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**AFRICAN SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN  
PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEMAKING:  
THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN  
STATE (ECOWAS)**

by

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March 2005

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STATE (ECOWAS)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis will examine the emerging role of a sub-regional organization dealing with peacekeeping and peacemaking missions on the post-Cold-War period in West Africa. This examination will focus mainly on ECOWAS and ECOMOG, its military wing, as the most prominent sub-regional organization in conducting peacemaking and peacekeeping missions in Africa. This thesis will focus on the first generation interventions of ECOWAS/ECOMOG in undertaking peacemaking and peacekeeping missions in Liberia (1990 – 1997), Sierra Leone, (1998 – 2000), and Guinea Bissau (1998 – 1999)), and the second generation of interventions in Liberia in 2003 and in Côte d'Ivoire (2003-2004). This examination aimed at assessing ECOWAS' strengths and limitations and comparing to which the second generation interventions have benefited from the lessons of the first.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACOTA:	African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance
ACRI:	African Crisis Response Initiative
AFL:	Armed Forces of Liberia
AFRC:	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
ANAD:	<i>Accord de Non-Agression et d'Assistance en Matiere de Defense</i>
CEAO:	<i>Communité Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest</i>
CFA:	<i>Communaute Financiere Africaine</i>
DDR:	Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration
ECOFORCE:	ECOMOG Force in Cote d'Ivoire
ECOMICI:	ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire
ECOMIL:	ECOWAS Mission in Liberia
ECOMOG:	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of the West African States
FANCI:	<i>Forces Armees Nationales de Cote d'Ivoire</i>
GOL:	Government of Liberia
ICGL:	International Contact Group for Liberia
IGAD:	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INPFL:	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
JTF:	Joint Task Force
LURD:	Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MJP:	Movement for Justice and peace
MODEL:	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
MPCI:	Patriotic Movement of Cote d'Ivoire
MPIGO:	Popular Ivorian Movement for the Far West
NF:	Nouvelle Forces
NPFL:	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
OAU:	Organization of African Unity
OFR:	Operation Focus Relief
PA&E:	Pacific Architects and Engineering
RECAMP:	<i>Renforcement des Capacites Africaines de Maintien de la Paix</i>

RUF: Revolutionary United Front (RUF).  
SADC: Southern African Development Community) and the  
SETAF: South European Task Force  
SMC: Standing Mediation Committee  
UN: United Nations  
UNAMSIL: United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone  
UNOMIL: United Nations Mission in Liberia  
UNOMSIL: United Nations Observation Mission in Sierra Leone  
UNOCI: United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire  
U.S.S.R: Soviet Union

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## I. INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations (UN) Charter, the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the UN Security Council.<sup>1</sup> However, the role and the scope of UN peacemaking and peacekeeping missions have changed over the last fifty years, in response to the changing nature of conflicts, and the rising role of other regional organizations.

During the Cold War, competition between the two superpowers (i.e., the United States and the U.S.S.R.) and “the impossibility for the permanent members of the Security Council to agree on joint action”<sup>2</sup> were the primary influences on UN policy. During this period, major changes in the international and regional political arenas altered the way the world perceived peace and security. One change that captured international attention as the Cold War ended was the increase in the number of intra-state conflicts.<sup>3</sup>

The UN and the international community played only a passive role in stopping the recurrence of internal conflicts in Africa, and helping to reduce the violence prevalent in many West African countries. The perceived inadequacy of their combined response, however, prompted sub-regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS), to intervene in many countries to halt the fighting between various factions and attempt to reach a peaceful resolution to these conflicts.

