responsible for the unification of the mission's command. In this respect, the Secretary General, with the consent of the Security Council, appoints the field commander, who in turn reports directly to the secretary general and not the home government of contributing countries or contingents. Such units also execute orders of the field command without clearance from their superior commanders. This has not been the case with the Organization of African Unity in Chad (1982)[24] and with ECOMOG at its initial take off.[25] The role of the executive secretary general of ECOWAS on the day-to-day functioning of the mission and the command relationship between the troops, the field commander and contributing countries is therefore very crucial.

Fourthly, the Security Council, Secretary General as well as the parties to the conflict, neighbouring countries in the conflict area and contributing countries should all show their confidence, trust and respect to the field commander of the mission. This is vital in more ways than one. In the first instance, the effect of spill over conflict is likely to happen, but neighbouring countries can cooperate and allow the mission to make use of their territories

for suppliers, liaison or other forms of contacts or communications, etc.

The Liberian crisis has indeed affected neighbouring countries, particularly, Sierra Leone where presently rebel forces have been attacking certain parts of the country, but with the aid of ECOMOG and Nigerian soldiers, the Sierra Leonean government is overcoming this threat.[26]

On the other hand, there were reported cases of rampant killings of refugees, especially, in Cote d'Ivoire in 1994[27] by Alhaji Kromah's warring faction of Liberia. This could have been minimised or could not have happened with the proper cooperation of the Ivorien government.

Before any peace keeping operation is employed, the conflict must be of an inter state dimension, in order to prevent the force from interferring in the internal affairs of states. However, the problem of non-interference has been a bit controversial in terms of definition. For instance, the United Nations has initially refused to intervene in the Liberian crisis because it considered it as an internal problem.[28] But even at its early stage, the Liberian conflict has assumed an international dimension because neighbouring countries such as Libya, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso have aided in one way or the other in fuelling the crisis. The carnage, genocide and wanton massacre of not only Liberian nationals but foreigners as well, created a need for external intervention. The refugee problem created by the war, in the subregion, also necessitates the intervention of an external mission.

Another principle of peace keeping to be given priority by the mission is to have a reliable and efficient communication system. This will enhance command and control and the overall success of the operation. Communication links should be well established internally within the unit or contingent, horizontally (i.e, with their immediate neighbouring units) and vertically, with their immediate superior headquarters.

Adequate provision of administrative and logistic support should be established. This has been the major problem with most peace keeping operations. The O.A.U. in Chad and ECOMOG in Liberia are no exception.

Nigeria was made to bear the logistic cost of the operation in Chad to the tune of $82 million which has not been reimbursed by the O.A.U.[29] In the case of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group, Nigerian soldiers constitute about 70% of ECOMOG troops.[30] Recent revelation by the External Affairs Minister of Nigeria indicates that there are about 6,000 Nigerian soldiers in Liberia.[31] It is therefore not surprising that Nigeria is paying about 80% of the ECOMOG bills.

Logistic support "should (therefore) be made available and centralised by the sponsoring organisation as a matter of force policy in support of its operation."[33]

The above mentioned principles should be utmost in the minds of organisations that give priority to peace keeping, particularly, ECOWAS Monitoring Group which is our point of focus here.

As Erskine has suggested, there should be the establishment of a small secretariat, comprising of seasoned military and civilian personnel, whose function is to work on the rules, procedures, concepts, systems and techniques of peace keeping, the burden of which would be equally divided among member states (whether at the continental level, OAU, or at the subregional level). By preparing now, he argued, the next peace keeping operation in Africa or in West Africa, could then be more effective and efficient.

However, the question here is with the current economic and political problems facing most African countries, could they concentrate and support this expensive venture which needs planning, time and money? Though peace keeping is less expensive than war which brings about destruction of both human and material resources, we should however give it a serious thought. We should weigh the pros and cons of it and seek other diplomatic measures rigorously before embarking on future operations.

It is also worth noting that peace keeping is never a sufficient and complete tool for conflict resolution.[34] It might take years, sometimes to convince parties to a dispute to comply with ceasefire agreement on a permanent basis. Each party may refuse to move from its fixed position in political negotiations as experienced with the warring factions in Liberia.

Thus, if Africa or ECOWAS have decided to take the course of peace keeping in resolving its conflict situation(s) (that may also arise in the future) then certain things must be taken into consideration.

The most important is the issue of logistics. As noted by Lt. General Erskine, "gathering troops from different parts of the world to operate together as a force in peace keeping - despite differences in language, cultural background and religion - presents no difficulty whatsoever. What is difficult and no less important is to sustain them logistically so that they effectively and efficiently discharge their operational task".[35] As emphasized earlier, financing of the operation should therefore be the responsibility of the sponsoring organisation as a whole and not for one country to be left with the large burden of supporting the mission as the case in Liberia. Recent pronouncements by the Nigerian foreign minister have revealed that a staggering amount of over N320 billion have been expended in just five years of Nigeria's involvement in ECOMOG. Considering the state of the Nigerian economy, this is indeed a great figure that could have been useful to address other domestic problems, particularly in the public sector.

Likewise, it is common knowledge that the state of most African economies is nothing to write home about and are in dire needs of revival. Nevertheless, since peace keeping mechanism has been adjudged as a necessity in the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U) charter and in the ECOWAS, and has come to stay, then it is only logical that serious thought be given to the evolution of an appropriate structure to manage it.

The lessening of the East - West tension and the demise of the cold war per se, has created its own repercusions with conflicts breaking

out here and there as in the former Yugoslavia and other states of former Soviet Union, and in Africa such as Somalia, Rwanda etc. This has made the United Nations to be very much preoccupied than ever before;[37] it has become cumbersome for the United Nations to handle these problems single handedly particularly since peace missions are needed to arrest most of these situations. Hence, the role of regional organisations in settling disputes becomes relevant in alleviating this burden of the United Nations, considering the fact that the United Nations peace keeping operation is severely underfunded for its purposes as highlighted by the secretary general, Boutros Ghali.[38]

African countries should therefore cooperate maximally to see that conflicts within the region are resolved amicably by pursuing mechanisms that are less expensive than peace keeping missions. But if peace keeping missions have to be resorted to, then Nigeria should not be left virtually alone in executing the mission.

Nigeria's Afrocentric Foreign Policy:

"Nigeria belongs to Africa and Africa must claim first attention in our external relations."[39]

-- Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa
Prime Minister of Nigeria, 1962.

"Africa is and remains the centrepiece of our foreign policy. We in Nigeria believe that we have certain responsibilities towards the continent of Africa."[40]

-- Brigadier J. Garba
Nigeria's Minister of Ext. Affairs, 1976

"We know that Nigeria is an African country which has to some extent limited the kind of role and status it occupies in the world."[41]

-- Prof. Ibrahim Gambari
Nigerian Minister of Ext. Affairs, 1984

The above extracts summarise the position which various Nigeria governments, civilian and military, have adopted since the early 1960s in the conduct of the country's external relations: that Africa is the foreign policy theatre of Nigeria's greatest political concern.[43]

This section, therefore, is concerned with the analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy, particularly the commitment to maintain Africa as the centrepiece of pursuing this objective; the factors that contributed in shaping the country's foreign policy, and how this has contributed or influenced the decision to participate actively in ECOWAS Monitoring Group's formation and operation in the Liberian fracas. The section will also discuss whether this policy stance of Nigeria has been effective in boosting the image of the country in Africa and the international arena as a whole. To start with, we need to know what a foreign policy is.

Many attempts have been made by scholars of international studies to define foreign policy. The concept can best be defined through an explanation of what it actually is.

Foreign policy consists of three elements: one is the overall orientation and policy intentions of a particular country towards another; the objectives that a country seeks to achieve in her relations or dealings with other countries and thirdly, is the means for achieving that particular goal or objectives.[44]

We should, thus, see foreign policy as "a dynamic process of interaction between the changing domestic demands and supports and the changing external circumstances."[45]

F. S. Northedge[46] defined it as "the use of political influence by one state to induce other states to exercise power in a manner designed by the State concerned". In other words, it is "the conscious behaviour of a nation state towards the external environment."[47]

Nigeria's foreign policy principles were laid down in 1960 by the country's Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, as:

(1) The sovereign equality of all African States;

(2) Respect for the independence, sovereignty and the territorial integrity of every African State;

(3) Non-interference in the internal affairs of other African countries;

(4) Commitment to functional cooperation as a means of promoting African Unity; and

(5) Total eradication of racism and colonialism from Africa.

Successive Nigerian governments have reiterated these principles. It is on the basis of this among other things that Nigeria has taken Africa as the centrepiece of its foreign policy and international relations. Hence since independence, Africa has remained Nigeria's foreign theatre and its greatest political concern.[49]

What has emerged over the years are five strands in Nigeria's African policy.[50] These are:

(1) Support for the Organization of African Unity;

(2) Its anti-colonial preoccupation or decolonization;

(3) Anti-apartheid stand in South Africa;

(4) Promotion of intra-African economic cooperation;

(5) Commitment to peaceful settlement of inter-state disputes and conflicts.

The genesis and factors that influenced Nigeria's Afrocentric Foreign Policy: The genesis of Nigeria's Afrocentric policy posture could be traced to the 1950s when Nigerian political leaders or nationalists expressed a self consciousness of the continental leadership they believed Nigeria was bound to assume on the African continent.[51] To this effect, in 1955, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe had admonished the Bandung powers for their failure to invite Nigeria to their conference, "to appreciate the historic mission and manifest

destiny of Nigeria on the African continent".[52] Azikiwe must have been inspired during his school days in the United States by the concept of American manifest destiny in the western hemispheric subsystem as advanced in the Monroe doctrine of 1823.[53]

In 1960, the then Prime Minister of Nigeria also re-echoed this when he appealed to Nigerians to aid in making Nigeria a strong and united country, "so that she might fulfil her destiny as the leader of the African continent."[54] But this policy orientation has rendered Nigeria a suspect in the eyes of West African states and other African countries as a whole, particularly, francophone countries, who perceive or misperceive this posture as an expansionist one. Noting this effect, Balewa has one assured them that:

> "We in Nigeria appreciate the advantages which the size of our country and its population give us but we have absolutely no aggressive intentions. We shall never impose ourselves upon any other country and shall treat every territory, big or small as our equal..."[55]

In 1991, former president Babangida had to make a similar statement in France:

> "The dominant presence of Nigeria in the region is a matter of geographical, demographic and resource reality. On the other hand, French presence is a historical fact which Nigeria has not only learnt to live with, but over the years, has come to perceive in a positive light."[56]

In fact, this is only a reiteration of a former declaration. Akinyemi had earlier in 1985, stated that:

> "Nigeria's size is not going to be used to the detriment of anybody. Under this present regime (Babangida's regime), you won't find us being apologetic over the size of Nigeria.... I don't know what else we have to do to show that we are prepared to make sacrifices for ECOWAS, rather than use ECOWAS as an instrument for dominating anybody."[57]

Four main motivations contributed in making the Nigerian political intelligentsia to assume that Nigeria is destined to play the "position in which God Almighty has placed us."[58]

As indicated in the above quotations, the most significant is the geographical size and position of the country. Nigeria is located on the western shores of the Atlantic ocean and is 356,669 square miles in size, which is about the size of Pakistan in Asia, nearly four and a half times the area of the United Kingdom, roughly fourteen times the size of Sierra Leone and 89 times the size of Gambia.[59]

Secondly, Nigeria is the most populous territorial entity in Africa. As at 1960, Nigeria's population was estimated at 51.6 million and according to 1992 census, Nigeria's population is put at about 88 million.[60] Thirdly, the country's relatively diverse and expanding economy, endowed with natural and mineral resources with some yet to be explored, enhance the country's stature and confer on it enormous political leverage.

Another importance factor that also influenced and shaped the afrocentricism of Nigeria's foreign policy was the Achilles' heels of Nkrumah, as described by Ambassador Leslie Harriman. President Nkrumah had dominated the African political scene up till 1966 which made Ghana to be seen as Africa's spokesman in the world's chancelleries. The inability of the Nigerian government, then, to counter this challenge posed by Ghana, became a constant source of irritation and displeasure among the country's political intelligentsia.[61]

In fact, a participant at the first All Nigerian Peoples' Conference held in 1961, to advise Nigeria on foreign affairs matters, once told the Prime Minister that he would "prefer to be a prisoner in Ghana than to be a free citizen in this country (Nigeria) because every where you go they ask you, are you from Ghana."[62] To counter this position of Ghana, Nigeria adopted antagonistic posture towards Nkrumah and pursued policies that were antithesis to that of Ghana. Harriman summarises this:

> "He (Nkrumah) never abused. All the abuses came from this end (Nigeria) and we tended to have an inferiority complex during that period at the governmental and all levels because of Nkrumah. So the whole thrust of our foreign policy then was one of hedging and fighting Nkrumaism, so to speak, until 1965 when Balewa went to Ghana and came face to face with Nkrumah and they reconciled."[63]

Thus, Nigeria adopted the doctrine of Afrocentricism to fight Nkrumaism because the government, as a Nigerian diplomat puts it, ".... cannot fold its arms and allow small Ghana to occupy the centre stage. It is just natural that we should occupy the driver's seat and Ghana should be one of the passengers".[64]

After the All Nigeria Peoples Conference to Advise the Federal Government on Foreign Policy Matters and on African Affairs in the African policy of the Balewa Administration, as articulated by Wachuku, included these strands of logic: "While we want Africa to live in peace, we do not want her to continue in pieces. Nigerians believe in the integration of the African continent ... Pan Africanism is no longer a theory; it is a fact. But while all Africans agree on that, our methods of pursuing this goal differ. There are some who want political union now - with themselves on top. We in Nigeria believe that the African states must first come together on the cultural and economic level..."[65]

To this end, the Balewa government through its spokesman, Jaja Wachuku, told the plenary session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1961, that Nigeria is far from being neutral in anything that affects Africa. Adding that: ".... the moment Africa is affected we are involved ... And being a member of the African community and feeling ourselves completely bound to its destiny .... obviously all questions pertaining to Africa must be considered as questions pertaining to Nigeria. The peace of Africa is the peace of Nigeria ...."[66]

And so this continued. In 1971, General Gowon also declared that: "We have learnt from experience to set a very high premium on our relations with countries of Africa as Nigeria's identity as well as her position of influence are intimately linked with her destiny and importance of all Africa in world affairs".[67] General Gowon was referring to Nigeria's unfortunate civil war experience when four African countries (Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Gabon and Zambia) offered de jure recognition to Biafra.[68]

The concept of Africa being the centre piece of Nigeria's foreign policy was defined by Ibrahim Gambari, a former External Affairs Minister in the country, to mean,: "the hub from which radiate the spokes of our foreign relations ... on the basis ... of our geographical, demographic, historico-cultural circumstances. Such an orientation is clearly necessary because our interaction with the world outside the African continent must be informed and to a great extent, determined by the yearnings and aspirations of people of this great continent".[69]

As at 1960, the economic factor had two major influences on Nigeria's foreign policy. First, because of the availability of raw and mineral resources, Nigeria was considered as a potential power. Secondly, the presence of these resources helped in creating a self-perceived image of Nigeria's importance in the international scene. To this end, in 1962, while speaking at the joint session of the Nigerian parliament, Dr. Azikiwe, the then governor-general of the Federation stated that:

> "My government attaches great importance to the exploitation of the nations mineral resources and to this end, it proposes to accord the highest priority to assembling a strong team of Nigerian administrators and specialist fully capable of developing Nigeria's mineral and power resources in cooperation with other interested parties, private and public, whose efforts they will supplement and where necessary regulate and inspect in the national interest".[70]

However, this portrays only the potential aspect of the Nigeria economy at the time but, basically, the economy is weak. Because of the inavailability of the proper machinery to develop or extract these raw material and mineral resources. Hence, the weak economy of Nigeria in the 1960s could not provide a proper backing to her foreign policy[71] as envisaged in the federal government's reluctance to open its embassies in foreign countries, because of lack of finance to maintain the embassies.[72]

Other prominent party members also agreed that if resources were available Nigeria would have been more active in African affairs. In deed, Nigeria's economy was still far better off than most African economies.[73]

Similarly, the size of the Nigerian military prior to the civil war was abysmally low and inadequate. The Nigeria armed forces at the time of independence stood at 10,000 men only and consisted primarily of the officer cadre, performing a ceremonial role and could at best play a limited role in either the strategic defence or security of the nation.

The structure and size of the military was to change during and after the civil war of the later 1960s and the lessons learnt during the war reshaped Nigeria's foreign policy from a low keyed, conservative and cautious one to a more active stance. This was coupled with the effect of the oil boom of the 1970s which provided Nigeria with petrodollars with which to pursue her foreign policy stance because in the international environment, foreign policy is only effective with the proper mobilization of domestic resources: political, financial and human.[74]

- The increase in oil revenue gave Nigeria confidence in her foreign relations. It gave Nigeria "more confidence in flexing the undoubted muscle that it had augmented by considerable economic muscle".[75] The contribution of the oil sector to total exports rose from 57.6% in 1970 to 97.2% in 1986.[76] Thus, oil revenue increased from 26.3% in 1970 to 74.2% in 1982. This also led to an expansion of public expenditure.

Though the oil windfall from oil exports led to a considerable expansion of the economy, it however did little to increase the country's self-reliance and by 1981, the oil boom of the 1970s came to an end, following the collapse of the world market price of oil and the immediate drastic oil revenue fall for the country. Hence, the Nigeria Gross Development Product (GDP) declined by 2.0% in the ending of 1981 and continued to fall in later years by a further 2.9% in 1982, 6.4% in 1983/84 and by 0.6% in 1984/85. This has drastic consequences for both internal and external polices. Immigrants were expelled in 1983 and 1984.[77]

"In the oil boom days, Nigerians liked to think of their country as the big brother in the subregion. It played host to thousands of immigrant workers, who came in to do lowly paid jobs .... But when the boom collapsed, the resentment of the population were visited on the immigrants, especially those from neighbouring countries."[78]

In addition, the ECOWAS initiated by Nigeria and formed to benefit the subregional countries as a whole in Nigeria in particular, was seen to have brought no benefit but only burden. Nigeria was supporting the Community at the expense of its domestic programmes. In fact, the then Nigerian Foreign Minister, Ibrahim Gambari, reiterated that Nigeria would continue to promote good neighbourliness within the subregion and "would continue to give as much assistance as is compatible with our limited resources but we shall no louger play the role of 'big for nothing brother' of any other states".

This is a fair statement considering the fact that the Nigerian foreign policy should first and foremost be of Nigeria itself as stated earlier; the projection of external policies is only viable if the internal or domestic system is sound and well coordinated.

The Nigerian debt and the economy in general,[79] however, continue to worsen. The IMF loan earlier sought by the Shagari administration and which the Buhari government continued to pursue did not materialize. Similarly, the sternness and vigour, though well-meant, with which the Buhari regime pursued its domestic and

external relations, contributed to its overthrow through a palace coup by General Ibrahim Babangida.