This thesis will provide an initial assessment of sub regional peacekeeping in West Africa. After reviewing the evolution of UN peacekeeping and peacemaking missions in Africa during the Cold War era and post-Cold-War periods in Chapter II, Chapter III will analyze ECOWAS’ first three interventions, in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, setting out its achievements and shortcomings. Through an analysis of

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter V of The United Nations Charter: Charter of the United Nations signed at San Francisco on 26 June 1945. Entry into force 24 October 1945<<http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/>> (22 February 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Maria Bideke :the future of the UN peacekeeping ,  
<[http:// justint.org/the %20future/%20for%20un%20peacekeeping.html](http://justint.org/the%20future/%20for%20un%20peacekeeping.html)> (20 February 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Abiodun Alao The role of African regional and sub regional organizations in conflict prevention and resolution. < <http://www.jha.ac/articles/u023.html>>(20 February 2005).

more recent interventions in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, Chapter IV assesses the extent to which ECOWAS has benefited from lessons learned during the first generation of interventions.

There is no doubt that the UN peacekeeping role in Africa has changed over the last four decades. During the Cold War era, efforts towards peacekeeping were often marred by political competition between the United States and the Soviet Union due to their support of their respective allies in the region. These two superpowers were generally opposed to UN involvement in the domestic affairs of their respective allies and client states, being more concerned with maintaining the integrity of their own spheres of influence.<sup>4</sup> The spread of their respective ideologies and the preservation of their national interests influenced the way the UN perceived peacemaking and peacekeeping operations in conflicts throughout the world. Both the United States and the Soviet Union were reluctant to support any UN initiatives unless their national interests were satisfied. As a result, only one UN peacekeeping operation (Congo 1960-1964) took place in Africa before 1989.

Despite the particular influences of the two superpowers during the Cold War, the UN tried to act independently in managing regional conflicts. In some cases, the UN became heavily dependant on the willingness and commitment of the United States and the Soviet Union to participate in the settlement of such conflicts. In other cases, the rivalry between the two superpowers prevented the Security Council from taking any urgent and concrete actions.

After the Cold War, the recrudescence of intra-state conflicts became a crucial problem for regional security. The withdrawal of the two superpowers from Africa had a destabilizing role on many countries. Such countries received, over the period of the Cold War, military and financial support to sustain their regimes. Therefore the shrinkage of external support, in addition to other domestic problems, contributed to the degradation of social, economic and security in many countries, which resulted in internal strives and conflicts.

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<sup>4</sup> Roland Paris: *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), 15.

The eruption of many civil wars created a huge burden on the UN and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to prevent and solve these conflicts. Neither the UN nor the OAU were able to intervene in a timely manner in order to secure peace and lessen the impacts of civil wars. The delay of response led to the emergence of sub-regional organizations as an alternative to enhance regional peacemaking and peacekeeping capabilities and ensure peace and stability.

In West Africa, ECOWAS emerged as a new actor in dealing with security issues on the regional level. Previously ECOWAS has been devoted entirely to economic development. Consequently, ECOWAS attempted to play a more significant role in peacemaking and peacekeeping missions, first in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, then in Côte d' Ivoire and again a second effort in Liberia. ECOWAS underwent various transformations over the intervening years in an effort to improve its effectiveness in meeting the needs of securing peace and stability in the sub-region.

The most significant non-UN expanded peacekeeping operations were conducted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau. Known as the Economic Community of West African States Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), these missions attempted to restore order in countries divided by civil war.<sup>5</sup>

The ECOMOG was instrumental in conducting peacemaking and peacekeeping missions in Liberia (1990 – 1997), Sierra Leone (1998 – 2000), and Guinea-Bissau (1998 – 1999). These interventions, the first ones of this kind in Africa, were implemented in an environment of inexperience, insufficient financial and logistical support, rampant regional and political divisions, and lack of external support. They were carried out in an ad-hoc manner, in the absence of a security framework mechanism or an organizational structure to achieve such complex missions. Although ECOWAS and ECOMOG had many successes, they also experienced some setbacks.

In response to these setbacks, ECOWAS initiated several changes to improve the effectiveness of its organizational structure in dealing with regional security issues, thereby making it a more permanent structure. In the development of chapter IV, recent

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<sup>5</sup> Fredeick H.Fleitz: *Peacekeeping Fiascos of the 1990's* (Westport CT, Praeger Publishers, 2004), 111.

interventions of ECOMOG will be examined; in Liberia in 2003 (and for a shorter period of time in Liberia at a later period), and in Cote d'Ivoire (2003-2004). The interventions in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, therefore were instituted under changed circumstances. The UN also became more involved in these internal conflicts, regional-political divisions lessened, and the international community was more cooperative in supporting West African initiatives in peace operations.

During fifteen years of active interventions, ECOWAS has experienced several transformations, all of which have served to enhance its role as a sub-regional organization dealing with peace operations. This organization has demonstrated a growing interest in managing regional crises, despite its limited financial and logistical means, as well as the serious challenges it faces in the field. Thus, exploring the strengths and limitations of ECOWAS as a pioneering regional organization in peacekeeping and peacemaking, this thesis will help better define ECOWAS' role in ensuring peace and stability. This analysis endeavors to a fuller understanding of ECOWAS strengths and limitations as a means of improving future ECOWAS interventions in order to 1) reinforce its standing in both the UN and the international community, and 2) ensure that ECOWAS will help relieve the UN from heavy responsibilities in this turbulent region.

During the Cold War, the United Nations peacekeeping missions aimed at pacifying inter-state conflicts through the deployment of unarmed or lightly armed military personnel from different countries serving under the UN flag. The purpose of the deployment of forces was both to help separate the belligerent parties and to prepare the conditions eventual peaceful settlements of conflicts. In the post Cold War period, the UN has continued its efforts to preserve peace and security, now mostly in the context of intra-state conflicts.

Moreover, the recrudescence of civil wars in Africa in short period of time, prevented the UN from responding to all emerging conflicts in a timely manner. As a result of the proliferation of these internal conflicts and the inability of the UN to react quickly to prevent the widespread of violence, three sub-regional organizations have emerged in order to face the challenges of security issues in their respective sub-regions. "ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD have engaged in conflict resolution with varying degrees

of success”<sup>6</sup>. In West Africa, for example, ECOWAS has become the most notable in dealing with regional civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d’Ivoire. The SADC contributed to the management of conflict in Lesotho and mediated in internal conflict in Congo; while the IGAD was particularly involved in the mediation of conflict in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan<sup>7</sup>.

The first UN peacekeeping operation in Africa took place in the Republic of Congo from July 1960 to June 1964, following Belgian military intervention and the breakout of fighting between different Congolese factions over power.. With nearly 20,000 UN peacekeepers, the operation was mandated to provide the newly independent country with military and technical assistance to restore law and order. As proof of its commitment to resolving the Congo crisis, in the face of increasing superpower involvement, the UN played an active leadership role in the implementation of peacekeeping operations. Because this country was considered a major battleground between the two superpowers in the spread of their ideologies, as well as in the preservation of their interests in the region, the UN’s firm stance and daring decisions preempted direct military intervention by the US and the Soviet Union in the Congo. It was in this context that Harlan Cleveland, then US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, stated that: “because of the UN’s Congo operation, there were no uninvited foreign troops, no communist enclaves, no army of liberation, and no reason for single American soldier to die there, no excuse for a Soviet soldier to live there.”<sup>8</sup>

Although the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. disengaged from Africa, in theory freeing the UN to take action there, the many civil wars in West Africa were too much for the UN to handle. With the end of the Cold War, and the eruption of civil wars, the scope of the UN peacekeeping missions increased, and the nature of its peacekeeping efforts changing accordingly. A second major change in the post Cold War era is that the UN

<sup>6</sup> Jeremy Levitt. *Conflict: Prevention, Management and Resolution: African Regional Strategies for the Prevention of Displacement and Protection of Displaced Persons. The cases of the OAU, ECOWAS, SADC, and IGAD.* <<http://www.law.duke.edu/journals/djcil/articles/djcil11p39.htm>> (9 March 2005).