On assumption to power, the Ibrahim Babangida government sought to undo the stalemate developed between Nigeria and the western countries and also ECOWAS members. In his first summit as head of state and chairman of ECOWAS in 1986, Babangida stated that:

> "In view of the rough waters through which ECOWAS has been moving of late, there was some breast beating at the lack of progress in the Community so far which had not matched the expectations that had accompanied ECOWAS creation in 1975."[80]

He went further to add that "the most importance aspect of the summit however was the considerable evidence it provided that Nigeria was willing to do right by ECOWAS after a period in which its commitment seemed to be slipping".[81] This is a sign of further commitment to maintain the leadership role in the subregion.

The Babangida regime reopened the Nigerian borders to nationals of neighbouring West African countries, proposed for the provision and renovation of accommodation in Lagos for ECOWAS staff and promised to provide land in Abuja for the new secretariat headquarters, as well as ₦5 million towards the total cost of the project.[82]

All these developments took place when the Nigerian economy was still bad and the prices of oil very low as openly admitted by the then Minister of External Affairs:

"We do not have as much as we did in ... 1975. But there is a lot of strength in the Nigerian system that should not be under estimated."[83]

Against this background, Nigeria made the initiative to end the civil war that broke out in Liberia, through the setting up of a Mediation Committee and later the formation of a peace keeping force: ECOMOG.

2.3 Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objectives and the Liberian Crisis:

The Nigerian government had defended its involvement in the Liberian crisis by arguing that it has affected its foreign policy objectives in more ways than one. As General Babangida puts it:

> ".... (Nigeria's) participation in ECOWAS Monitoring Group fell in line with Nigeria's foreign policy over the past three decades. There is therefore no gain saying the fact that when certain events occur in this subregion ... which are bound to affect Nigeria's politico-military and socio-economic environment, we should stand by as helpless and hapless spectators".[84]

Babangida further stated that countries with contigious boundaries with Nigeria are "ring countries" in which "crisis or conflicts would inevitably have adverse spill over effects on the peace and tranquility of our country".[85] Thus, Nigeria's core value objective viz the territorial integrity of the state is indirectly challenged.

Similarly, the diplomatic behaviour of Nigeria rotates around the promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and the rest of the world and the defense of social justice of the blackman and the defence and promotion of world peace.[86] From this, therefore, the protection of Nigerian citizens and other Africans can be said to be challenged in Liberia. In fact, attention of Nigeria and indeed the international community was drawn when large numbers of the civilian population were brutally attacked by both the rebel and government forces in 1989. Taylor's forces not only attacked and murdered members of opposing Liberian ethnic groups, but also turned against the citizens of other countries living in Liberia including Nigerians. At least seventy thousand Nigerians lived in Liberia when Taylor launched his attack into Nimba county.[87]

As the rebellion moved closer to the capital, the fundamental rules of war which seeks to shelter unarmed civilians, women and children from active combat were completely ignored by the warring fractions. Nigeria, through this conflict, had argued that it was important for her to remain faithful to the age-long African confidence in the ability of her fellow African brothers to protect each other. This made Nigeria not to evacuate her nationals when other European countries were doing so. Instead, Nigeria opted for intervention and reconciliation because, as Government noted, "it could not remain idle while its citizens were trapped without food, water and medical facilities."[88] This announcement followed after about seven hundred Nigerian citizens were killed while taking sanctuary in the Nigerian Embassy in Liberia.[89]

Nigeria's involvement in Liberia can also be seen as an attempt to discourage ethnic based civil war and the overthrow of a recognised national government. President Babangida had just survived an ethnic-based attempted coup against his government.[89] A successful civil war and overthrow of Doe could help encourage a similar attempt against the government in Nigeria as well as other West African States.[90]

Nigeria had also argued that the Liberia crisis has endangered Nigerian economic interests in the region and threatened to topple a government friendly to Nigeria and replace it with a potentially hostile regime. Similarly, Taylor, if successful, could unleash dissidents in his army to overthrow governments friendly to Nigeria such as Gambia, Guinea and Sierra Leone.[91] Indeed, the Liberian crisis has attracted intervention and influence by other African states (Libya, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast) in Nigeria's perceived region of interest.

As indicated earlier, political instability in the subregion negates against Nigeria's attempt at organizing economic and political cooperation in the ECOWAS region. Thus, "ECOWAS cannot achieve its ultimate objective of economic integration and cooperation unless the subregion was considerably free of political tension and conflict".[92] The Liberian civil war, therefore, has prevented Monrovia from fully participating in regional economic schemes as well as impacted on bilateral Nigerian-Liberian economic cooperation, especially Nigeria's attempt to secure iron ore from Liberia which would feed the former's steel industry and help eliminate European and American middlemen.[93]

In effect, therefore, it could be argued that the crisis in Liberia has indeed called for external intervention especially on the part of Nigeria. But a look at the Nigerian economy at the time of ECOMOG formation reveals that perhaps it would have been better if other diplomatic means or measures were rigorously pursued to solve the problem rather than the expensive peace keeping force which Nigeria is made to bear the heaviest burden. "The pre-eminent role of Nigeria in that peace effort is reflected in the strength of the Nigerian contingent. Though no official figures are available, a little less than two-thirds of the troops appear to be Nigerians. Its hardware is also thought to be the live-wire of ECOMOG.[94]

At the fourteenth ECOWAS summit at Abuja in 1991, the Nigerian Minister of External Affairs confirmed that, "Nigeria was responsible for 70% of the funds used in running ECOMOG in Liberia. This is estimated to have outstripped the budget of fifty million dollars ECOWAS fund.[96] In fact, statements by Chief Tom Ikimi, Nigeria's Foreign Minister, 1995, revealed that over N320 billion has so far been spent on ECOMOG operation.[97] However, the government believed that this total commitment to end the Liberia crisis is based on reasons enumerated above, particularly to enhance Nigeria's leadership role and Afrocentric foreign policy in the West African subregion in particular and Africa as a whole.

The creation of ECOWAS and later ECOMOG has aided in portraying the image of the country in a more positive light,[98] amidst domestic

contradiction and criticisms. However, it could be argued that for Nigeria to achieve a meaningful foreign policy and make a significant impact abroad, Nigeria's foreign policy should first and foremost be about Nigeria i.e, in terms of self-preservation of the Nigerian state, unity and welfare of the Nigerian people. This should form the core values of our foreign policy. The other long range values (such as the promotion of African unity, etc), cannot be achieved unless the Nigerian state maintains its own existence and meet the economic developmental and social welfare needs of the Nigerian society. "Nigeria, given its size and potential, can provide that leadership role in Africa, if it meticulously husbands its human and natural resources and resolves its internal problems."[99]

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CHAPTER THREE

BRIEF HISTORY OF LIBERIA & A BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS

3.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF LIBERIA:

Liberia first came into existence as a country in 1822 when the first batch of freed slaves were repatriated to this West African coast through the efforts of the American Colonization Society. The freed slaves were believed to be causing social and economic disorders to the whites in the United States of America.[1]

They were settled at Cape Mesurado; later on more slaves were freed even before reaching America. In fact, some were freed along the coast of West Africa and were thus brought by other philanthropic groups, like Pennyslylvania and the Colonization Society of New York.[2]

The freed slaves were settled in several settlements which included Maryland, Sinoe and Bassa.

Liberia became the first independent African state when it declared itself a self governing republic in 1847. The 1847 Constitutional Convention laid the basis for the modern state of Liberia. As Dr. Charles Huberich, a renowned scholar of International law has observed,

> "The Declaration of Independence is characterised by a calm dignity and a clear presentation of the facts of the historical evolution of Liberia. It is not a declaration of political independence, for the Liberian community was from the moment of its establishment a free, sovereign state."[3]

Thus, Liberia has never been a colony. The capital, Monrovia, was named after the fifth president of the United States of America, James Monroe.

Historically speaking, none of the present tribes in Liberia today are the descendants of the real indigenous tribes there, but rather they have at one time or the other migrated to the area for one reason or the other. Such reasons, according to Umoden, may be due to the collapse of the ancient Ghana empire, in order to escape from the Almorovids invaders and were attracted by the coast. Another reason may be due to the gradual encroachment of the Sahara desert which forced the inhabitants to seek a more hospitable environment.[4]

Population: The 1974 census indicated that Liberia has a population of over 1.5 million. In 1986, Liberia's population was officially estimated to be about 2.3 million and the figure has been growing by 3.4 per cent yearly.[5] The capital city, Monrovia, has a population unofficially thought to be about 425,000.[6]

The 30 indigenous tribes came from four main groups comprising 17 ethnic groups, with the Kpelle and Bassa as the main groups. Other large groups are the Gio, Kru, Grebo and the Mano, followed by the Lorma, Krahn, the Gola, Kissi, Mandingo, Vae and the Gbandi.

The people are adherents of Christianity, Islam or traditional African religion.

Land Area: Liberia has a land area of 111,300 square kilometres which is equivalent to 43,000 square miles. It is bordered to the west by Sierra Loene, to the north by Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire by the east and the Atlantic ocean by the south.[7]

Counties and Territories: The Country is divided into fifteen political subdivisions: 9 counties and 6 territories. The territories are located within the various counties but are administered by their own superintendents representing the president and has local autonomy which include the administration of their own development budget.[8]

TABLE I

Table Showing Counties and Populations in Liberia As At 1990:

C o u n t y	Population
Montserrado	523,916
Grand Bassa	222,066
Sinoe	102,281
Grand Cape Mount	88,791
Maryland Mount	103,832
Nimba	402,547
Bong	356,561
Grand Gedeh	134,535
Loffa	311,291
River Cess	56,502
Grand Kru	67,887
Bomi	101,528
Marsibi	70,603
T O T A L	2,542,340

Source: Business in ECOWAS Magazine: Political Structure of Liberia Pub. (1990) August 14th, p.25.

Economic Activities:[9] Main economic activity in the region is agriculture. Produce include rice, banana, palm products, large forestry reserves, rubber, cocoa, coffee and cassava.

Minerals found in the area include iron ore which was discovered in 1965 and is the biggest in Africa and third largest in the world, diamonds, colombite and tin are yet to be tapped.

Liberia is physically small but wealthy nonetheless according to African standards. The country's economy has attracted private investments particularly from America, for instance, in 1972, it has attracted more than $500 million of private investments thereby boosting the country's budget which by 1971 has reached $71 million. The G.D.P. was $420, making the country to be listed as a middle income country by the World Bank.[10]

However, the national wealth is not evenly distributed. The Americo-Liberians who formed only five per cent of the population, controlled about 60% of the national wealth. No wonder Kissinger once described the country as a "depressing appalling slum".[11]

The inequality was maintained with the collaboration of multinational corporations operating in the country and the ruling class. The multinationals paid menial wages for unskilled and semi-skilled labour. Only in 1977 did Tolbert order a fifty per cent increase in salaries of the lowest paid. This increase was however not much.[12]

The multinationals, such as Firestone which is the oldest, in fact since 1925 and operates the largest rubber plantation in the world in Liberia, did not however do much in infrastructural development. All it did was to establish a retreading company rather than a much more appreciative venture like a tyre factory or rubber processing factory in the country.

Lamco, the Liberian and American Mining company which was exporting over 4 million tonnes of minerals annually,[13] was no exception. Together with the collaboration of top government officials, these multinational corporations (MNCs) continued to exploit the economy.

Trade Unions could not do much because they were under the control of the ruling elites, hence strike action was unthinkable. In fact, Shad Tubman, Tubman's son, headed the Confederation of Trade Unions in Liberia and was for years the public relations consultant to LAMCO. People were afraid of voicing their discontent for fear of security forces. Those indigenous students who were fortunate enough to proceed abroad for studies, were given fat scholarships and were coopted into the system when they return.

This did not go well with Amos Sawyer, Tipoteh and Baccus Matthews who refused to be coopted on their return but rather went to identify themselves with the masses by forming Movement for Justice In Africa (M.O.J.A.).

White elephant projects are only visible in Monrovia. The oil crisis of 1973 exposed the fragile and dependant nature of the

economy. During this period, oil prices increased which invariably affected the operations of mineral extractions of the MNCs. Consequently, there was a decrease in demand due to increase in extraction in America and Europe who are the major trading partners. Similarly, there was a decrease in demand of cars in developing countries and a decline in aid package from friendly countries like Scandanavia and Europe who are interested in Liberia's minerals and timber. Aid dropped from $80 million in 1975 to $44 million in 1976.[14]

Moreover, debt skyroacketted to $168 million in 1976 with the London and Paris Clubs owing $70 million alone. Inflation rose by 11.4% while the average wage packet was only $70 a month. Despite these problems, Tolbert spent $100 million in 1979 to host the O.A.U. summit through loans.[15]

To make matters worst, unemployment rose by 25% and only $5 million in cash was left in government treasury by 1979. This culminated with the rice riots the same year, when the price of rice was increased from $22 to $30 per bag.

3.2 ROOTS OF THE CRISIS: As Amadu Sesay has aptly observed, Liberia has a unique history for several reasons. Firstly, like Ethiopia, it is one of the oldest republics in the continent dating back to 1847. Secondly, until 1980, it was the oldest de facto one party political system in Africa with the True Whig Party being in continuous power since 1877. Thirdly, Liberia has never experienced European style colonization but rather a 'black-on-black' domination.

Liberia has for decades been regarded as a stable country. However, this is only on the surface, because the country has been ruled by the so called Americo-Liberians, a minority made up essentially of the descendants of former slaves and form only 5% of the total population, yet control economic and political power.[16] In fact, the 19 presidents before the April 1980 coup were Americo-Liberians and 11 out of these 19 were actually born in the United States.[17]

As they celebrate their newly found independence, the freed slaves started subjugating the indigenes of the land under the garb of freedom, equality and justice. All natives were seen as inferior to the Americo-Liberians. This ill-treatment set the basis of discontent and class and ethnic consciousness in the society. Even when Doe, an indigenous son of the soil came into power, this societal inequality in all its ramifications continued.

In 1944, during William Tubman's era, however, the situation was slightly arrested, but the basic ingredients continued throughout his reign. In his inaugural speech, Tubman pledged that his administration would have a:

> "No reprisals, no pay-backs, no get even with, but let the dead past bury the dead .... (my administration) ..... shall engage in the strive at the assimilation and unification of our various population composing the body of politics. Liberia must be a place for all Liberians to live alike - all to stand equally, privileged, responsible and protected by like administration of the law."[18]

The Americo-Liberians continued to form the national bourgeoisie, dominating all top government and cabinet posts, and occupying most of the strategic positions in commerce, industry, the curch and fratenities especially the masonic temple. Thus, three concentric circles of power and influence was formed, viz: the True Whig Party (T.W.P.), and the church with the Masonic Temple binding them together. In short, they controlled the political participation and expression of dissent in the country.

Close relatives were appointed into key positions and cooptation of bright and promising young indigenous Liberians was carried out all in the bid to maintain the status quo.

The Senate, Judiciary, House of Representatives became mere rubber stamps of the president. In fact, cheques worth $25 and above had to be signed personally by Tubman himself.[19]

This level of control, throughout his twenty seven years of rule was made more efficient due to the activities of the security agencies such as the National Bureau of Investigation, the Special Security Service and the National Intelligence and Security Service,[20] hence making the country to run like a police state.

However, despite these stringent measures, Tubman's administration did help in reducing some of the worst excesses of previous administration. But the relative achievement was reversed during his successor's reign, W. Tolbert.

Tolbert ruthlessly stiffled any opposition. The electoral process became a camouflage of corruption and abuse of power. Cooptation strategy was much in use during this period. And those who digress are stripped of their positions and privileges associated with it.[21] A typical example was Dr. Togba - Na Tipoteh, who lost his job as a budget adviser to the president and as a professor of Economics in the University of Liberia.

The formation of the Liberian Chapter of the Pan-African Organization, Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) in 1973 by three renowned scholars: Na Tipoteh, Dr. A. Sawyerr and Dew Mason, saw the raising of political consciousness of the masses both in the urban and rural areas.[22]

The aim of MOJA was said to be achieved when in April 1979, there was a protest by the people against the rising cost of the nations stable food - rice. Unfortunately, Tolbert met the demonstrators with naked force leaving 200 people dead by the end of the day and properties worth millions of pounds destroyed.[23]

Consequently, leaders of MOJA and Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) who were at the forefront of the protest were chased into prisons and exiles; they were charged with treason and sedition.

The 1979 protest marked the beginning of the end of Tolbert's reign as well as the facade of stability poised to the outside world. As oppression of the regime increased, so also the people's discontent invariably increased and a situation was created where people started advocating for changes - any change that will relieve them

of the present situation. Thus, when on the 12th of April, 1980, a year after the protest, a band of non-commissioned officers sacked the executive mansion, which is the seat of government in Monrovia and assassinated President Tolbert, people took to the streets to welcome this "revolutionary" development.[24]

The coup led by a 28-year old semi illiterate Master Sergeant, Samuel Doe, who became the head of state, brought to an end the 133 years of rule by the True Whig Party. But alas! the jubilations was soon to end. The Americo-Liberians started to flee from the country for fear of genocidal reprisal. To make matters worse, Doe publicly executed 13 politicians who were charged with corruption by his administration.[25] This was to sow the seeds of another era of oppression and terror.

Doe, like his predecessors of the T.W.P., stiffled opposition and prevented many political organizations from participating in the political process. This brutality forced political activists to work underground and form armed insurrection. On his resumption to power, Doe continued to eliminate all those perceived as threats to his government. Major William Jerbo was executed along with 30 others for allegedly plotting a coup against the P.R.C. government. In fact, most of those with whom he carried out the April 1980 coup were executed or forced to flee from the country,[26] as he became paranoid and tribalistic in his approach to issues in the state. He came to favour his Krahn ethnic group, while other tribes were massively prosecuted, particularly the Gio and Mano tribes.

Students and Labour leaders were intimidated and harrassed, while Ministers in the cabinet were changed in quick succession. Various hurdles were placed to prevent opposition parties from effectively competing. In fact, apart from Doe's National Democratic Party of Liberia (N.D.P.L.) no other party was registered by the electoral commission.[27] This stronghold of the electoral commission made Doe to win the elections as president.

In the economic field, the country's economy was grossly mismanaged. By 1988 the "gross domestic product was put at $997 million. External debts stood at $2 billion while capital and interest repayment dragged in arrears of a staggering $860 million."[28]

Earlier in 1986, the World Bank had suspended its operations in Liberia because of its inability to control its operations. Similarly, the I.M.F. in 1988 also closed its Monrovia offices when Liberia failed to sustain minimum debt repayments.[29]

In essence, therefore, the seed of the Liberian conflict was sown long time when late President Doe failed to address the fundamental issues that brought him to power. These included the domestic social and economic inequalities between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous population, the political imbalance along the line of national question, the basic issues of fundamental human rights, the decaying economy and the increasing militarization of the political process.[30] The regime became the incest mechanisms that destroyed it.

Doe's ascension to power was as dramatic as his exit. He shot himself to power in 1980 after assassinating William Tolbert in his bid to break the 133 years dominance of the Liberian True Whig Party; he continued by annihilating his enemies and certain ethnic groups.[31] This further heightened antagonism, social discontent and economic dislocation which invariably incapacitated his political stronghold. Consequently, the collapse of the regime was signalled by the invasion of the country in December, 1989 by Charles Taylor led National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

All these social and economic inequalities therefore culminated in December 24th 1989 revolt when a poorly armed rebels of NPFL under Charles Taylor invaded the Nimba county in the northern part of the country, marking the beginning of a crisis that is yet to end.

Charles Taylor was once a confidant of Doe and a former Chief Executive of the Government Services Agency, until he was accused of embezzling $1 million. Consequently, he fled to the United States where he was arrested and detained while the Liberian government was working on his extradition. He fled from the U.S.A. to Libya and later to Burkina Faso where he received military training and organised a guerilla-style campaign which they launched on Nimba county.[32]

The Liberian civil war initially started as skirmishes with Taylor's forces attacking border posts in Liberia. President Doe used his National Army (AFL) to crush the rebels which only ran into a few thousands.[33] Doe later recruited unemployed youths (mainly the

Khran) and released political prisoners to boost the size of his 6,000 armed forces of Liberia. Taylor countered this move by employing over 10,000 men who were paid higher wages.[34]

Having realized that he was losing, Samuel Doe embarked on large scale destruction of innocent lives of selected tribes particularly the Mano and Gio tribes.[35] This move was further countered by Taylor's NPFL. Hence, the scale of war continued to increase and became uncontrollable by May 1990 leading to the increase in the number of refugees to neighbouring countries, while thousands of people lost their lives.[36]

Though Doe did not take the rebellion seriously because of its minimal size, he however, retaliated by killing civilians in Nimba. But NPFL was not daunted and went along to seize Firestone Rubber Plantation, the port of Buchanan and several other towns. In fact, Taylor's forces came close to seizing the capital city Monrovia, but this was halted by the intervention of ECOWAS members, particularly Nigeria Ghana and Gambia.[37]

These countries became concerned with the large number of refugees flooding into neighbouring states of Liberia and the atrocities committed by both Taylor's and Doe's resistance forces.

Initially, the crisis was considered to be an internal one owing to O.A.U. members hold on the principle of non-interference. But at the 13th ECOWAS summit in Banjul, Gambia, member states, particularly the Anglo-phone countries agreed to the formation of a

a

mediation committee based on the fact that subterranean activities of some member states in providing arms and bases for the rebels against the Doe government were taking place which they agreed violated the principle of non-interference.[38]

The then chairman of the Community, Dauda Jawara, stated that the "Committee was set up to... do something about any conflict in the ECOWAS region that would lead to instability and destabilization".[39]

The Mediation Committee called for a ceasefire among the warring factions but when this failed to yield positive results, members agreed to establish the ECOWAS Monitoring Group. However, various scholars have argued that ECOWAS had no judicial basis to intervene in the internal affairs of member states.[40]

They based their argument on the fact that the Economic Community of West African States was conceived and given birth without a major ingredient of most international organisation: political support. It was constructed as a purely economic entity, bereft of a political apparatus for meaningful economic performance. The only provision that the ECOWAS treaty made was in Article 2 which stated that a Tribunal "shall settle disputes regarding the interpretation of the treaty where direct agreement fails".[41]

However, Nigeria in particular saw the Defence Pact of 1981 in which all ECOWAS members are signatories as providing the legal backing for the formation of ECOMOG.

Despite this argument, however, the formation of ECOMOG drew criticisms from Nigerians and most Franco-phone countries in the subregion who viewed the Monitoring Group as an aberration in the existing framework. The anti-ECOMOG posture of Charles Taylor was symbolic of the immediate negative reactions to the scheme. In fact, Taylor's reference to a black Hitler who was using his country's oil wealth to subdue other Africans, was a veiled reference to the Nigerian former president Babangida, dramatising the fact that Nigeria was the prime target of the anti-ECOMOG polemics in the region.[42]

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12 Vogt M.A. (ed), The Liberian Crisis And ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt At regional peace keeping (Opcit) p.37

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16 Yoroms, Gani, Nigeria, ECOMOG And West African Regional Security; Draft paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of African Studies Association Seattle, Washington State, November 1992, p.6

17 Opcit p.27

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23 The African Report, July - August 1979, New york stated however that 30 people were killed and over 400 wounded.

24 Ayam John, Nigeria and Peace Keeping Efforts In Chad and Liberia, paper prepared for International peace and security in A changing World Workshop, New York, 4th April, 1992 p.17

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27 Ibid.

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31 Ibid. p.3

32 General Thomas Quinwomkpa who staged a military coup in 1985 against Doe hailed from Nimba county

33 Vogt, M.A. (ed), The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt At regional Peace Keeping, Gabumo Publishing Company, Lagos, 1992, p.56

34 Ibid. p.56

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37 Newswatch (Lagos), 29th October, 1991 p.17

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CHAPTER FOUR

FORMATION OF ECOMOG

4.1 NIGERIA'S ROLE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ECOMOG: THE LEGAL QUESTION

This chapter will examine the role Nigeria played in the initiation of a peace keeping force in Liberia and the argument that has been raging for and against it. In other words, the legal justification for the formation of ECOWAS Monitoring Group in Liberia. The chapter will also discuss the uneasy road to finding a lasting and peaceful solution to the Liberian crisis.

When the guerilla army of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) started attacking the government of Samuel Doe, marking the beginning of the Liberian war, President Samuel Doe sought for Nigeria's military assistance of 2,000 soldiers to bolster his faltering army, but the Nigerian government declined to intervene unilaterally but initiated a multinational approach to end the crisis under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).[1]

At the 13th summit of the ECOWAS Heads of States held in Banjul on 6th of July, 1990 where the issue of Liberia was raised, it was observed that some of the member states of ECOWAS were backing the guerilla army of Taylor. Cote d'Ivoire had given assistance to the NPFL by authorizing the supply of arms and by providing passage for arms from Burkina Faso originating from Libya to Taylor.[2] This created some disaffection within the Organisation as this act was considered by some of the Heads of States as a violation

of the age long tradition held by member states of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) not to intervene in the internal affairs of member states.[3]

In order to forestall the genocidal war which was at the time becoming alarming, Nigeria proposed for the establishment of a Standing Mediation Committee. However, other member-countries of ECOWAS, particularly Francophone countries argued that as a regional organization, ECOWAS had no judicial backing to interfere in Liberia because, the Organisation was basically created to achieve economic integration within the subregion. In reality, the ECOWAS Charter did not provide a major ingredient of political instrument for the resolution of conflict among member states. Only Article II of the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence made reference to this. It stated that:

> "Member states declare and accept that any armed threat or aggression directed against any member state shall constitute a threat or aggression against the Community".[4]

Some Heads of States argued that ECOWAS cannot achieve "its ultimate objective of economic integration and cooperation unless the subregion was considerably free of political tension and conflict".[5] Similarly, at the end of the 14th Ordinary Session of Heads of State in Abuja in 1991, the ECOWAS Secretary-General, Abass Bundu, succinctly stressed that:

> "You cannot talk meaningfully about economic cooperation and integration by itself without also relating to the underpinning

> of political stability within the subregion. The two are inseparable and therefore have to be discussed inter alia. It is clear .... that regional solidarity and commitment to integration will be considerably enhanced where political stability becomes a common identity and is also perceived as a shared responsibility."[6]

On the issue of non-interference clause in the OAU and United Nations Charters, it can be argued that the situation in Liberia has gone beyond that. As admitted by both the then ECOWAS Chairman, Dauda Jawara, and the Secretary-General of OAU, Salim A. Salim, "the wanton killings going on in Liberia has made the country a slaughterhouse and the situation could no longer be treated as an internal matter."[7] Salim further stated that:

> "Before ECOWAS undertook its initiative, many, including the African media, were condemning the indifference demonstrated by Africa. The most desirable thing would have been to have an agreement of all parties to the conflict and the convergence of views of all members of ECOWAS. But to argue that there is no legal basis for intervention is surprising. Should the countries in West Africa just leave Liberians to fight each other? Will that be more legitimate? Will that be more understandable?"[8]

He did not think so, but added that, if the intervention could be construed as a legal error it remained proper because it is better to make a mistake trying to solve a problem than to remain completely indifferent in such a situation.[9]

In fact, the former president of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida, argued that:

> "We have heard views about the legality of ECOMOG. But those who raise the preposterous questions are equally but indirectly questioning the legality of ECOWAS. The answer therefore to this rather ambiguous question lies in asking the fundamental question, is ECOWAS legal? Furthermore, people who raise the issue of legality should promptly look at Articles 52 of the Charter of United Nations for the appropriate and expected role of ECOWAS and other subregional organizations world-wide .... the Charter of the United Nations .... (states that) ..
>
> (a) Nothing in the present charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies of dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action, provided that such arrangements of agencies and their activities are consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.
>
> (b) The members of the United Nations entering into such arrangements or constituting such agencies shall make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies before referring them to the security council.
>
> (c) The Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies either on the initiative of the states concerned or by reference from the security council."[10]

To further this argument on the justification of ECOMOG's involvement in Liberia, Margaret Vogt insisted that at the time of ECOMOG deployment, "the legal status of Liberia as a sovereign state was in dispute .... there was no government to negotiate with and to hold responsible for the atrocities that were being perpetrated against innocent citizens of Liberia and other African States and for the violations of the immunity governing the establishment of diplomatic missions."[11]

At this stage, it is perhaps relevant to look at the 1978 protocol on Non-Aggression and 1981 ECOWAS Defence Pact. These two protocols had their origin even before the formation of ECOWAS. With the formation of ECOWAS, Nigeria identified her national security within the context of regional security. In fact, General Yakubu Gowon, a former Head of State during whose time ECOWAS was formed, had once expressed the feeling that the national security of Nigeria extends beyond its national boundary."[12]

Nigeria hoped to secure its national security through ECOWAS - a regional body that would be backed in due course by a security system. This would eradicate the military ties that francophone countries have with France. In this vein, therefore, a former Head Of State, General Obasanjo, stated in 1976 that "Africa had no need for an external policeman since there is no vacuum in Africa to be filled militarily by international do-gooders."[13] In fact, in 1982, President Shehu Shagari called to question the "existence of military or defence pacts between some OAU member states and extra-continental powers"[14] referring to Francophone countries.

Clearly, this shows that the formation of ECOWAS was not only necessary but inevitable. Nigeria together with Togo initiated the Protocol on Non-Aggression in 1976, shortly after the formation of ECOWAS. The protocol was signed and adopted in 1978. Under the protocol, member states resolved not to use force as a means of settling disputes among themselves, they also recognise the current borders between them and pledged not to attack each other.

To consolidate the Protocol, another one was adopted and signed in 1981 Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence or the ECOWAS Defence Pact. This protocol or Defence Pact states that member states have agreed that any armed threat or aggression directed against member states shall constitute a threat or aggression against armed aggression (see appendix for the complete agreement). In other words, the Defence Pact has identified three categories of threats which could justify an ECOWAS armed response. These are contained in Articles 16 to 18 of the Protocol.

Article 16 refers to cases of armed threat or aggression directed against a member state by a non-ECOWAS country. In Article 17, it refers to conflicts between ECOWAS-member states, while Article 18 stipulates that where internal conflict in a member state is actively promoted and sustained by outsiders,[15] then ECOWAS should intervene. It was this last Article that ECOWAS employed to justify its response to the conflict in Liberia.

But despite the signing of the Defence Pact, it was never ratified by all the 16 members of the Community for two main reasons or problems. The first problem was posed by Francophone countries who

expressed apprehension at Nigeria's overwhelming power in the subregion. They refused to support one of the points in the ECOWAS Defence Pact which called on member states to accelerate plans for the withdrawal of foreign troops from their respective countries. Hence, the francophone states adopted the Accord de Non Aggression et d 'Assistance en Matiere' de defence or A.N.A.D in 1981, within the context of the C.E.A.O.[16] six years after the formation of ECOWAS.

The A.N.A.D, amongst other things, does not call on member states to withdraw foreign troops from their countries. Obviously, they prefer France assistance in military and defence matters as well as economic matters.

The second problem was the lack of adequate finance, technology and industrial base to back up the pact. Babajima, a research fellow at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, aptly summarises it this way:

> ".... the most vexing is the problem of finance. Where will the money for the operations of the A.A.F.C. (Allied Armed Forces of the Community) come from? Where will the money for the enlarged bureaucracy that will arise out of its formation come from? These questions are relevant because the community is having problems with late payments or even non payment of dues by member states. Nigeria has had to underwrite a large part of the running cost of the Secretariat."[17]

Thus, the Defence Pact was never ratified by all 16 ECOWAS member-states, particularly the Francophone countries. Only 10 members ratified the Pact;[18] the Liberian crisis and its adverse effect on the stability of the region, made Nigeria to shed more light on the need for a collective regional security framework. Nigeria therefore argued that the Liberian situation falls on one of the categories of military crisis which would justify an ECOWAS armed response as identified by the 1981 Defence Pact.

4.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF ECOWAS STANDING MEDIATION COMMITTEE:

In his speech at the 13th ECOWAS Session, in 1990, the former Nigerian President, General Babangida, who proposed the setting up of the Standing Mediation Committee, stated that:

"The noble ideals of the ECOWAS were anchored on solidarity, unity, mutual trust and good neighbourliness. We should always uphold these principal ingredients in our dealings with one another. .... In view of the occasional clashes resulting from political misunderstanding among some of our member states, I propose that the summit should set up a Standing Mediation Committee of four members ... such a Committee should intervene in timely fashion, whenever such disputes arise. The membership of the Committee could be reviewed every three years..."[19]

The Community, therefore, reiterated that "regional security and stability as well as peace and concord, are necessary conditions for effective subregional cooperation and integration..."[20]

Thus, the Standing Mediation Committee was set up championed by Nigeria to "prevent Liberia, a member state from sinking further into anarchy and destruction."[21] The former Nigerian Vice President, Admiral Aikhomu had explained that:

> "... when the crisis in Liberia degenerated into almost senseless killings with a possible invitation for massive extra continental interference and destabilisation of the subregion, the intervention of the leaders of ECOWAS became an urgent necessity and indeed responsibility. The purpose has been:
>
> (a) to bring the carnage to a halt;
>
> (b) to intervene in the fighting between the forces, separate the belligerents and establish a ceasefire; and
>
> (c) to restore law and order in the country and help to instal an interim government, which will in due course, work out necessary arrangements and facilities agreeable to the principal actors for a return to normal or democratic government in Liberia."[22]

The Standing Mediation Committee consisted of five members: Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana, Togo and Mali. The Committee's plan was endorsed by both the OAU and the UNO and included the following:[23]

(1) An immediate ceasefire;

(2) The formation of a peace keeping force;

(3) The establishment of an interim government representing the various political and ethnocultural interests.

However, none of the leaders of the warring factions was eligible to serve as the president of an interim administration. Similarly, both the President and the Vice President of the Interim Regime will not be eligible to contest the ensuing national elections.

The fourth condition which is the holding of national elections within a year, under international supervision, was rejected by Taylor because it would prevent him from becoming the president of Liberia, a position he felt entitled to.[24]

After the Banjul summit, in June 1990, ECOWAS Heads of states and government and their respective foreign ministers embarked on a series of meeting and consultations with warring factions and with other interested groups of Liberia. Unfortunately, attempts by the Committee to resolve the problem was unsuccessful because of divergent interests of members which made mediation efforts difficult. Each of the warring party leaders showed willingness to a ceasefire only if he could eventually emerge as the president of Liberia.[25]

On 30th August, 1990, ECOWAS called for a national conference which was convened again in Banjul. All the principal political parties, churches and major interest groups were in attendance except for

Charles Taylor, the leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia. Amos Sawyerr was elected as the Interim President while Bishop Diggs became the vice-president of Liberia.[26]

By mid September 1990, Sawyer made another attempt at conciliation by proposing the setting up of an interim legislative assembly with Taylor's NPFL having 6 seats while Yormie Johnson's INPFL would have 4. This was again rejected by Charles Taylor who was all out for the presidency. Later in the same month, the United States' government mediated negotiations which led to the formal declaration of a ceasefire, but which was promptly violated by the NPFL.[27]

As the war continued with no end in sight, ECOWAS member states continued to seek other measures to end the crisis. Hence, the establishment of ECOWAS Monitoring Group which was initially proposed since early August 1990, was finally ratified. It decided to move to Liberia as stated in the communique of the Mediation Committee:

> "The failure of the warring parties to cease hostilities has led to the massive destruction of property and massacre by all the parties of thousands of innocent civilians, including foreign nationals .... the result is a state of anarchy and total breakdown of law and order in Liberia. These developments have traumatised the Liberian population and greatly shocked

> the people of the subregion and the rest of the international community. The ECOWAS Mediation Committee (has therefore) decided to assume their responsibility that peace and stability is maintained within the subregion and in the African continent as a whole ...."[28]

This implies that "the formation of ECOMOG was inspired by the philosophy which demanded an African solution[29] for the purpose of keeping the peace, restoring law and order and ensuring that ceasefire is respected.[30]

But as preparation for ECOWAS Monitoring Group to take off got to a top gear, Togo the sixth ECOMOG member withdrew from the force, leaving Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea and Sierra-Leone - all Anglophone countries except for Guinea.

4.3 ANGLOPHONE - FRANCOPHONE PROBLEM:

At the initial formation of ECOMOG, the French speaking countries in the West African subregion refused to cooperate in the establishment and deployment of ECOMOG for the basic reason that they fear Nigeria's domination in the region. This fear and suspicion of Nigeria by the francophone countries has been in existence right from the 1960s when most African countries got their

independence. In addition to this, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso have been accused of aiding the Liberian rebels, particularly Charles Taylors's NPFL.

The francophone countries, therefore, argued that they were not fully consulted about the ECOWAS peace efforts in Liberia and so they characterised the peace efforts as an "anglophone road show".[31] They accused the Mediation Committee of exceeding its mandate in sending ECOMOG into Liberia. Apart from showing interest in the peace keeping effort, they also condemned the action. President Campaore expressed their sentiments in a message to the ECOWAS Chairman saying:

> "We learnt from the international media the momentuous decision by some members of ECOWAS to send a supposedly conciliatory force into Liberia without first fully briefing other countries on the exact assignment of such a force. Burkina Faso is very disappointed by this move, and as far as we are concerned the permanent mediation committee created during the May ECOWAS summit is not competent to intervene in a member state's internal affair".[32]

Although the practical arguments for the rule on non-intervention are well known, the message of president Campaore, in fact, reflected the thinking of the Francophone West African states, and their objection to the peace keeping force in Liberia.Another

explanation for the Francophone states' reluctance to participate in ECOMOG might be due to financial constraints as observed by Professor James and M. Vogt, "financial constraint underpined the reluctance of many Francophone West Africa states from contributing forces as each participating state was expected to meet the financial cost of peace keeping. The United States had to offer financial incentives to facilitate the deployment of the small Senegalese contingent deployed to ECOMOG."[33]

The Anglophone states, therefore, supported the interim government that was formed, while Francophone states threw their support behind the rebel factions.