<sup>7</sup> William Zartman: *Regional conflict management in Africa, in Regional conflict management* Paul F Diehl and Joseph Lepgold (Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 85.

<sup>8</sup> William J. Durch: *The evolution of UN peacekeeping.* (New York, the Henry L. Stimson Center 1993), 345.

peacekeeping operations expanded beyond the traditional peacekeeping tasks into multidimensional operations, involving political and humanitarian work, such as the supervising of elections, peace building, civil administration, verification of human rights practice s, reconstruction of infrastructures, delivery of humanitarian relief, and nation building.<sup>9</sup>

Also, the post Cold War period saw the increase of internal strife in many locations in Africa, which request an increase of peacekeeping missions to prevent the spread of violence. Despite the limited means of the UN, coupled with a lack of interest on the part of the international community to get involved, this organization strived to respond to the increase demand in peacekeeping missions. Subsequently, the above factors contributed largely to an increase in the number and size of UN missions in Africa. In turn, this expansion of the UN role created a heavy burden on its operations and its ability to deal efficiently with increasingly complex security situations and in timely manner. Accordingly during this period the UN was facing the world's most intractable conflicts, without the necessary financial and logistical support from the international community to resolve them.<sup>10</sup>

A critical issue that arose in this period was the questionable legality of UN intervention in internal conflicts. The UN was clearly limited by its principle of the “inviolability of (national) sovereignty.” This principle of “non-interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state”<sup>11</sup> constituted an impediment to UN interventions. “The sanctity of principles of state sovereignty and non-interference in other states' affairs throughout the Cold War era largely confined the UN to intervention in wars between countries”<sup>12</sup>. Consequently, the delay to intervene in certain internal conflicts triggered an increase in violence, often generating atrocities and mass carnage. The

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<sup>9</sup> David Malone and Karin Wermester:*The Changing Nature of UN Peacekeeping. Managing Armed Conflicts in the 21 Century* .Adekeye Adebajo and Chadra I.Siram, (London, Frank Case Publisher 2001), 39.

<sup>10</sup> Fredeick H.Fleitz, *Peacekeeping Fiascos of the 1990's* (Westport CT, Praeger Publishers, 2004), 16.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Charter: Chapter II. <<http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter7.htm> > (10 March 2005).

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, <[http:// www.una-uk.org/UN&C/Peacekeeping.html](http://www.una-uk.org/UN&C/Peacekeeping.html)> (4 July 2004).

abandonment of Somalia in worst situation, the negligence of critical situation in Rwanda, and the decline of intervention in Liberia, constituted the most notable fiascos of the UN in dealing with this kind of internal conflicts.

The UN undertook reforms aimed at improving its capacity to conduct peacekeeping operations in the context of any complex crisis. In this context, the Brahimi report of August 17, 2000, submitted to the Secretary General of the UN, offered a critical and useful assessment of the UN's past peacekeeping operations, and extensive recommendations about how the UN could improve its performance in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace building, in order to meet the challenges of peacekeeping in the 21st Century. Among its recommendations was the empowerment of regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa to undertake regional peacekeeping operations, and the strengthening of UN cooperation with those organizations in peacekeeping and in enhancing the capacities of these organizations.<sup>13</sup>

African sub-regional organizations thus emerged by necessity as managers of regional conflicts. Over the last fifteen years, the contributions of African sub-regional organizations to peacemaking, particularly ECOWAS in peacekeeping, have highlighted the importance of regional arrangements in successfully addressing regional problems. In their responses to the havoc caused by the spillover effects of civil wars in neighboring countries, African sub-regional organizations have attempted to develop their own peacekeeping and peacemaking capabilities. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), all previously devoted to the economic development of their respective regions, have each undergone to some degrees significant transformations to address the needs for preserving peace and stability.