By late 1990, the rift within ECOWAS had escalated to the level where Francophone countries were planning to recognise the NPFL government of Charles Taylor as the legitimate government of Liberia. It took a diplomatic 'tour de force' to avert the demise of ECOWAS. Former president of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida had to explain that ECOMOG "is not an army of conquest or occupation but on a mission of ensuring the restoration of peace and normalcy" to Liberia - Africa's first and oldest republic.[34] He further added that, "I certainly agree with those who see any misunderstanding or conflicting signals from member-states of the ECOWAS as disagreement over procedural issues and not over the fundamental roles of the ECOWAS in the Liberian crisis."[35]

However, the Chairman of ECOWAS, Sir Dauda Jawara of Gambia denied that the Community was disintegrating along Anglophone - Francophone member countries over the role of ECOMOG in Liberia. He told the British Broadcasting Corporation, in an interview, that the peace keeping force sent to Liberia was formed in line with the ECOWAS peace plan, adding that:

> "They will continue to be a peace keeping force but if there are elements that continue to hold Liberia to ransom, lawless and indisciplined forces, simply shooting at random, I think it is the duty of any peace keeping force to try and disarm such elements to protect the population, protect themselves and to protect the country."[36]

But, the francophone countries viewed it differently. ECOWAS leaders had to seek for President Houphouet Boigny's effort to resolve the misunderstanding, because Cote d'Ivoire is seen as another power after Nigeria, to be reckoned with. The first proposal that he made was a call for a replacement of the ECOWAS peace keeping force by a United Nations peace keeping force. This proposal was not supported by most member states.[37]

The Francophone states have always been concerned with Nigerian political, economic and military ambitions. One reason for Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire support of Taylor is the fact that they "wanted to exert some influence in West Africa to challenge Nigeria's position in the subregion."[38] To this effect, Cote d'Ivoire calculated that the anti-Nigerian orientation of the

National Patriotic Front of Liberia would make it a reliable ally if it assumes power in Liberia. Conversely, the Nigerian strategy is that by supporting the ECOWAS peace efforts and preventing the emergence of a government led by the NPFL any future government in Liberia will owe it a debt of gratitude, thus, Liberia will be supportive of Nigeria's efforts to maintain her leadership role in the region.

Another reason was that of family relationship between Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoirean leaders. Alphonse Tolbert, the eldest son of president William Tolbert of Liberia, married the adopted daughter of president Felix Houphouet Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire. In the African context, this marriage joined the Houphouet and Tolbert families with the relationship between father-in-law and son-in-law as well as between the two fathers-in-law being much closer than it is in many western cultures. Doe publicly executed president Tolbert when he assumed power in 1980, and his son Alphonse was arrested and later died in custody.[39] Later, Alphonse's widow got married to president Blaise Campaore of Burkina Faso.

When Taylor approached president Boigny for aid in order to initiate an insurgence against Doe's government, the Ivorien leader sent him to his son-in-law in Burkina Faso who gave Taylor the assistance he needed and introduced the rebel leader to Qaddafi.[40]

Thus, Nigeria's concern in Liberia is in part aimed at countering the influence of these two countries.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Nigeria has since independence assumed a 'grandfather-son' approach with incremental sacrifice to her neighbours and has thus, maintained the reputation of a so-called subregional power. It has consistently convinced ECOWAS member states of its non territorial ambition in the subregion. It has financed and sustained not only ECOWAS but assisted individual member states and has shown its preparedness to commit more to the peace and survival of the subregion.[42]

Nigeria believed that the security of the subregion is her security and its insecurity is her insecurity as 55% of people in West Africa live in Nigeria.

Another reason for Nigeria's concern on Liberia was because Nigeria has also had a close relationship with Liberia, particularly from 1985 when Ibrahim Babangida (former president of Nigeria) took over the government in Nigeria. This friendship between Nigeria's president and Samuel Doe was further cemented in 1988 when the Nigerian government bought over $30 million of Liberia's debts in order to make it credit worthy following the refusal of the African Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund to grant Liberia new loans due to its inability to service its debts.[43]

In addition, a section of Liberia's Trans-African highway was constructed by Nigeria as well as a school of international relations in Monrovia named after the Nigerian president, General Ibrahim Babangida. The school was also provided with seven professors from Nigerian Universities.[44]

Moreover, Nigeria has been involved in mediating conflicts between Liberia and its immediate neighbours particularly in 1988 when a diplomatic row arose between Sierra Leone and Liberia over a minor border clash.[45] It came as no surprise, therefore, when Samuel Doe paid a solidarity visit after Babangida survived an attempted coup de tat and also to request for weapons and armed forces to counter the insurgence by Taylor in 1990, which marked the beginning of the Liberian war.

Nigeria's flirtation with Doe's regime had made it a suspect in the eyes of the NPFL and prince Johnson's INPFL, inspite of Nigeria's participation in the ECOWAS Mediation Committee and the numerical preponderance of her troops in the 6,000 strong ECOMOG peace keeping force (as at 1990).[46] In fact, "at the peak of the Liberian crisis, president Doe was frequenting Nigeria more for assistance instead of Banjul, the Gambia capital, where the then ECOWAS Chairman was".[47] Similarly, the deployment of ECOMOG into Liberia at the time when the Executive Mansion was under siege by Taylor and Johnson was perceived to be compatible with Nigeria's motive to protect the late Doe rather than the much heralded rhetoric of minimizing human suffering. In view of this distrust of Nigeria's motives in ECOMOG, Taylor declared war on ECOMOG even before it landed in Monrovia.[48]

With the Anglophone-Francophone conflict therefore the ECOWAS peace initiative (ECOMOG) was launched without a cease fire agreement signed between the warring factions. Nigeria however made various diplomatic efforts to overcome this problem. Hence, after Doe's death at the hands of Johnson forces, general francophone solidarity

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began to erode following a series of ECOWAS reconciliation conferences. The establishment and operations of ECOMOG became acceptable as a product of ECOWAS military initiative. Soon after, Senegal sent troops to ECOMOG, and the idea of a regional military cooperation began to attract a new political commitment which was demonstrated by the willingness of francophone West Africa to support the attempt to restore peace and order in Liberia. However, as observed by Lieutenant General Erskine, the idea of regional military cooperation and the peace keeping effort ought to have been approached more professionally and effectively.[49] So far, all ECOWAS members have contributed in seeing to the end of the Liberian crisis.

Thus, from the foregoing discussion, it can be seen that ECOMOG was envisaged "to safeguard the interest of the Community's citizens who had been trapped in the war torn country, to put a stop to human carnage which has now degenerated into a fraticide-genocide war", for this, "the sanctity of human life was no longer being respected .... de jure authority in Liberia had disappeared and ECOWAS as a subregional organization cannot sit by and watch the continued decimation of human lives in the region .... ECOWAS has political and moral responsibility to put a stop to this genocidal war even if it means through forceful intervention".[50]

The whole essence of this therefore is to say that ECOMOG is a peace keeping force and its aim is to ensure a ceasefire in Liberia and bring the warring parties to a round table conference to resolve

the crisis and to allow for the formation of a democratic system of government.

The bankruptcy of this, however, is that most of these advocates of democracy for Liberia are themselves leaders who do not practise democracy. Many of them are military dictators and sit put leaders in their various capacities. For instance, the Nigeria political impasse of 1992 to 1993 was as a result of the cancellation of elections which according to reports, is the fairest elections ever carried out in the country.[51] The military rulers are yet to hand over to a democratically elected government, five years after the commencement of the Liberian imbrioglo. Similarly, Dauda Jawara, Chairman of ECOWAS when ECOMOG was created, ruled The Gambia for 27 years before his autocratic government though under the guise of democracy was finally toppled by a military junta in 1994.[52]

Coming back to Nigeria, it has been argued by some observers that Nigeria's interest in Liberia cannot also be far fetched from the fact that the rebels of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) headed by Charles Taylor, encompasses dissidents from other West African countries including Nigeria, who were promised by Taylor, that their assistance in overthrowing the Doe regime would be reciprocated by assisting them in dislodging their respective governments from power.[53]

In another point of view, Nigeria's role in the deployment of ECOMOG can be said to be an attempt by the then Nigerian president and his

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government to divert the attention of the Nigerian military (i.e, to keep them busy abroad) from organizing coup de tat to topple them. There is a little home truth about this allegation if we examine the state of affairs in Nigeria from 1990 when criticism against ECOMOG at home was very high, particularly in 1992 when the June 12th election was cancelled. The initiator of ECOMOG was pressured to step down or "step aside" after he had installed a civilian transitional government of Chief Ernest Shonekan, an ally to the former president.[54]

However, Shonekan expressed his willingness to withdraw Nigerian troops from Liberia within the shortest time possible but this attempt was disrupted with the 'resignation' of Shonekan and handing over power to General Abacha who had been a top military government official since 1984 when Buhari took over power from Shagari, through the reign of Babangida and was the Chief of Army STaff when he resumed the office of the Head of State.

Perhaps, one would argue that Shonekan was forced to resign because of his inability to arrest the political situation or impasse in the country and to dance to the tune of the former president Babangida, who was alleged to be pulling the strings behind the scene, as some political analysts argued.[55]

It was therefore not surprising that the Abacha government changed the decision of "bringing the boys back home" from Liberia, inspite

of internal criticism. The argument was that, "it will be a great disaster if at this stage of development in Liberia, we should pull out without realising the sacrifice in terms of men and materials which we have put in .... It is not neat to just pull out without bringing the peace process which was initiated by ECOMOG (in) which Nigeria played a substantial role to a logical conclusion."[56]

Nevertheless, no matter what the hidden agenda of the Nigerian government is in the Liberian crisis, Nigeria has already expended a lot of resources in ECOMOG and has given legal justification for its involvement in ECOMOG. It now remain for us to hope that the five year old Liberia war would finally come to an end soon, especially, with the signing of the latest peace agreement in Abuja last year.

4.4 RESTORATION OF AN UNEASY PEACE:

This section will concentrate on the discussion of ECOMOG activities in Liberia and the various peace agreements signed, as well as the role played by the numerous field commanders in the resolution of the Liberian problem. An assessment of the peace keeping force will also be made.

ECOWAS Monitoring Group's involvement in Liberia began by acting essentially as an evacuation force. The peace initiative was initially dubbed as "operation liberty".[57] But even before it was deployed, the NPFL of Taylor had declared war against it hence,

ECOMOG forces were attacked as they landed at the Port in Monrovia. Taylor had threatened that he would kill one Nigerian or one Ghanaian for every Liberian killed as a result of ECOMOG activities in the war torn country,[58] adding that,

> "There would be a very, very high price to pay for the death of any Liberian in the hands of a West African peace keeping force. I now have a right to ask for help from whoever wants to assist me. I am personally directing the military operations. We'll fight to the last man. We don't consider this force to be a peace force. I have given orders to open fire on any stranger setting foot on our territory."[59]

It therefore became evident that the evacuation exercise cannot be carried out without a form of law and order before an interim government was put in place. The constant attack by the NPFL forces and occasional ones from Johnson's Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia brought the need for a change in the terms of reference of ECOMOG's mandate, because "ECOMOG cannot keep a peace which did not exist."[60]

Consequently, by mid September 1990, the force was instructed to enforce a ceasefire, "to clear the capital city of all threats of attack and establish and maintain effective buffer."[61] In other words, the capacity of the NPFL to attack, must be reduced or neutralised. Hence, ECOMOG forces were increased from 3,000 to 6,000 men, additional troops from Nigeria and Ghana were transformed into NIBATT II GHANBATT II arrived in Monrovia and a second phase

of ECOMOG was launched.[62] More offensive weapons were added to its arsenal and aerial bombardment was employed to eliminate immediate threat posed by Charles Taylor and his men. Main vessels were assigned to ECOMOG including a Nigerian naval ship, NNS Ambe (an amphibian landing craft with immense loading capacity) and the Ghanaian merchant vessel, MV Tano River. Others are two Ghanaian gun boats (GNS Yogaga and GNS Achimota), two fast attack war ships from Nigeria: NNS Ekpe and NNS Damisa, and the DOLPHIN MIRA which played the role of a tug boat. Its duty was to help in anchoring all the ocean vessels.[63]

The change of ECOMOG mandate was also as a result of the killing of president Samuel Doe by Johnson's INPFL. Doe was abducted from the ECOMOG premises where he was convening a meeting with the then ECOMOG commander and later killed.

By 22nd October, 1990, a ministerial meeting of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee was held and all the warring factions were invited.[64] Six countries: Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Mali were present. Representatives of the O.A.U. and the United Nations were also present. The Armed Forces of Liberia (A.F.L.), I.N.P.F.L. and the N.P.F.L. also sent their representatives. An Islamic interest group led by Hassan Kromah also attended. However, the ceasefire agreement signed at the end of the meeting was violated almost immediately by Taylor's N.P.F.L.

Taylor refused to make a personal appearance whenever a meeting of such nature was called, hence providing a cog-in-the-wheel for the immediate resolution of the crisis. He only made his first appearance at the Banjul meeting in November, 1990.

Reasons given by political analyst was that Taylor was facing serious threats of defeat on the battle field. But by that time, the ECOMOG had its mandate changed from peace keeping to peace enforcement. However, at this juncture, I shall take a brief look at the main warring factions in Liberia.

(a) The National Patriotic Front of Liberia:

The NPFL was essentially drawn from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups and owes its origin from the November 1985 General Quinwokpa's abortive coup. (*Quinwokpa was from these ethnic groups*). Consequently, the Gio and Mano suffered reprisals at the hands of Doe's Khran tribe and thus, many of them were forced into exile to as far as the United State, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Fasa, Guinea, Sierra Leone among others.[65] These refugees were accepted in these host countries who also abhorred the political prosecution of the Doe's administration. Charles Taylor was among those that went to exile.

"According to intelligence report, Charles Taylor, a former civil servant of Americo-Liberia extraction, had been plotting against Samuel Doe's government since 1987 when in December 1989 ... Taylor erupted in an armed insurrection in Nimba county bordering Cote

d'Ivoire, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia .... was deemed to have been inaugurated as a formidable force. By mid March 1990 Charles Taylor's NPFL which had an estimated strength of 1,500 men, had emerged as a power force drawn primarily from refugees from the Gio, Mano, Grebo, Kru, Gbadi, Americo-Liberians, and regular soldiers that had deflected from Samuel Doe's Armed Forces of Liberia and from the external support it enjoyed from Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Libya."[66]

The NPFL became equipped with assaultrifles, recoils, propelled grenades, mortars, machine guns and other sophisticated weapons, supplied mostly by Libya.[67] The rebel group employed both conventional military tactics and guerilla warfare. At the time of intervention, the NPFL had captured the major towns and the main roads that linked Liberia's two eastern counties and the Grand Gedeh and Maryland to the west of the country. The group had also captured an A.F.L. army garrison in Sekpletic and Dubuzon. These gave them access to more arms and ammunitions. By mid May 1990 the rebel ground had captured two-thirds of the country.[68] It had taken over most of the south eastern Liberia and had reached the Atlantic at Green ville - a major timber port 600 kilometres down the coast from Abidjan. The rebel attack continued and captured Gbarnga which is the last main town on the road to the capital. Gbarnga was henceforth made the capital of the NPFL..

With these achievements, the Doe government had no alternative than to agree to negotiate with the NPFL. Taylor's preconditions

for negotiations which included that the negotiations be held in Buchanan or Kakata - towns controlled by the NPFL - was rejected by Doe because it tantamounts to recognizing Taylor as the new Liberian leader.[69] With the refusal by Samuel Doe, the NPFL launched its final military onslaught on the outskirts of Monrovia which led to the capture of R.F.J. airport and the subsequent capture of suburban parts of Monrovia where it halted its advances. This tactical error only provided for bilateral and multilateral intervention which the NPFL opposed and introduced new dimensions to the protracted conflict.

(b) The Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia:

The INPFL is a break away faction from the NPFL and just like the latter, its forces were drawn from the disaffected and brutally suppressed Gio, Mano, Sarpo Gbandi and Kru ethnic groups. The leader of the INPFL, Prince Yormie Johnson was himself a Gio by origin.

Although both the two rebel group leaders shared a common goal and aspirations at the initial point, they parted ways when both were poised to attack the executive mansion, the desire of each of them to become the president of Liberia created this rift. Hence, they became enemies with each trying to excel the other in sheer brutality and thoughtless violence.

Prince Johnson had insisted that Taylor had become greedy and over ambitious, wanting to be president in place of Doe. "That was not the idea ... (for me) I still maintain my original stand. I don't want to be president. I am contented with ..... being a fighter and

I will fight ... until Charles Taylor's over-ambitious plans are shattered and until the Liberian people's dignity is restored ... the gun that liberates must not rule".[70]

But one wonders how this could be achieved when both groups were reported to have engaged in wanton killings of innocent citizens in the course of the war. In fact, Prince Johnson had once declared himself president after killing President Doe.

(c) The Armed Forces of Liberia:

The AFI was formed by Master-Sergeant Doe to protect the Liberian natives, after the 1980 coup which brought Doe to power and saw to the end of the 133 years of the True Whig Party of the Americo-Liberians. The key leaders of the coup were Doe from the Khrahn tribe, Corporal Wehsen from the Sarpo ethnic group, Thomas Quinwokpa from Gio and Mano group, Fallab Varney from Gbadi and Nicholas Podier from the Kru ethnic group.[71]

But with time, Samuel Doe began to alleniate himself from the same people that aided his succession to power. The other ethnic groups apart from the Krahn, became excluded from the centre of power. Doe also reorganised the Provincial Redemption Council in order to ensure the dominance of the Krahn tribe and their cognate Loma tribe,[72] which owed their allegiance to president Doe and not to the Liberian state.

The AFL had an estimated strength of 7 battalions, and was equipped with assault riffles, rocket launchers, machine guns, anti-tank

weapons, artillery among others.[73]

But by December 1989 the NPFL became better equipped than the AFL and as a result of which the latter suffered severe setbacks in its operations against Charles Taylor's rebel group and became confined to the executive mansion and the Barclay Bank Training Centre in Monrovia by May 1990.[74]

President Doe, however, refused to heed to international pressures that persuaded him "to leave Liberia and allow negotiations to commence when Charles Taylor and his NPFL forces were poised to attack the Executive Mansion in May 1990".[75] Doe equally opposed the deployment of ECOMOG to Liberia arguing that "the decision to impose a multinational force on him was a usurpation of his sovereign right to establish control over the internal security of Liberia".[76]

Doe had earlier thought that the United States would come to his aid, but when the United States sent its ships to evacuate American citizens only, Samuel Doe realised that what he wanted from the United State was not fourth coming and hence, he became amenable to the deployment of the West African peace keeping force.[77]

(d) The United Liberation Movement For Democracy In Liberia (ULIMO):

The ULIMO was a break away faction from the Armed Forces of Liberia and was formed by Alhaji G.V. kromah in 1993. Just like the other

warring factions the United Liberation Movement have been accused of committing many atrocities in the course of the Liberian war, including the killing of 600 refugees in Harbel area in 1993.[78] The ULIMO has also contributed to the failure of several peace agreements including the December 1993 Accord signed in Ghana. The rebel group had also challenged and attacked several of the NPFL held areas including the Nimba county.[79]

4.5 THE PEACE ACCORDS:

After President Samuel Doe's death Prince Yeduo Johnson declared himself president. Almost simultaneously, the Commander of later Doe's guard, Brigadier-General David Nimley, assumed control of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) or what remained of it and held to the executive mansion fortress while declaring himself president as well. Both Johnson and Nimley, however, agreed to hand over power to the interim government of Amos Sawyer but insisted on a continued pursuit of the military option in settling the conflict.