ECOWAS is the most active sub-regional organization dealing with security issues in Africa. It is made up of fifteen-member states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. This organization has been involved in peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts in several countries through its military body, the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibrahim report. Report of the Panel on the United Nations peace operations <[http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace\\_operations/](http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/)>. (20 December 2004).

Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). ECOMOG was created in 1990 as an ad hoc response to emerging needs, then being deployed as a peacekeeping force in West Africa. It was set up by member states in order to deal with security problems that followed the collapse of the formal state structures in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea Bissau. An assessment of the ECOMOG's interventions in Liberia (1990 –1997), in Guinea-Bissau (1998 – 1999), in Sierra Leone (1998 – 2000), and the ongoing interventions in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire will be the focus of the next two chapters.

## II. ECOWAS: IN LIBERIA, SIERRA LEONE AND GUINEA-BISSAU

### A. INTRODUCTION

ECOWAS' military interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau all attempted to end civil wars. These were ambitious attempts to address internal conflicts without the support of the UN or the international community. Despite the financial constraints experienced by most member states, and the absence of existing security frameworks at the regional level, ECOWAS intervened with its own resources and means. In order to better understand and accurately assess ECOMOG's interventions, one must reflect on the recent history of the countries concerned, and examine the political and security situations prevailing at the time in the region.

Since the early 1960's, most West African countries have experienced crises of varying degrees and intensities. During the 1980's, the regional security situation steadily deteriorated in many West African countries, and these countries became some of the most volatile and unstable in the world. The combination of colonial legacies, bad governance, and the degradation of the economic, political and social led to unrest and fighting in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. As a consequence of their geographic proximity and the commonality of their political and social features, security issues in these countries were closely linked. Civil wars jumped from one country to another in a relatively short period of time. In fact, the occurrence of civil war in one country has inevitably had a destabilizing affect on neighboring countries, and the whole sub-region. For that reason, ECOMOG's interventions aimed as much at preventing regional violence and instability as at resolving internal conflicts.

The civil war in Liberia had its roots in the early days of the country's creation in 1847. Despite their minority status, the Americo-Liberians dominated the country's political, economical and social domains for more than 130 years. For many decades prior to the crisis, they ruled the country inefficiently. The growing incompetence of successive governments, and discriminatory practices toward the majority indigenous population led to riots and internal strife. Ultimately, on April 12, 1980, Samuel Doe seized power in a military *coup d'etat*.

The Doe regime set out to kill former president William Tolbert, and members of his entourage, all the while marginalizing other key figures of the former administration. The junta established a repressive military regime in Liberia based around the new president's ethnic group, the Krahns. This perpetuated the ethnic divisions within the national institutions, including the bureaucracy. During the first five years of his rule, Doe did not succeed in implementing the economic, social and political reforms he had promised at the time he seized power in Liberia. On the contrary, he transformed his regime into a civilian entity and, in the absence of any effective opposition, held elections that were far from free and fair<sup>14</sup>. In order to remain in power, the new regime drew internal support from the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), and external support from Nigeria and the USA, as a Cold War ally. This tumultuous situation lasted until 1989, when armed opposition arose to challenge Doe's regime<sup>15</sup>. This rebellion was led by Charles Taylor, head of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). During the struggle over power between the Doe regime and the NPFL rebels, Liberia plunged into bloodshed and armed conflict. This eruption of violence marked the start of a long, bloody civil war in Liberia.

The conflict in Sierra Leone followed essentially the same pattern. From independence in 1961, a minority of the population (descendants from freed slaves), ruled and dominated political and economic life in Sierra Leone. However, the cumulative impact of mismanagement by successive administrations led to the degradation of state institutions, the fragmentation of Sierra Leonean society, and the decline of the economic system. Those circumstances were the main driving forces behind the widespread violence and hostilities in the country. Consequently, in March 1991 the country witnessed the eruption of an insurgency in the form of the Revolutionary United Front

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<sup>14</sup> Adekeye Adebajo: *Nigeria, ECOMOG, and Regional Security in West Africa* (London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 28.