On October 15th 1990, another extra ordinary session was called at the initiation of the former Cote d'Ivoirean president Houphouet Boigny at Yamoussoukro.[80] However, the date of the meeting became the bone of contention. Consequently, on 22nd of October, the ECOWAS Chairman called for a preliminary meeting of ministers of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee. The objectives of the meeting were[81]

- to assist all warring parties to negotiate and finally sign a ceasefire agreement; and

- to properly prepare the grounds for the proposed extra ordinary summit, an advance copy of this ceasefire agreement was sent to each of the parties.

The INPFL and AFL accepted the draft in its entirety, while the NPFL indicated its readiness to accept the agreement provided it was amended especially with respect to the provisions relating to the interim government. It also agreed to accept the ECOWAS Monitoring Group on condition that provision be made for the inclusion of contingents from other states within and outside ECOWAS.[82]

After a series of extensive discussions with the warring parties and the amendment of the draft agreement which the NPFL made greater contributions, the NPFL delegation however refused to sign the drafted ceasefire agreement that had fully accommodated their own amendments.

By November 26th, 1990 following the refusal of Taylor to accept an invitation to a meeting with some members of the ECOWAS known as the contact group which was formed specifically for this mission another extra ordinary session was held in Bamako.[83]

Again in December, a fourth ministerial meeting of the Standing Mediation Committee was convened in Banjul. At this meeting, the warring parties prepared and signed a joint statement which stated out that:[84]

(1) The warring parties, in keeping with the final communique of the ECOWAS Authority, hereby agree to form a future interim

government. Towards this end, the warring parties agree to organise an All-Liberia conference in Liberia within the next 60 days.

(2) Also, the warring parties agree to constitute a Technical Committee to work out security arrangements, under the supervision of ECOWAS, for the hosting of the All-Liberia conference.

(3) The warring parties agree to seek assistance from ECOWAS and other friendly governments and organisations to help repatriate and resettle Liberians prior to the All-Liberia conference.

(4) Upon formation of the future Interim Government, the said government shall take appropriate measures, with the assistance of ECOWAS, to begin disarming the warring parties.

(5) The warring parties agree to continue the ceasefire as is with all parties remaining where they were as of the signing of the ceasefire agreement in Bamako on November 28th, 1990 and to continue discussions in Liberia on the modalities of monitoring the ceasefire under the supervision of ECOWAS. All efforts will be made to conclude the modalities for monitoring the ceasefire within 30 days.

(6) The warring parties agree that immediately upon signing this statement, all seaports and airports will be considered military freezones. Towards this end, warring parties controlling the seaports/airports to be utilized will work out the appropriate security measures whenever use of the seaports/

airports is desired. For each arrival/departure, two inspectors of ECOMOG will work along with the warring party controlling the seaport/airport each time it is used.

However, by January, 1991 the National Patriotic Front of Liberia objected to the confinement and disarming of its troops until the outcome of the proposed second national conference was known. This created a stalemate inspite of the fact that agreement had already been reached in principle during the committee's deliberations on the modalities for implementation of the ceasefire.[85]

Consequently, another meeting was convened in the Togolese capital, Lome, in February, 1991 in which all the leaders of the warring factions were present as well as the president of the Interim Government and a representative of the OAU, who was invited to attend as an observer.

During the meeting, a formal ceasefire agreement was reached, adopted and signed by the three warring parties. The agreement also included modalities for the implementation of the ceasefire. Major elements of the settlement include:[86]

(1) The immediate confinement of the troops of the warring parties to specific camps at various points throughout the country.

(2) The maintenance and monitoring of the ceasefire throughout the country, including seaports, airports and land entry points by ECOMOG liaising with the technical committee to comprise the

Field Commander of ECOMOG or his representative and a representative of each of the warring parties.

(3) That the warring parties thus confined and encamped will be disarmed by ECOMOG following the All-Liberia conference.

(4) The holding of an All-Liberia conference on March 15, 1991 with a view to reaching the ultimate political accommodation.

The parties thus, agreed for the encampment and disarming of their troop. ECOMOG was also to incorporate Malian troops into its force.

All-Liberia Conference 15th March, 1991:

The Lome summit and agreements brought relative calm to allow for the much talked about All-Liberia conference to take place on 15th of March, 1991 under the triumvirate chairmanship of Ambassador H. Brewer, Archbishop M. K. Francis and Sheikh K. K. Konneh.[87] The purpose of the national conference was to find a peaceful means of ending the unfortunate situation in Liberia through the formation of an interim government acceptable to the Liberian people.

The NPFL submitted proposals to the conference but later walked out of the meeting after refusing to agree on several issues both of substance and of procedure.[88] This setback by the NPFL did not however stop the conference from forming an interim government known as the Interim Government of National Unity in which Professor Amos Sawyer was endorsed by the conference as the President of the I.G.N.U., while the INPFL nominated Dr. Peter Naigow as the vice-president, who replaced Bishop Ronald Diggs.[89]

A Unicameral Interim Legislative Assembly made up of 51 members was also established with 26 members from 13 counties, 13 representatives from the Assembly in Gbarnga and 13 representatives from the Assembly in Monrovia, 5 members came from the NPFL and one member from the INPFL, while 2 members were from the interest groups and 6 from the 2 existing political parties.[90]

Prior to this national conference, a joint declaration on the Liberian situation was held on the 1st of March, 1991, at the invitation of the Togolese president, in which the warring parties agreed to cooperate fully with ECOWAS and to refrain from taking any action that might be prejudicial to the arrangements being made to ensure the successful convening of the All-Liberia National Conference".[91]

However, shortly after the National conference, clashes continued to occur between the rebel groups to the extent that another meeting was called, this time in Yammousoukro in June 1991, at the invitation of president Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire because, "war appears to be defying all efforts to bring sanity to the place and at every crucial turn, it has been Mr. Taylor frivolously throwing a spanner into the peace works."[92]

Consultative Meeting of Heads of States in Yamoussoukro - Yamoussoukro I 30th June, 1991:[93]

On 30th of June, 1991, a meeting was convened under the chairmanship of president Boigny in which the warring parties attended as well as the Heads of States of Nigeria, Gambia, Togo and Burkina Faso and the Interim President of Liberia.

The Heads of States present at the meeting requested president Boigny to launch an urgent appeal to both Sawyer and Charles Taylor to accept a ceasefire, as preliminary national reconciliation and restoration of peace to the war torn country. The proposals made which included the maintenance of security in each of the zones under the control of the two parties (Sawyer and Taylor) were accepted by them, they also pledged their reconciliation in the presence of the five Heads of States.

The 14th Summit of ECOWAS Heads of States and Government Abuja I, 4th - 6th July, 1991:[94]

Few days after the Yamoussoukro agreement, the 14th ECOWAS summit was held in Abuja - Nigeria. During the session an extensive review of the Liberian situation was made, while the communique released at the end of the summit stated that:

> "The Authority stressed the need for the five member committee to ensure that a proper environment conducive to the holding of free and fair elections are held; such environment include the effective supervision and control of the armed forces belonging to each of the parties, the facilitation of the repatriation and settlement of Liberian refugees prior to the elections, and the effective restoration of conditions necessary to guarantee free movement of persons and unfettered campaigning by the political parties, considering that the elections are envisaged to be held within a period of six months, the authority requested the committee of five to do everything possible to expedite the creation of these necessary conditions. Recalling

> the fact that the All-Liberia National Conference had agreed on the composition of the Interim Election Commission, the authority requested the Interim Government of Liberia to expedite the constitution of the Commission to enable it commence its works."[95]

The summit also re-affirmed the need for other ECOWAS member states to contribute troops in strengthening the capacity of ECOMOG to *overcome the Liberian problem.*

First Yamoussoukro summit of the Committee of five - Yamoussoukro II:[96]

This summit took place on the 29th of July, 1991 following the endorsement by members at the Abuja summit. The Cote d'Ivoire president again chaired the meeting. Others present included the *Heads of States of The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal, a* representative of president Eyadema of Togo, Professor Amos Sawyer, Taylor and representative of International Negotiations Network (INN).

After reviewing the Liberian situation, commendation was made to former president of United States, Jimmy Carter, for responding to the invitation and for making the INN assist in organizing electoral process in Liberia.

Second Meeting of the Committee of Five - 16th - 17th September, 1991 - Yamoussoukro III:[97]

As agreed during the Yamoussoukro II meeting, another meeting was convened again under the same chairmanship of president Boigny. It

was maintained at the meeting that ECOMOG should be remodelled and reinforced. Similarly, the warring factions agreed for the disarming and encampment of their troops in designated locations by ECOMOG forces.

Both the Interim Government of Liberia and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia agreed to:

(1) Set up a five member Elections Commission for the organization and supervision of the elections in Liberia.

(2) Establish a five member Ad hoc Supreme Court to adjudicate disputes arising from the electoral process as provided by the Liberian constitution; and

(3) To cooperate fully with the International Negotiations Network of the Carter Centre invited by the Committee to assist with the electoral process.

Third Meeting of the Committee of Five, 29 - 30 October, 1991, Yamoussoukro IV:[98]

As agreed in the previous meeting, the committee of five met again, with other members of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee, Guinea and Sierra-Leone in attendance. Others invited to the meeting were Salim A. Salim, the Secretary-General of O.A.U. and Mrs. Dayle Spencer of the International Negotiations Network.

As usual, the review of developments relating to the Liberian situation was made. The parties were urged to speed up preparations

for the commencement of the Interim Elections Commission and the disarming and encampment of combatants. Other agreements reached include:

(a) ECOMOG now to cover the whole of Liberia, as ECOMOG troops have to be deployed all over the country for the supervision of the encampment and disarming of all warring factions.

(b) ECOMOG shall enjoy freedom of movement throughout Liberia.

(c) All warring factions will voluntarily abandon their fighting locations and move into designated camps.

(d) Eminent persons of the International Negotiations network will visit Liberia during encampment and disarmament to reinforce the confidence of warring factions.

(e) All parties will recognise the absolute neutrality of ECOMOG and demonstrate trust and confidence in it.

(f) Lost weapons need to be located and recovered.

(g) Obstacles and minefields have to be neutralized.

(h) ECOMOG troops to monitor all entry points into Liberia.

On the other hand, ECOMOG was given certain tasks which will enhance the smooth encampment and disarming of the warring factions. These include among other things, the elimination of external threat to the disarmament process, patrol and static guards to monitor all avenues of approach to Liberia, providing security for all VIPs and

local dignatories where necessary and the stationing of guards in strategic installations.[99]

However, these anticipated development did not all happen because of obstacles created by Charles Taylor. Instead of working for the implementation of the agreement, Taylor was reported to have recruited 5,000 men to boost his army that was supposed to be disarmed by January, 1992.[100]

Several attempts were made to ensure that Taylor heeded to the agreement signed in yamoussoukro, but to no avail. For instance, the Interim government of Sawyer imposed economic sanctions against the NPFL and its controlled territory in December 1991 because, "... (Sawyer) had seen the peace process stalled by the NPFL and watched that body build up a vast arsenal mainly to ensure that the pillage continues".[101]

Similarly, people in Liberia had expressed their unhappiness for the delay in the implementation of the peace accord. Taylor on the other hand refused to commence the process of the implementation until the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia has withdrawn into Sierra Leone.[102]

Finally, in February 1992, Sawyer offered the post of vice-president to Taylor on condition that the NPFL disarmed and encamped within the stipulated period. Several cabinet and legislative positions were also offered to top NPFL members but yet the efforts yielded no fruitful results.[103] Hence, the Informal Consultative Group of ECOWAS Committee of Five decided to meet again to further the peace process.

Informal Consultative Group Meeting 6th - 7th April, 1992:[104]

Five months after the Yamoussoukro rounds, an Informal Consultative Group meeting was held in Geneva at the invitation and under the chairmanship of president Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire. Present at the meeting were Heads of States of Senegal, Burkina Faso and Amos Sawyer, Taylor and the vice president of Nigeria who represented the Nigeria president.

It was observed during the meeting that positive development were recorded amidst the stalemate created by the NPFL - which include the appointment of the members of the Interim Elections Commission, the ad hoc supreme court, the completion of reconnaissance visits by ECOMOG to the areas held by the NPFL and the opening of some of the trunk roads in Liberia.

At the end of the day, however, it was also observed that several aspect of the Yamoussoukro accord had not been implemented, particularly those relating to the establishment of a buffer zone along the Sierra-Leone - Liberia border and the encampment and disarmament of all combatants.

The meeting, therefore, clarified several issues which include:

(a) That the buffer zone on the Liberia - Sierra Leone border envisioned by the Accord should be established without further delay. ECOMOG alone shall secure the zone. NPFL may send unarmed observers to the zone.

(b) That all entry and exit points into and out of Liberia in particular the seaports and airports, shall be secured by ECOMOG. NPFL may maintain an unarmed administrative presence at these points through police, customs and immigration in the areas under its control.

(c) That the encampment and disarmament of all combatants shall be be carried out by ECOMOG as envisioned in the Yamoussoukro Accord.

(d) That Mr. Charles Taylor may maintain a personal security of company strength equipped only with small arms.

To this effect, the ECOMOG field-commander was directed to implement the Yamoussoukro Accord without further delay. The new date for the commencement of ECOMOG operations for implementing the Yamoussoukro IV Accord as April 30th, 1992 (See appendix for Time Table).

15th Summit of ECOWAS, 27th - 29th July, 1992:[105]

As with previous ECOWAS sessions, the Liberian crisis was given top priority at the 15th summit of ECOWAS. It noted with disappointment the uncooperative attitude of the NPFL in foiling any peace agreement reached especially in the area of disarmament and encampment of its combatants and the insertion of buffer zone along the Liberia - Sierra-Leone border. The summit, therefore, resolved that:

(a) The Field Commander of ECOMOG shall complete the implementation of the programme contained in the Yamoussoukro Accord of 30th October 1991, clarified by the Geneva meeting of the Committee of Five, not later than thirty days from July 29th 1992.

(b) That unless Charles Taylor and the NPFL comply fully with the implementation of the said programme, the Authority shall impose comprehensive sanctions against Charles Taylor and the NPFL-controlled areas of Liberia and other party(ies) that fails to comply with the implementation of the programme.

(c) That all the member states of ECOWAS shall take all necessary measures to give full effect to this decision.

(d) That the Committee of Five, in consultation with the Standing Mediation Committee, shall seek the assistance of the security council of the United Nations to make whatever sanctions that are imposed effective and binding on all members of the international community in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations charter.

Just as in the previous accords signed the summit reiterated its appeal to the international community to aid ECOMOG in anyway possible, to see to the end of the Liberia problem.

Following the 30 day ultimatum which expired in August 1992, given to Taylor to heed to the Yamoussoukro Accord, an economic embargo was imposed by ECOWAS to starve the NPFL of arms.[106] Consequently,

ECOMOG was able to liberate 20 towns and villages under the control of the NPFL which include towns of Buchanan, Kakata, Herbel and the strategic Roberts Field International Airport.[107] Similarly, Gbenga, the headquarters of the NPFL was "mistakenly" bombed by ECOMOG troops.[108]

The fall of Kakata only instigated Taylor rather than mollify him. He stated in a radio broadcast of the BBC that "we may suffer some setbacks but we will continue to fight this war, this year, next year and the next 10 years. ECOMOG will gain no military victory because if peace is forged without Taylor's input, the fighting will reoccur".

Following this threat, more contingents of 5,000 soldiers mainly from Nigeria and Guinea arrived in Liberia to boost the already 16,000 there. In addition, the Nimba Redemption Council - a militant group whose mission is to chase Taylor out of Nimba county, launched an offensive near the Cote d'Ivoirean border.[109]

The Cotonou Agreement 25th - 26th July, 1993:

The signing of the Cotonou agreement took place in Benin, a month after more than 500 civilians were killed in the general Harbel area 64 kilometres from Monrovia.[110] The National Patriotic Front of Liberia was accused of committing the massacre because a radio message was intercepted in which Charles Taylor was heard saying, "if you have men among them, chop them and for the women, rape them .... All I want now is a reign of terror.... " Whole villages and

displaced centres were set ablaze shortly after hearing this intercepted message.[111]

During the Cotonou meeting, it was agreed that ECOMOG troops together with Zimbabwean and Tanzanian troops will work jointly in disarming the warring factions.

The Liberian National Transition Government was proposed, hence Taylor insisted that this new LNTG be installed first before disarmament takes place.[112]

The Accord also gave the NPFL the right to nominate members to a number of cabinet posts in the new Liberian National Transitional Government. The peace accord was however threatened in August that year when the Interim President, Amos Sawyer, sacked Ma Kayon, the elected chairman of the reconstituted transitional government which was formed during the Cotonou meeting.[113]

By November 1993, about 300 United Nations observers arrived in Liberia to supervise the disarmament process as requested by Charles Taylor. Zimbabwe and Tanzania sent a reconnaissance team two months later.[114] Zimbabwe had earlier threatened not to commit its troops unless the United Nations was ready to write off the entire cost of its peace keeping operation,[115] which the United Nations apparently did.

Following this development, the Nigerian government further reiterated its commitment to see to the end of the Liberian fracas.

This went counter to earlier announcement by the Nigerian Interim Head of State, Shonekan (27th August - 17th November, 1993) to withdraw Nigerian troops from ECOMOG by March 1994 due to economic reasons.[116] The Abacha government that took over in November 1993 argued that, "it will be a great disaster if at this stage of development in Liberia, we should pull out without realising the sacrifice in terms of men and materials which we have put in ... while it was not Nigeria's desire to keep the troops in Liberia a day longer than necessary, it is not neat to just pull out without bringing ... the peace process which was initiated by ECOMOG (in) which Nigeria played a substantial role, to a logical conclusion".[117] No fewer than 11,500 Nigeria troops were in ECOMOG at that time. The Nigerian government further stated that ECOMOG had completed the first and most important phase of its mandate which was the enforcement of a ceasefire between the warring factions and thus what remains was for the establishment of an institution of a lasting peace through political negotiations.

With this renewed effort by Nigeria, Taylor also agreed for the disarming of his troops and urged other warring factions to do the same.[118] Similarly, by March 1994, some war-weary combatants from the ULIMO faction handed over their arms to the ECOMOG encampment site at Todee after the attack on Kakata by ULIMO in which lorries carrying 250 tonnes of food items meant for refugees were hijacked.[119]

The request by Charles Taylor that the new Liberian National Transitional Government be installed first before disarmament takes

place was finally agreed upon in March following the meeting between Amos Sawyer and the warring groups. Charles Taylor's opponent still harboured the suspicion against his motive. It was not surprising, therefore, that shortly after the meeting the struggle to maintain power in the LNTG came to the fore.

Taylor wanted his NPFL to have their ministers in Agriculture, Lands and Mines Ministry in order to control the resources of the nation, as well as the labour and Internal Affairs Ministry so as to control and manipulate the political appointees in the various subdivisions of the nation and to control the dissemination of information in which government policies will be presented to the world.[120]

The United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO) on the other hand wanted to control the economic heights of the government apparatus. ULIMo has also shown the desire to control the Defence and Finance Ministries and also put forward names of candidates to fill the posts of Chief executives of key corporations such as Liberian Telecommunications and the National Bank of Liberia.[121]

Thus, from the pattern of distribution, the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) was alienated and treated as the faction rather than a legitimate party, because most sensitive posts were denied it. Already, the ULIMo had taken charge in the Ministries of Commerce, Public Works and Health and are bidding to get the Finance Ministry. But the Defence portfolio was vehemently objected to by the other parties. The Justice Ministry later came under the NPFL (ie, the Minister of Justice was nomited from the NPFL.[122]).

ULIMO has also taken over the Ministry of State which is the heart and soul of the Executive Presidency inspite of the fact that they *have been reluctant to comply fully with disarmament.*[123]

The IGNU was given port folios in Posts and Telecommunications and Education Ministries. Though these are vital ministries their importance will be greatly reduced in a government made up of hostile partners where the complementary port folios are held by groups which have shown no inclination to cooperate effectively with the IGNU nominnes, except in areas of convenience.

In April 1994, a month after disarmament had started only 1,447 fighters had surrendered their arms out of 60,000 estimated by the *United Nations.*[124]

This slow pace of the disarmament process has made the LNTG to be influential only in Monrovia; the combatants have to be disarmed and demobilised for the Liberian National Transitional Government to survive. In fact, another fighting broke out again between ULIMO faction under Kromah and Roosevelt Johnson's faction, a break away group from ULIMO; and also between the Liberian Peace Council (LPC) and NPFL.[125] But then, by October the same year, ECOMOG troops were reduced to cut logistic costs. Akinola, ECOMOG spokesman also called on the international community to "review its role ... in the Liberian peace process especially in the area of logistics requirements, to enable ECOMOG carry out its mandate successfully."[126]

The Akosombo Agreement - 21st December, 1994:

Another attempt to find a lasting solution to the crisis was made by Rawlings of Ghana, who was then the ECOWAS Chairman. The warring factions agreed for the establishment of the Council of State which is a collective presidency that will run the country until elections were held in November 1995.[127]

The meeting was adjourned to December 28th and January 11th but it finally ended in a deadlock three days later before it was reconvened on January 23rd 1995. However, by early February, the peace accord collapsed when the disagreement arose among the warring parties on who should head the six-man Council of State.[128] Right from the on set, the meeting have had to cross several hurdles.

In the first instance, the issue on the number of the council members became a crucial one, while some did not want it to be less than four, others wanted it to be extended to six. For example, Bowen of the Armed Forces of Liberia wanted the council to have five and even six members and the traditional rulers to be included because it will be to his advantage.[129] On the other hand, the choice of a chairman of the council was the most contentious and intractable issue which finally became the waterloo of the Accra peace talks. Everybody wanted to be chairman, particularly, Charles Taylor.[130]

Ghana bemoaned this failure of the peace talks describing it "as very frustrating and disappointing. We had thought their personal ambition will be subordinated to the overall interest of Liberia."[131]

With the failure of the Accra meeting, ULIMO forces once again incurred into Nimba county. Similarly, the Liberian peace council fought the NPFL over the control of Grand Bassa county[132] to drive out Taylor and his NPFL. Kromah argued that he entered Nimba county in order "to stop Taylor from violating the ceasefire", but Taylor retaliated, claiming that his army, "is too big a meat for Alhaji Kromah to chew" and vowed to stay in his capital to fight back.[133]

Similarly, in April this year, ECOMOC had to intervene and drive out troops of ULIMO faction when fighting between Kromah and Roosevelt Johnson rebel group prevented relief materials from reaching the people of Turbman-burg. Armed robbery was also reported to be on the increase. ULIMO was also reported to have killed 62 people in Tosi.[134]

With all these developments, peace continued to elude Liberia. However, in June this year, Taylor held talks with Nigerian Head of State, General Abacha to discuss issues relating to disarmament of his troops and finding a lasting peace and to uphold the Cotonou Accord which had already worked out a gradual programme for election in Liberia and of course, the final withdrawal of all the forces contributed by participating nations. Thus, the main concern of ECOMOG, according to Nigeria's military spokesman Fred Chijuka, is "to disarm the warring factions to ensure a workability of the ceasefire agreement they signed, when that is done, it will be easy for participating countries to withdraw their troops."[135]

Abuja II Accord - 20th August, 1995:[136]

After the meeting with Charles Taylor, a general meeting of all the leaders of the warring parties, ECOWAS members, representatives from OAU, INN and a host of others, took place in Abuja, Nigeria's capital in August last year (1995), where another shaky agreement was signed. Under the agreement, a mandatory ceasefire would take off on August 26th 1995, the council of state comprising an independent chairman and five vice chairmen with equal status would become operational from September 2nd.

Tamba Kongoh was picked up as the chairman . The council was established by the Cotonou Agreement which also established that the second vice chairman would take over. Taylor wanted to be the second vice chairman but the other factions agreed to jettison that part of the accord and suggested that a neutral person be chosen and the vice chairmen should have equal status - that went well with the group of nine.

In the long run, San Kawolo, a kpeller from Liberia's largest ethnic group, was elected chairman of the council of state. All the five others are to be vice chairmen with equal status. They are: Taylor, G.V. Kromah, George Boley and Oscar Quiah. Former chairman, 90-year old Kongoh, is the only member to represent civilians of Greater Liberia.

Also under the agreement, factional leaders and members of the council wishing to contest elections will be represented by civilian members. The chairman shall be ineligible for elective office in the first presidential and legislative elections. Ministerial and

statutory posts are to be shared among the factions as enshrined in the Cotonou Accord. The council of states lifespan is twelve calendar months.

However, Boucault Johnson, a leader of the breakaway faction of ULIMO did not sign the agreement because a proposal sent to the facilitators to make Bezekiah Bowen, a General and Commandant of the Armed Forces of Liberia, the Chief of Staff was rejected. In place of the proposal, Bowen was offered a ministerial portfolio which was not named, Bowen refused to take it. The Akosomboh agreement which had made Bowen head of army, meant he would be responsible for restructuring the army.

Other leaders, however, did not agree with Johnson and Bowen on this issue. Mr. Boley leader of the Liberian Peace Council had argued that "I am a commissioned officer of the Liberian Army and a Major. I tell you Bowen is not the only competent soldier in the A.F.L.", insisting that Bowen had been adequately protected by the Abuja Agreement and that his ministerial position could not be determined except with the consent of the ECOWAS Committee of Nine.[137]

Despite Bowen's objection, representative of ECOWAS who brokered the Peace Agreement said it was binding on all parties. However, Taylor had argued that the facilitators should look for a majority vote and not an endorsement by all parties, "total consensus is not even a feature of democracy" - said Taylor.

The Abuja II Agreement was described as the most comprehensive in that it incorporated the Akosomboh and Cotonou Accords and the inputs of the five factional leaders who met before the full conference started.

Commenting on the Agreement signed, Ghana's Foreign Minister had said that "Everyone is tired of war, and everyone is tired of talking. This Agreement is an Agreement whose time has come".[138]

Nigeria's Foreign Minister, Tom Ikimi, had also urged the two parties yet to sign the agreement to reconsider their stand because "Liberia is greater than any individual".

Canaan Banana, representative of the OAU's Eminent Group, had this to say:

> "Agreements on Liberia are not in short supply, what is in short supply is the determination and commitment to implement them; we hope that this would be the last meeting and the next one would be to celebrate a new government and a democratic parliament".[139]

The discussion of the various peace agreements signed so far can only be complementary when a brief examination of the role played by the Field Commanders is done.

4.6 THE FIELD COMMANDERS

(i) Lieutenant General Arnold Quainoo[140]

General Quainoo of Ghana was appointed as the first Force Commander of ECOWAS Monitoring Group. His appointment was evidently political, in that owing to the reservation of the francophone countries towards Nigeria's dominant role in the West African subregion, and in particular in ECOMOG's formation, it will raise more criticism that the organization was being hijacked by the "so called" giant of Africa to service a selfish agenda; hence a Nigerian Force Commander was so to speak, out of the question even though Nigeria is the prime actor in ECOMOG (ECOMOG draws 70% of its troops and 80% of its funding from Nigeria). Thus, Nigeria assumed the role of a political adviser, while several other key posts were given to Nigerian soldiers.

As stated earlier, ECOMOG was first entrusted with a mandate of a peace keeper and the evacuation of Nigerian and other West African nationals from Liberia. But even before it landed in Liberia, the NPFL had declared war on ECOMOG. But since ECOMOG was not an expeditionary force, it was not able to retaliate or engage in direct combat with any of the warring factions. Thus, when Doe was abducted from the ECOMOG headquarters and later killed, the Force Commander defended his inability to arrest the situation by arguing that Samuel Doe's visit to the ECOMOG Headquarters was unscheduled and unexpected and came as a surprise.

However, some observers have insisted that Doe's visit was unscheduled but, it was certainly not unannounced, owing to the fact that "for Doe to move from the Executive Mansion to ECOMOG premises, he had to pass through both ends of either the new bridge or the old one linking Bushrod Monrovia with Bushrod Island. Ghanaian troops which were under the direct and ultimate control of Quainoo have large concentration on both ends. They also occupy virtually all the buildings in the kilometre long distance between the two bridges and the gate of Freeport in which the ECOWAS Headquarters is located".[141] Anyone moving through these roads would have to be stopped and searched. This clearly indicated that ECOMOG forces were obviously aware that Doe was on his way and should have provided escorts to take him back if they could not receive him or protect him as a guest if the Headquarters have decided to play host.

As it turned out ECOMOG Forces did nothing while Doe's men were killed and Doe himself was whisked off and driven out of the Headquarters.

(ii) Major General Nimyel Dogonyaro[142]

Two weeks after the incidence which took place on the 9th of September 1990, Lt. General Quainoo came to Lagos to see the Nigerian president and requested for a Field Commander. Consequently, General Dogonyaro was chosen and his mandate was to enforce peace in Liberia. Since then, the post of the Field Commander has continued to be chosen from Nigeria, while the post of the Force Commander was removed from the political organizational set up of the ECOMOG.

On the day of his arrival Dogonyaro instructed his soldiers to make preparation for a full scale onslaught against Taylor. To this effect, a buffer zone was created in Monrovia. ECOMOG also blockades the Buchanan Port and proceeded with the process of selective bombardment of Taylor's position, this had the rebel leader worried immensely as to complain that:

> "I think that if President Babangida is smart and I think he is a very smart President, I think he should keep Dogonyaro far from him. If there is any threat to the Nigerian Government ... Dogonyaro is one of the threats and he is so indisciplined. That he did not get order to start the war, that he acted on his own and we have much to believe that he did ... After all, people saw that he had gone over board".[143]

Some military sources have indicated that seven more days of attacks on Taylor by ECOMOG under Dogonyaro would have forced him (Taylor) to flee. In fact, Selley Thompson, Doe's presidential spokesman, has contended that Dogonyaro had become a Liberian hero and could win the presidential seat if foreigners were allowed to contest for the post. It was also reported that the carnage and devastation had minimised during his tenure.

> "All ECOMOG needed was two or three more days. They could have reached Gbarnga. Taylor would have fled and his supporters would have dropped their guns and surrendered."[144]

Indeed, Dogonyaro himself agreed that "the whole thing could have been finished a long time ago but political considerations are naturally superior to military decisions. Anyway, I was not there for war".[145]

President Babangida also admitted to State House correspondents that the Field Commander was on the threshold of victory when he was recalled. If that has been the case, then why recall a winning horse?

> "I believe that it was the will of God, that it was time for me to come back home. I have done my part, let somebody else continue ... Sometimes you don't allow your personal feelings to override national interests. When you do that, then ... You are not doing good service to the nation. So I leave that to myself."[146] - Said Dogonyaro.

Selley Thompson admitted that it came as a great shock to him to know of Dogonyaro's removal, adding that, "the first thing that came to mind was that politics had come into play,[147] and that:

> "He (IBB) was soft when he allowed him to come back to base. I don't know what his personal reasons were, but I'm sure he must have taken that decision may be on the consideration of certain individuals in the Nigerian military who feared that Dogonyaro was wielding so much influence."[148]

In the final analysis, it could be argued that Dogonyaro's removal when victory was almost certain could not be far fetched from former President Babangida's "hidden agenda" of which many political analysts have argued upon. It certainly seems that Babangida had used the Liberian crisis to keep the Nigerian military busy abroad so as to prevent them from plotting against the regime.

(iii) Major General Rufus Kupolati[149]

Dogonyaro was thus replaced with Major General Rufus Kupolati in February 1991. His mandate was to establish a classical peace keeping force which implied opening up line of communication with all warring factions because as was argued within the military circle, the Dogonyaro style is bound to create high level of casualties and alienate public opinion.

On the other hand, a journalist who had been in Monrovia for a very long time had argued that,

"Selley Thompson was dreaming. The others are ignorant without first hand experience of what was happening over there. Dogonyaro's forces had not gone as far as Kakata and it is only when hostile forces get to Kakata that the situation begins to spell doomsday for Charles Taylor. Kakata is the gateway to his economic and military kingdom. Turning west from Kakata you approach the Bong Mines .... (to) ... the east, you are threatening Robertsfield Airport which put the Buchanan ports at very easy reach. Once you take Kakata you pose a military

> threat to everything that sustains Charles Taylor - the Firestone Rubber Company, Roberts Field Airport and the Iron ore mines of Bong county .... Dogonyaro had not even breached the fort (between Robersfield and Monrovia). How then can he be on the threshold of victory?"[150]

Moreover, there was the problem of terrain. The area in which ECOMOG was engaged in fighting with Taylor's forces, was marshy and densely forested which make a guerilla warfare more suitable for which ECOMOG forces were not prepared due to the lack of a proper familiarity of the geographical set up of the area. In fact, even before Dogonyaro was appointed as Field Commander, 'Africa Confidential' had predicted in September 1990 that "there is little doubt that ECOMOG, with its well trained and well equipped troops could drive Taylor's forces out of the capital it if wanted to .... having seized the capital ECOMOG would find it difficult to go further without a massive increase in manpower that contributing countries could ill afford."[151]

The appointment of Kupolati, who has been described as "an officer and a gentleman" was borne out of the desire to play a diplomatic card in the Liberian crisis. He revealed in an interview that:

> We want to be seen for the role we have been sent here to perform ... helping to restore peace ... we decided to hold meetings ... (with) all the warring factions ... and arrange for confidential visits ... (so as) to have confidence in ourselves and the people all over the country..."[152]

But one thing which Kupolati came to realise in the Liberian situation and which irritates him most was the level of mendicity, duplicity and fraud that pervaded the Liberian political arena. He had observed that the Liberian political scene was characterised by shifting loyalties and changing allies and it was never clear who could be trusted.[153] For instance, some weeks before Doe was killed, Johnson had cultivated for Doe and even sent rice to the Executive Mansion when there was food shortage there. This made Samuel Doe to probably think that Johnson was his friend forgetting that he had once tried to kill Johnson. Yormie Johnson exploited this pretext to lure and kill him.

Even though such is the nature of politics, with no permanent friends or permanent foes, politics, however, involves minimal consensus and a *modicum of principles*. The duplicity of the Liberian political arena where principal actors are constantly primed to seek political advantage must have offended the sensibilities of Kupolati's moral cadre. Hence, his dislike of the interim president, Amos Sawyer, was not far from this reason.

Sawyer had appealed to Jawara, the then ECOWAS Chairman, to restrain Dogonyaro, when the latter blockaded the port of Buchanan and intensified military pressure on Taylor's NPFL which could have possibly led to the end of the Liberian conflict. The interim president told journalists in Freetown, Sierra-Leone that,

> "ECOMOG should exercise restraint in its military action against rebels ... ECOMOG should maintain for now a defensive posture, so as to give the Interim Government time to send a peace offensive to Charles Taylor."[154]

Adding that the Liberian crisis was "a political problem which requires a political settlement.... We are continuing the process of reaching out to reach a plitical solution with him (Taylor) and to see whether he can come on board the interim administration."[155]

This was surprising owing to two main reasons: First, is that it was ECOMOG that saw to his appointment as the interim president and secondly, Sawyer had previously and constantly castigated Taylor for refusing to recognise his administration.

It could be reasonable, therefore, to suggest that Sawyer was concerned with his own political ambition because if Taylor's NPFL was defeated and destroyed then his interim government would have to give way for a democratically elected government which the interim president, as agreed by the Standing Mediation Committee cannot vie for the presidential seat again.

In any case, Kupolati became very friendly and gave more breathing space to Taylor which political analysts argued, had been exploited by the latter to stretch the process of the war and to continue aiming at the presidential seat.

Kupolati relaxed the blockade on the Buchanan port and allowed the NPFL commanders free access to his base but was contemptuous of Sawyer's interim government. During his tenure, the government owned newspaper (New Nigeria) published an editorial calling for greater sympathy to the NPFL and described the interim government as "a bunch of Monrovia based politicians".[156] It was also during his tenure that the "NPFL initiated its thrust into Sierra Leone, strengthened its hold on Liberian mineral and agricultural resources and intensified its propaganda war against the presence of Nigerian troops in the peace keeping force."[157]

Kupolati's action could be justified on the grounds that his mandate was to forge concensus and peaceful settlement of the Liberian dispute; he saw his cooperation with the leading waring faction as the main road of achieving this.

But then, it had become clear that one cannot make any political deal with Charles Taylor which fall short of handing him the keys to the Executive Mansion in Monrovia. This became evident when Taylor's forces made their way into Sierra-Leone in the guise of an insurrection. In addition, Taylor had shown the tendency to renege on agreements, dishonour resolutions and stall implementations of accords thus, reinforcing the impression that he and his NPFL are the main obstacle to peace in Liberia.

The incursion into Sierra-Leone by Taylor inspired a coup which saw the coming into power of Valentine Strasser and the presence of Nigerian soldiers to arrest the situation.[158] Initially, Taylor had denied being involved stating that "lies are not going to solve the problems in this region. We are not .... not involved in any military situation inside Sierra Leone". However, a rebel caught by Sierra Leonean soldiers had revealed that they invaded Sierra Leone because "they want to succeed as a government in Liberia ... because Sierra Leone is part of ECOMOG".[159] These developments contributed to the change of the Field Commander.

(iv) Major General Ishaya Bakut[160]

Major General Bakut came to replace Kupolati. He was appointed as a political compromise i.e, a cross between Dogonyaro and Kupolati in October 1991. He was to serve as Field Commander till March 1993. Bakut was said to have inherited "a force threatening to break into pockets of nationalist sentiments with Ghanaians adhering to one set of rules, Guineans to another and Sierra Leoneans and Gambians marginalised by their numerical inferiority. Nigerians were becoming overloads of a badly disenchanted and demoralised Force. Reports from Monrovia indicated that he has worked hard to reverse this trend."[161]

In addition, the first major engagement of the Field Commander was his attendance of the ECOWAS Committee of Five on the Liberian

crisis in Yamoussoukro on 29th - 39th October, 1991 in which a programme of implementation that would lead to the holding of a free and fair elections was drawn up. He also set up a Technical Committee which was given the task of creating modalities for the implementation of the Yamoussoukro IV Accord and ironing out minor details.

Even though the General had initiated a meeting between Interim President Amos Sawyer and the INPFL leader, Prince Yormie Johnson, which led to the return of INPFL into the Interim Government of National Unity and had launched "Operation Clean Monrovia", an operation aimed at retrieving all hidden, lost or illegally acquired arms, ammunitions, explosives and any war-like material from Monrovia and environs and had opened up two major highways by January 1993 (i.e, the Monrovia - Kakata and beyond the Monrovia - Bomi), which led to the free movement of persons and goods, he was however accused of accepting bribes from the NPFL to deliberately move at a slow pace in the peace efforts.[162]

(v) Major General Tunji Olurin

By February, 1993 another Field Commander was appointed - Major General Tunji Olurin took over the helm of affairs from General Bakut.

General Olurin's mandate was to enforce peace. Hence, during his tenure in office, ECOMOG was reported to have 'mistakenly' bombarded

the Cote d'Ivoirean - Liberian towns of Gbenga, near Danana which is only 500 kilometres away from the Cote d'Ivorien capital.[163] During the attack five Ivorien soldiers were killed.

However, the bombing of Gbenga which is the headquarters of Taylor may probably be deliberate and may be aimed at cutting the supply of arms to the NPFL from Cote d'Ivoire which had earlier claimed to have closed the border in November 1992 following the ECOWAS embargo to starve the NPFL of arms.[164]

Two weeks before the bombing, General Olurin had announced that ECOMOG troops had liberated twenty towns and villages controlled by NPFL which included towns of Buchanan, Herbel, kakata and the strategic Robertsfield International Airport - all held by Taylor since 1990.[165]

But in June that year, about 500 or more refugees were killed in the general Harbel area which is 64 kilometres from Monrovia. Taylor and his NPFL troops were accused of committing this genocide because of an intercepted radio message (see previous pages for details 4.6). But, reports later received have shown that the ULIMO faction was responsible for the killings.[165]

(vi) Brigadier General John Shagaya[167]

In September 1993, General Olurin was replaced by Brigadier-General John Shagaya. However, Shagaya's period in office was

shortlived. Barely two and a half months after his resumption to office, he was retired from the Nigerian military. This took place at a time when the political situation was very flux with the armed factions ganging up and making vociferous noises.

General Shagaya had stated that his mission was to make peace, adding that there was no peace to keep, "we have to make it first". He had insisted that there would be no seating of the transitional government of which the warring factions form a part, without (the LNTG was formed during the Cotonou Accord, see previous pages for details) disarmament first.

Brigadier Shagaya had also travelled to the East and Central Africa to assist the United Nations hasten the arrive of new troops, so as to make the NPFL more comfortable with the peace process. Shortly after this visit he was retired from the Nigerian Army.

His removal as the head of the big 16-battalion multi-national force which is the security underpinning of the massive several million dollars international humanitarian and political efforts to end the civil war in Liberia without an immediate replacement sent shock waves. However, two weeks later, another General, who was an experienced officer in both combat and peace keeping was appointed.

(vii) Major General John Inienger[168]

Major General John Inienger had served the army for the past 27 years and thus have both political and diplomatic experience.

Both Shagaya and Inienger are said to belong to the same school as smart, flexible but tough soldiers, depending on the given situations.

Inienger is presently the Field Commander, as at the time of writing. During this time about 1,447 soldiers from the various warring factions were disarmed and demobilized out of the 60,000 combatants (according to the United Nations estimate).

By October 1994, ECOMOG soldiers were reduced to cut logistics costs. In fact, ECOMOG spokesman had to call again on the International Community to "review its role ... in the Liberian peace process especially in the area of logistics requirements to enable ECOMOG carry out its mandate successfully."[169]

However, inspite of the disarmament process going on, the Field Commander has not been able to prevent the fightings that broke out in spite of the Akosombo Peace Accord. For example, the Liberian Peace Council fought the NPFL over the control of Grand Bassa county, while the latest one involved Kromah's forces and a break away faction of the ULIMO headed by Roosevelt Johnson. In April last year, ULIMO was also accused of killing 62 people in the Yosi area.[170]

Thus, with the latest peace Agreement signed by the warring factions, it is hoped that Inienger will be the last ECOMOG Field Commander to see to the end of the Liberian war. On a final note, it can be argued that the mistakes committed by the Field Commanders can be excused on the basis that it is their first experience in

a new West African peace keeping force. It is also hoped that the experiences learnt would provide lesson for future attempts at conflict resolution in the region.

4.7 ASSESSMENT OF ECOMOG'S PERFORMANCE: SUCCESSES, PROBLEMS AND LESSONS LEARNT

From the foregoing discussion so far, it can be derived that the attempt by ECOWAS to find a lasting peace in Liberia has met with successes and problems and has provided lessons for future peace keeping operation and conflict resolution not only in the subregion but the whole of Africa.

Successes:

The effort by the Economic Community of West African States to initiate a peace keeping force to solve the Liberian crisis, has proven that it has become of age for Africans to take care of their security problems. Nigeria has indeed made history as the initiator of a West African subregional peace keeping force in Chad (under the auspices of the OAU) and now in Liberia, which it is hoped has come to stay to address future occurrences.

The role played by Nigeria in trying to find a lasting solution to the Liberian war, has been fruitful in more ways than one. In the first instance, ECOMOG has provided a working framework within which a final solution can be found to the crisis. Secondly, the various negotiations and agreements signed have reduced the level of wanton

destruction of lives and property in Liberia by the warring factions.[171] To this effect, the movement of people and goods have resumed within and outside the country with less threats to lives and property. Air transportation has also resumed by the close of 1994.[172]

The process of disarmament and encampment of combatants has reached a certain level even though the process is slower than anticipated, it has at least reduced the number of armed rebels. As at August, 1994 about 800 combatants from ULIMo were disarmed making the number to be 1,447 out of the total of those to be disarmed.[173] The disarmament process will create the requisite security conditions for the holding of free and fair elections later this year.

Also through the effort of ECOWAS - ECOMOG, an Interim Government was instituted and presently a six man council of state - a form of rotational presidency - has been established through the cooperation of the warring parties.[174] This will provide the basis for democracy to reign in that country.

Problems:

The Liberian crisis has indeed had a severe repercussion on the country itself and the subregion as a whole. ECOMOG has thus experience several setbacks in its bid to solve the Liberian imbrioglo.

The decision of ECOWAS to intervene in the Liberian conflict engendered a serious rift between the Anglophone members led by

Nigeria and the Francophone countries spear headed by Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. However, this problem has been overcome.

Because of the ad hoc manner in which the peace keeping force was mobilised, proper mechanism for its operations were not adequately addressed. The administrative and logistic factors became major problems as sponsoring states were left with the responsibility of how their forces operated in the peace mission. Hence, whenever the chips are down Nigeria is left to take up the final responsibility thereby making Nigeria to be ladden with the heaviest burden.[175]

Another problem was the decision by ECOWAS to send the peace keeping force in the absence of a cease fire. This endangered the lives of the members of the peace keeping force especially when the NPFL declared war on ECOMOG before it landed in Liberia.[176] The result was that ECOMOG was drawn into the war, thus undermining the neutral status of the force. ECOMOG had been swinging from peace keeping to peace enforcing depending on the situation that arises.

On the other hand, ECOMOG cannot be entirely blamed for launching "limited offensive" on selected areas particularly areas under the control of the NPFL, owing to the fact that the NPFL had always been the most strongheaded rebel group in Liberia and had killed not only ECOMOG soldiers but hundreds of Nigerians and nationals of other ECOWAS members.

Thus, even though Nigeria had realised the importance of a ceasefire first before ECOMOG was deployed, the political conditions created necessitates it deployment before a ceasefire was reached.[177]

The circumstances that led to the capture, torture and murder of president Doe by the INPFL forces have been questioned by observers and the ECOMOG Commander then, has been accused of deliberately letting this happen. According to political analysts, Ghana was not in good terms with Doe at the eve of the crisis and thus, the abduction of President Doe from the ECOMOG Headquarters which was under the command Lt. General Quianoo, a Ghanaian, was seen as a deliberate ploy by Ghana.[178] This event has portrayed ECOMOG as a party to the conflict, instead of a neutral force.

Another problem with which ECOMOG has had to contend with is the sporadic effect of the war on neighbouring countries, particularly Sierra Leone, where the NPFL incursions into the area instigated a change of government headed by Valentine Strasser in April 1992 who had insisted that he overthrew the Momoh regime in order to arrest the rebel incursion into Sierra Leone.[179] With this problem, Nigeria was made to send her troops to arrest the rebels' incursion. So far the threat posed by the rebels is yet to be eliminated.

Similarly, in July 1994, another coup d'etat was reported in The Gambia which brought the end of the 27 years rule of President Dauda Jawara.[180] The coup attempt in Togo in 1993 and the recent calls to return to democracy in Nigeria are all adverse effects of the Liberian crisis.

Moreover, the various agreements signed so far especially the latest one signed in August last year, is yet to be implemented in their entirety. The encampment and disarmament of the warring groups is proceeding glacially and fightings have been reported early this year in some parts of the country. This is not unconnected with the failure of ECOMOG to interdict arms meant for the warring factions.

The Liberian war has created refugee problems in the subregion so that contributing countries in ECOMOG are now faced with two burdens: financing ECOMOG, and taking care of the refugees in their own countries. About 4 million people in the region were affected by the regional trauma. About 500,000 were displaced refugees from Liberia and 2 million others were generous local people in the neighbouring states who shared their "water, food and shelter with their displace neighbours and making great sacrifices in doing so."[181] Cote d'Ivoire had to cater for 250,000 fleeing refugees, Guinea 280,000, Ghana 15,000, Sierra Leone 130,000 and Nigeria over 1,000 refugees.[182] These countries had to attend to these problems giving their decaying economy.

Apart from the refugee problem, there was also the problem of communication. Provision of reliable communication systems to facilitate prompt information gathering were poorly supplied. Additionally, as Lt. General Eskine has noted, both the O.A.U. and ECOWAS are yet to establish command structure for the operationalization of peace keeping force. Though ECOWAS Defence Pact has the structural standard for carrying out peace keeping

force, it was not properly taken into consideration when ECOMOG was being established. Moreso, "unlike the United Nations that allows the Secretary General the executive administration of movement of forces after the security council resolution might have been adopted, the ECOWAS Defence pact places the institutional implementation of peace keeping forces on the authority of ECOWAS, its Defence Council and the Defence Commission. The Pact states that a military expert shall be appointed as a Deputy Executive Secretary by the Defence Council who takes the responsibility of the Secretariat coordination of peace keeping force. In this instance, the ECOWAS Executive Secretary is alienated from what is considered purely a military issue. No reason has been given for the underplaying role of the ECOWAS Executive Secretary in the peace keeping operation which is more of a civil implication than a military exercise."[183]

Lessons Learnt From ECOMOG In Liberia:

The Liberian crisis has served as a lesson to Nigeria that we are an integral part of the subregion. It has made us to appreciate ourselves and our neighbouring countries. The crisis has thus shown the significance of economic and political cooperation within the subregion and the African continent as a whole.

Another lesson learnt was that the Nigeria government will have to reconsider domestic opinions of foreign military operations in support of its foreign policy objectives. Although domestic discontent over foreign policy action has always featured in most nations of the world, the longevity and casualties in Liberia has made domestic displeasure more pronounced.

Media houses such as the Guardian Newspaper and African Concord[184] have condemned Nigeria's involvement in the war arguing that Liberia was not worth "spilling a pint of Nigerian blood". The African Concord printed a cover story in January 1991 accusing the Nigerian government of sustaining approximately 20% casualties since August 1990. The government however had maintained that less than 50 Nigerians had died in Liberia between that period. Other groups such as the Nigerian Labour Congress, the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Civil Liberties Organization, Nigerian Student Union (NANS) and Women In Nigeria to mention a few, have all questioned Nigeria's prolonged involvement in ECOMOG.[185]

Some see the adventure becoming Nigeria's version of Vietnam and in the event of the collapse of the peace process Nigeria will loss her credibility as a subregional power and would as well undermine the relative solidarity in ECOWAS. However, this has not yet happened and it is not likely to for it is hoped that the latest peace effort will materialize. Similarly, the failure of Nigeria to evacuate its nationals when other countries were doing so before the landing of ECOMOG troops had received further criticism from Nigerians who saw this as the sacrificing of Nigerian nationals to protect Doe in power. The criticism was highest when President Babangida announced to the press that:

> "Liberians are our brothers and Nigerians over there lived together with and see themselves as part of the society. I do not think it is right for any government to create distinction between fellow Africans over the evacuation exercise"[186]

The government had considered the cost of evacuating her nationals too enormous in view of its dislocated economy and the additional cost it has to bear in ECOMOG and thus, could not bear two pronged commitments. co

The Liberian crisis has provided another convincing demonstration of the utility of appropriate sea power for a subregional or regional power which like Nigeria is also a coastal state. "The deployment or diversion of warships with capabilities to influence events in trouble spots by major powers where they have interests to protect, is a universal standard practice. The speed and efficiency with which this is done depends on the state of readiness of their warships and the anticipation by naval leadership of political directives."[187] In the Liberian civil war, the Navy became the first force of choice, because naval forces are flexible to deploy without plunging into irreversible commitment. They are also easy to withdraw without a loss of face. Thus, the Nigerian Navy had been in the Liberian waters sixty four days before the other forces on the formation of ECOMOG. on the for

The prompt response of the Nigerian Navy was a vindication of the age long maxim that the armed forces must be in constant and instant state of readiness for any eventuality of war or crisis. Hence, for Nigeria to play a leadership role in the West African subregion it must possess an effective Navy with a balance fleet maintained in a high state of readiness for rapid intervention.

Nigeria will be expected to play more prominent roles in peace keeping efforts in Africa. No doubt, a strong Navy with a balance mix of forces and capabilities is an enabling factor for the country to play such crucial roles. "Our future force planning should critically examine the development of special forces in the Nigerian armed forces. This will give us the flexibility of choice of forces to carry out specific missions".[188]

Nigeria's effort towards the resolution of the Liberian crisis has been commended by the International Community including the United Nations as envisaged in its contribution through humanitarian aid and troops from other African countries; the International Negotiation Network, the United States of America which has given $30 million as at 1993, the Organization of African Unity and prominent individuals such as former U.S. President, Jimmy Carter and the Secretary General of the OAU, Salim Ahmed Salim.[189] It is our hope that the Nigerian government and indeed ECOWAS member states would take note of the loopholes of ECOMOG so as to serve as a guide in future peace keeping operations.

Conclusion.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

From the foregoing discussion, it can be argued that the bid to find a lasting solution to the Liberian problem has been one of the most tasking and contentious issues ever encountered by the Economic Community of West African States and the first of its kind since its establishment in 1975. This chapter summarises what has been discussed in the other four chapters from which a conclusive statement will be made. Recommendations will also be given, based on the findings of the study.

The study has been aimed at critically assessing the rationale behind Nigeria's involvement in trying to solve the Liberian problem or crisis and whether this gesture by Nigeria is in line with her foreign policy objectives and whether it has come at the right time or not. Secondly, the thesis set to examine Nigeria's role in the formation and deployment of ECOWAS Monitoring Group in Liberia. The question was how effective was ECOMOG in resolving the Liberian crisis?

5.2 SUMMARY

As has been demonstrated, attempt to resolve the Liberian crisis has been one of the most sustained, frustrating and persistent diplomatic engagements in Africa as well as the most expensive and tasking one. Various reasons could be attributed to the prolonged war and the peace process in the country.

We started with the background and issues that led to the crisis right from the time Liberia was established through the 133 years of the Americo-Liberian rule to the reign of Samuel Doe which have impacted on the nature of the crisis and the inability of the peace process to materilise.

We examined in chapter two the root of the Liberian civil conflict which was laid in the 1840s when the first batch of American freed slaves landed in the coastal area of what was to be known later as Liberia.[1]

This saw the commencement of the Americo-Liberian rule which lasted for one hundred and thirty three years. During this period, the political, social and economic systems established, became a replica of the caste system that predominated in the American South during slavery. The indigenous ethnic groups were subordinated and relegated to the background while the few Americo-Liberians who constitute only 5% of the total Liberian population came to control the economic, social and political power of the Liberian State.[2]

Consequently, the heightened level of exploitation inevitably pushed the indigenous groups to rebel against the government. The most prominent revolt was the 1979 rice uprising in which about 200 people were killed and several others wounded.[3] Barely a year later, another rebellion took place which brought a semi-illiterate, non-commissioned soldier - Master Sergeant Samuel Doe, from the Krahn ethnic group - into power.

The Liberian people welcomed this change but their exuberance soon turned to disappointment, because Samuel Doe's rule rather than alleviate the sufferings of the people only heightened the level of discrimination and exploitation in the society. Other ethnic groups, particularly, the Gio, Mano and Sarpo, as well as political rivals were brutally subjected to hardships and were killed in their hundreds.[4]

Several coup attempts were made but were foiled by the Doe army and the victims were prosecuted. In essence, therefore, Doe did not address the fundamental issues that brought him to power which include the economic, domestic and social inequalities between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous population, the basic issues of fundamental human rights, the decaying economy and increasing militarization of the political process with the state becoming a repressive power state. All these created social discontent.

People were eager to welcome any change that would remove Samuel Doe from power. Amidst this tension, Taylor-led National Patriotic Front of Liberia, decided to launch its insurrection against the Doe regime on the eve of Christmas, 1989, hence marking the beginning of a civil war that was to last for several years.

Other warring groups gradually emerged thereby complicating the situation. THE NPFL had over-ran about 90% of the country when ECOWAS decided to deploy its peace keeping force to Liberia. De

jure authority had also fallen by then and the country was in a state of anarchy. Because of the destruction of human lives and property of both the Liberian citizens and nationals of other West African countries and the presence of external factors in the Liberian war, some ECOWAS Heads of States, led by Nigeria decided to send a peace keeping force to monitor a ceasefire and a return to normalcy in the country.

The process of negotiations and cooperation in the conflict were configural with graduated stalemates. When the crisis started, it was thought that the United States, a historical ally of Liberia would come to the aid, but this did not happen immediately. Perhaps, this was because the United States - Liberia relations had become strained during the Doe era. The constant abuse of human rights by Samuel Doe's government and the mounting debt of $2.7 billion had made a U.S. Senator,Edward Kennedy, to point an accusing finger at the regime of corruption and mismanagement of the Liberian economy at the expense of American tax payers which the United States had used in assisting the Liberian economy.[5] Later, Doe protested against the United States government for sending its experts to assess the performance of the Liberian economy.

Thus, American assistance to arrest the situation at the initial stage was denied. In short, the United States had been occupied with the Gulf crisis between Iraq and Kuwait. Similarly, aiding

Taylor openly would mean dealing with Libya as well which the United States had been in dispute for sometimes now and which was also a principal backer of the NPFL.[6] What the United States did, therefore, was to send her naval warships for the evacuation of its nationals from Liberia.

Furthermore, the United Nations was perhaps unwilling to intervene at the beginning of the crisis because it regarded the situation as an internal problem of Liberia. Similarly, the OAU has no standing mechanism for peace enforcement and was vascillating too, on the fact that the crisis was purely an internal affairs of Liberia.[7]

However, as the crisis deepened with all sorts of atrocities being committed by the warring parties, some ECOWAS leaders, spearheaded by Nigeria, decided to do something about the situation. But, the situation was increased when arms supplied by Nigeria to President Doe's army were captured by the NPFL which confirmed the romance of President Babangida and Samuel Doe and the conclusion was that ECOMOG was in Liberia to save Doe and protect him as president.[8] This was one of the major reasons why Charles Taylor, until recently, had always defied and violated any agreement reached and signed during the past five years which had Nigeria's support.

The involvement of ECOMOG thus contributed in increasing the rate of violence especially by the NPFL which viewed ECOMOG's intervention as a cog-in-the-wheel of its assuming the Liberian mantle of leadership.

But then, even if ECOWAS had not intervened, it has become obvious that had it been Taylor - an Americo-Liberian by origin - was able to overthrow Doe and become the President, other ethnic groups especially the Krahn would have been brutally persecuted by him, the Liberian problem would not have been over yet.

The intervention of ECOWAS through the formation of ECOMOG met with various criticism, particularly, from the Francophone states within the ECOWAS, which are the principal backers of the NPFL. They had initially viewed the peace keeping force as an "Anglophone road show" and have argued that the Community has no judicial backing to employ ECOMOG, adding that, the ECOWAS charter was concerned more with economic benefits of economic integration than with mechanism for resolving conflicts among member states.

But, the Protocol on Non-Aggression of 1978 and the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance or Defence Pact of 1981 was referred to by Nigeria to provide another legal backing upon which ECOMOG was established.[9] Similarly, it has been argued that Article II of ECOWAS Treaty cannot be achieved without political stability in the Community. In addition, the Technical Commission of the Authority is to "submit from time to time reports and recommendations, through the Executive Secretary to the Council of Ministers. They ..."may also have other functions as are imposed on (them) under the treaty".[10] Accordingly, nothing prevents the Authority from endowing the technical commission with competence in matters of peace and security.

All these arguments were brought in to provide a legal backing for ECOMOG deployment. Subsequently, through the efforts of Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire the rift between the two camps - Anglophone and Francophone countries - was gradually overcome.

Nigeria has consistently argued that its foreign policy objectives have been put to question in the Liberian conflict and thus, it is only right that she defended them. This has been fully discussed in chapter three but let me briefly summarise it.

Nigeria has since independence, maintained Africa as the centrepiece of its foreign policy. This Afrocentric foreign policy was to assume a new dimension when in 1984 Buhari's government formulated the 'concentric circles'[11] of Nigeria's foreign policy.

The first circle puts Nigeria's interest first, its security, territorial integrity and political independence became paramount. The second circle is the West African subregion which comprises ECOWAS countries because events in the area have direct impact on Nigeria. The third circle involves African issues such as aiding towards decolonization and self-determination of countries still under colonial domination, while events involving organizations like the United Nations and other international institutions outside Africa made up the last circle.

Former President of Nigeria, Ibrahim Babangida, had once stated that, countries with contiguous boundaries with Nigeria are 'Ring

Countries' in which "crisis or conflicts would inevitably have adverse spill over effects on the peace and tranquility of our country".[12] On this basis, therefore, the diplomatic behaviour of Nigeria rotates around the promotion of equality and self reliance in Africa and the rest of the world, and the defence of social justice of the blackman and the defence and promotion of world peace. It seeks consensus and commonality of decision in community of nations. However, it also believes in stalemated conflict. It was on this basis of this concentric foreign policy that Nigeria got involved in the Liberian crisis.[13]

As stated earlier, Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy started even before independence. But then, by 1960 to 1969, Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy was in mere pronouncements due to her weak economy even though the country's economic potential power was evident. The nature of the Nigeria society was characterised by ethnicity, regionalism and political diversity and disunity to the extent that the nation was thrown into a civil war for about four years. The civil war produced some lessons and experiences which helped produce a stronger active foreign policy towards West Africa and Africa after the war.[14]

The oil boom of the 1970s saw Nigeria's increasing leadership role in Africa. With the petrodollar rolling in, many bilateral agreements were signed with neighbouring countries like Benin, Chad and Niger Republics including Liberia,[15] so also in the rest of

Africa where Nigeria had aided in independent struggles of Zimbabwe and Angola and the nationalization of Shell Company and other radical external policies, were pursued.[16]

However, in the 1980s, the fall of oil revenue created a situation in which Nigeria can no longer play the role of "father Christmas" or big brother. In fact, questions were asked by Senators of the second republic as to why Nigeria continued to pay for resettlement of refugees from Chad and why Nigeria continued to supply Niger Republic with electricity unfailingly when the country is experiencing constant power failure.[17]

This situation was put more aptly by Ambassador Sanusi who argued that "We (Nigeria) cannot starve just because we want to play "father Christmas or some kind of 'big brother' to our needy African brothers".[18]

This feeling was shared by the majority of Nigerians and reflected the ailing economic conditions of the country. Thus, with popular support at home, the Nigerian government was able to expel illegal aliens from the country. The actions of Nigeria as regards to the external environment negatively or positively have direct impact on her neighbours. For example, the closure of Nigerian borders in 1983 and 1984 has gravely affected the economies of Benin and Nigeria Republics to the extend that the president of Benin had to visit Nigeria in 1984 to plead for the reopening of the borders.

This demand was granted in 1985 even though it was a disadvantage to Nigeria's economy.[19] The situation portrayed the level of commitment of Nigeria in pursuing its leadership role in the subregion.

Apart from reopening the broders, the new military administration of General Babangida that seized power in 1985, continued to pursue policies to please the western powers, such as the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme. It was also in line with the age-long Afrocentric foreign policy posture that it initiated the formation of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee and later ECOMOG in Liberia which is hoped to remain even after the Liberian conflict has been resolved, as a regional security framework or system to address similar issues in the future.

Nigeria's involvement in ECOMOG was also made possible due to the rapid increase of world oil prices following the Gulf war from 1990 to 1992. This enabled Nigeria to realize billions of Naira, a large part of which have been claimed to be expended on the peace keeping force.[20]

Thus, the major issue raised in chapter 3 is that the pursuance of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives at any point in time, should reflect the economic strength of the country. In addition, African countries should cooperate maximally to see that conflicts within the region are resolved amicably by pursuing appropriate mechanisms. Logistics burden should be shared equally among contributing countries and not be left on a particular nation.

On the other hand, Nigeria's role in resolving the Liberian crisis through ECOMOG, has been justified based on the fact that the crisis has endangered Nigeria's economic interests in the West African subregion and has threatened to topple a government that is friendly to her. And so, political instability in the subregion negates Nigeria's attempt at organizing economic and political cooperation in the ECOWAS region.

In the fourth chapter, Nigeria's role in the formation of ECOMOG was extensively discussed. The legal arguments for and against the establishment of the peace keeping monitoring group was discussed as stated earlier. In essence, therefore, the legality of ECOMOG has been well established by Nigeria.

Nigeria has indeed had to cross numerous hurdles to see that peace is finally restored in Liberia. This can be seen in the various peace accords reached and signed by the various warring factions over the past five years of the crisis. Most of these peace agreements, however, met their untimely demise any time one of the warring parties (particularly, the NPFL) decided to breach the agreement either by attacking ECOMOG soldiers or any of the rival warring groups.

Because of the numerous problems faced by Nigeria in ECOMOG, the peace keeping mandate has been changed several times to meeting the situation at hand. Similarly, the Field Commanders have been changed from time to time all in the bid by Nigeria to solve the problem.

As stated earlier, Nigeria has come to maintain the post of Field Commander since September, 1990 following the incidence at the ECOMOG Headquarters which saw the abduction and later killing of president Doe at the time when General Quinoo (of Ghana) was the Force Commander of ECOMOG.

Initially, when ECOMOG was formed, the Force Commander was the head of the political organization of the peace keeping mission, followed by the Field Commander. But since Quinoo stepped down, the post of the Force Commander was removed from the political cadre and the Field Commander became the head of affairs of ECOMOG.

5.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it has become clear that for Nigeria to make an impact and maintain her leadership role and Afrocentric foreign policy posture, it has to have a strong and viable economy and a popular support of the citizens at home because popular support for government policies can constrain or enhance a country's foreign policy and image abroad.

The involvement of Nigeria in ECOMOG has been applauded by the international community and is in line with her foreign policy posture. But this gesture has also earned it criticism at home for several reasons. In the first place, many Nigerian citizens in Liberia both civilians and those involved in ECOMOG operation have lost their lives.[21] Secondly, the amount of resources committed to ECOMOG by Nigeria, is quite enormous which if judiciously utilized at home, could have gone a long way in ameliorating the sufferings

of the people which should be the top priority of the Nigerian government.

However, since Nigeria has already committed itself in resolving the Liberian conflict through the financing of ECOMOG, withdrawal, without a lasting and peaceful solution found to the problem, would have a negative impact on Nigeria's image, security and defence strategy because ECOMOG was designed to project an offensive deterrent force capable of protecting Nigeria's national interests and supporting her national objective.[22] Secondly, withdrawal of Nigerian troops before peace is forged, will plunge the country (Liberia) into another crisis worst than before the peace keeping force was deployed.

A further examination of this study reveals that the basic principles of peace keeping as outlined or practiced by the United Nations, have not been fully adhered to by ECOMOG. This may be attributed to the fact that ECOWAS Monitoring Group is the first of its kind in West Africa by ECOWAS and thus, mistakes are likely to be committed. But the issue of logistics have constituted one of the major constraints in the peace initiative. The financial burden was left largely on Nigeria to bear. This has been the major issue that drew internal criticisms against the Nigerian government and thus, the constant call on the government to withdraw its troops from ECOMOG. Nigerian government should ensure that in future peace keeping efforts, logistic cost is shared rationally among participating countries.

Even though one cannot over-ride the hidden agenda of the Nigerian military in its involvement in ECOMOG, its role in the formation of the peace keeping force has indeed set the basis for a regional security framework which the West African subregion needs in view of the constant border clashes and internal crises in many nation states in the region.

In the absence of the perennial "East-West struggle" that underpinned virtually every conflict in Africa, and the rest of the world, states and domestic combatants should begin to turn to regional organizations to complement and reduce the burden of the United Nations towards this direction.

African countries have also realised that the "non-intervention prohibition" has been a major impediment to the resolution of conflicts in Africa. This needs to be re-examined in such a way as to favour the whole Community and not to run into the danger of intervening to save despotic regimes from the growing wave of democracy that is sweeping across the continent. This is very crucial, considering the fact that the preponderant majority of the regimes in Africa lack legitimacy and popular support.[23]

Thus, Nigeria's initiation and willingness to see that a democratically elected government is installed in Liberia should be reflected in Nigeria itself. After all, "Charity begins at home" and one should always give a good example to enable others to follow in his/her footsteps. Since Nigeria has always claimed to be the

"natural" leader of the continent and a "regional power", she should, therefore, let democracy reign in the country. The Babangida military administration had promised to hand over to a civilian government since 1993, but this did not materilise two years after the expiration of the deadline. Nigeria can, thus, maintain her credibility not by enforcing a ceasefire in Liberia, but by addressing first, its internal problems and contradictions with popular participation and economic revival in the fore stream. as it is, the Structural Adjustment Programme which has led to economic and social hardships[24] in the country, has also created discontent and disaffection against the military governments. These should be addressed by the government.

On the other hand, the research has tried to look into Liberia's past in order to examine the causes of the crisis. To this end, the Liberian situation has brought to the fore the need for Nigeria, and indeed other African countries with multiple ethnic groupings to incorporate the spirit of democracy and fair play. Dictatorship, ethnicity and nepotism are never pillars upon which a strong and united society is developed.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the 190 or so independent states in existence contain at least 5,000 ethnic groups.[25] In Africa, where there is a huge number of these groups, political exploitation of ethnic tension has been the norm and this has given rise to perpetual strife as various ethnic groups seek to take revenge on each other when the balance of power swings,

as it regularly does through military coups rather than the ballot box.

Conclusively, therefore, Nigeria's role in ECOMOG has boosted the image of the nation in the eyes of the world. It has set the basis of a regional security system for the subregion and the whole of Africa to follow. Nigeria has thus lived up to its task as a mediator in Africa and has made history as the initiator of a peace keeping force in the subregion. Through its untiring effort, it is hoped that the Liberia crisis will finally come to an end before the year runs out.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Sixteen of the world's 35 internal conflicts are in Africa.[26] Africans should therefore support the OAU's belated mechanism for continental conflict prevention, management and resolution which has finally come into being two years ago. The experiences learnt from ECOMOG can be fully utilised to achieve maximum and efficient result.

In the same vein, experiences of the OAU and ECOWAS in Chad and Liberia respectively, require that both organizations should examine their constitutive instruments to ensure that the law on the subject is sufficiently settled to assuage dissent among their members and avoid creating opportunities for external intervention.[27]

A major root cause of tension in Africa is the decline in socio-economic development. Ghana's foreign minister was quick to note this when he said, "In Africa, economic and social conditions have become increasingly intolerable despite the various structural adjustment programmes which African countries have undertaken at considerable sacrifice".[28] Thus, other alternatives should be explored by African States and governments to revive their economies. Similarly, by resolving contending economic problems, the diversion of resources meant for the general well being of the population, to few hands or political class would be minimised.

According to Akinterinwa, a research fellow at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, "the only way Nigeria can become ... a success story is to become a full fledged member of the international system ... this will require fiscal discipline, good investment ... Nigeria only needs to get its economic act together"[29] to become Africa's leader.

In addition, extra attention has to be paid to a consensus of members in the subregion on the basis of historical, political, economic and military consequences of embarking on an expensive adventure. In the event of the consensus at the various subregional levels, the possibility of having and maintaining a continental high command will be easier and less costly.

To this effect, the East-West tension should be considered as a signal to pursuing peaceful means of solving disputes. Africans should also seek assistance and encouragement within and among themselves in all aspects. The recently proposed "Europe 92" (96?), following the Maastrict treaty in which all European countries are working towards the unification of their economic, social and political systems has created the condition which necessitates the need for a south-south cooperation between the third world countries. African countries should therefore give more support to regional organisations for the achievement of not only economic but political and social development and stability in the region. Dan Fulani has aptly put it this way:

> "Positively, there is no more East-West divide for now, there is therefore a decreasing support for allies, regimes and systems. Negatively, with the fall of Berlin Wall and the breakup of the Communist block, aid, profitable investment and other types of assistance have changed direction ... it will require an intensified diplomatic repolarisation, diversification and assessment of priorities towards an endogenous programme of economic survival, for any meaningful cooperation (integration for peace, security, stability and development) to get solidified, which perhaps might limit the perpetual marginalisation of Africa (the subregion)"[30]

Moreover, African States should take full responsibility of any regional agreement rather than leaving most of the burden on one State. Nigeria should give chance to other countries in the region

rather than monopolising any operation to avoid accusation of hegemonic designs as meted out on her by Francophone countries. This will go a long way in minimizing or eliminating the Francophone-Anglophone rivalry.

To further forestall any accusation of hegemonic designs, Nigeria should intensify diplomatic offensive to ensure that coastal nations in West Africa interact more intensively in maritime policing to protect common interests so that in crisis situation such as ECOMOG, in Liberia, they will have the benefit of having worked together. Nigeria should start this new initiative in maritime policing with our immediate maritime neighbours in the proposed Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC).[31]

In the same vein, a joint military manoevres and training should be organised at the regional level with a view to preparing the regional corps of military and civilian future policy makers on the significance of mutual political and strategic cooperation in the interest of international continental peace and common security. Where possible, the United Nations Organization and the Organisation of African Unity should, through a high level policy programme, commit these organizations in the area of military cooperation, with the assistance and approval of the United Nations Security Council.[32]

In the aftermath of the cold war, the United Nations has acquired an ability that was previously lacking: it has become the centrepiece of international security efforts, though with strong manipulation by the western powers, particularly the United States as evidenced

in the UN Coalition Force that repelled Iraq from Kuwait in 1991.[33]

Between 1985 and 1994 alone, about nine peace keeping missions have been embarked upon which are about equal to the number of operations initiated by the United Nations in the previous forty years.[34] This increase in the United Nations missions is as a result of the vast expansion of roles and responsibilities as traditional peace keeping tasks of conflict containment is coupled with that of conflict resolution leading to complex peace building operations.

Peace keeping has, therefore, evolved from the classical model to the modern. The distinction between the two is that the former deals with conflict containment in which outside assistance is employed to mediate and encourage conflicting parties to disengage. It also involves the negotiation and arrangement of ceasefires, verification of truces including troop withdrawals and or disengagement, interposition of barriers between hostile parties, investigation and mediation of violations and creation of buffer monitoring zones.[35] In short, this model has been described as a "Sheriff's posse mustered at the last minute to prevent the worst."[36]

On the other hand, the peace keeping in the modern context has gone beyond the Sheriff's posse to embrace multi-component missions such as demobilisation of fighting units, implementing measures to re-establish confidence and achieve national reconciliation, securing, organizing and monitoring elections, providing humanitarian assistance to civil populations, human rights overwatch and national reconstruction and administration as envisaged in Cambodia.[37]

This enlarged agenda of the United Nations entails certain risks. One is that peace keeping is beginning to veer towards peace enforcement with attendant complications. Associated with this, is the role of the use of force and the prospect that it may become an instrument of power politics. Secondly, the United Nations system capability would be seriously stretched by the wide-scope of demands necessitating organizational reforms.

To this effect, therefore, regional organizations involved in peace keeping operations should be regarded as complimentary even though they might be too weak to take on the task of conflict resolution and lack the capability to be autonomous.[39] They should thus be inter-linked formally or informally with the United Nations. A form of partnership is called for between the two, with the United Nations having the option to decentralise authority, delegate duties or subcontract the task of execution to the regional agency as and when appropriate. The United Nations can accommodate such arrangements as in Article 39 of the UN charter given the security council the power to determine when a threat to or breach of peace or act of aggression has occured and Article 53 of the charter has made the Security Council the agent for enforcement of peace and security even where regional organizations exist.[40]

On the other hand, the United Nations itself needs reorganization and reforming especially in terms of structure, procedure and finance. For instance, the existing power arrangement at the level

of the security council reflects the state of power distribution at the end of World War II and this has become outmoded and shopworn. Thus, "new-era" powers such as Japan and Germany whose economic weight ought to be thrown behind the expanding UN responsibilties must be included.

Another alternative is for the Security Council to be abolished and its powers conferred on the General Assembly but if the Security Council cannot be abolished for fear of alienation by the big powers, then it should be expanded to embrace new powers and key regional actions (like Nigeria) or elected representatives of the third World as a mark of respect for democratic ethos.

On a final note, I share fully the observation made by General Erskine that "gather troops from different parts of the world to operate together as a force in peace keeping despite differences in language, cultural background and religion presents no difficulty whatsoever. What is difficult and no less important is to sustain them logistically so that they can effectively and efficiently discharge their operation task"[41] should not go unheeded.

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