<sup>15</sup> Clement Adib. *The Liberian conflict and the ECOWAS-UN Partnership*. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 18, No3, pp471-488, 1997.

(RUF). The rebels of the RUF movement was made up of Sierra Leonean fighters and Liberian elements from the NPFL, who had had received military training in guerrilla warfare in Libya and Burkina Faso<sup>16</sup>.

The RUF, led by Foday Sankoh, instigated a rebellion against the government of Joseph Momoh; the leader of this movement motivated more by the plunder of natural resources (mainly lucrative diamond mining) than by the achievement of any political ambitions. Because of the collapse of the state's institutions, the central government had little control over its territory, failing to prevent the rebels from capturing more territory, particularly rich zones where the diamond mines were located.

The security situation in Sierra Leone worsened when the elected government of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was ousted in May 25, 1997, by a *coup d'etat* mounted by a group of army officers, led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma. Ironically, the leader of this junta appointed himself as Chairman of the new Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), allying himself with the rebels of the RUF in governing the country. As the opponents to this new regime increased, the security situation deteriorated even more rapidly as the country entered an uncertain climate of violence and criminality.

The first civil war in Liberia had a destabilizing influence on Sierra Leone, as well as on other neighboring countries. The relationship between the two warlords, Charles Taylor, leader of the NPFL, and Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF, instigators of civil wars in their respective countries, goes back to the earliest days of their rebellions.

The relationship between Taylor and Sankoh strengthened during the years of civil war in the two countries. RUF and NPFL rebels moved back and forth across the border of Liberia and Sierra Leone freely, complicating and delaying the resolution of this regional conflict. To support their rebellions, the two movements established an alliance based on the criminal exploitation of natural resources and weapons smuggling. After his election as president, Taylor became officially involved in the illegal trade of diamonds and arms, with the RUF rebels and continued to inter-meddle in Sierra

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<sup>16</sup> Adekeye Adebajo: *Building Peace in West Africa*,( London: Boulder, 2002), 82.

Leonean state affairs. The alliance between the RUF and the president of Liberia fueled the civil war in Sierra Leone by providing the rebels with arms in exchange for diamonds<sup>17</sup>.

The involvement and interference of Charles Taylor in the Sierra Leonean civil war was motivated, firstly, to plunder the diamonds extracted from Sierra Leone in order to sustain the purchase of weapons; secondly, to divert ECOMOG from its efforts to prevent his assumption of power in Liberia; and finally, to create problems for the Sierra Leonean government in response to its prominent role in supporting ECOMOG in Liberia.

The conflict in Guinea Bissau followed a different pattern. The crisis there started in June of 1998, following the attempted military *coup d'état* led by General Ansumane Mane. After Mane failed to overthrow the democratically elected president, Joao Bernardo Veira, the situation degenerated into a mutiny against the central government. Despite the efforts of military forces loyal to the government, and the intervention of Senegalese and Guinean troops sent to prevent the conflict from spilling over into their countries, the rebellion spread throughout Guinea-Bissau. Violent battles took place between the two camps, particularly in the capital, and thousands of civilians were caught in the crossfire before fleeing to the countryside and neighboring countries.

## **B. ECOMOG INTERVENTIONS IN LIBERIA, AND SIERRA LEONE AND GUINEA-BISSAU**

### **1. ECOMOG Organization Shortcomings**

#### *a. Institutional Structures*

Originally formed as an economic community in 1975, ECOWAS was intended to promote economic cooperation between member states. The authority vested in ECOWAS by member states provided it with the necessary institutions to fulfill its goal as a regional economic organization in West Africa.<sup>18</sup> At the advent of the Liberian crisis ECOWAS attempted to move quickly from dealing with economic to security

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<sup>17</sup> Confort Ero and A, Ndinga-Muvumba, “*Small Arms, Light Weapons*”, in Adekeye Adebajo and Ismail Rashid, *West Africa’s Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 231.

<sup>18</sup> Economic Community of West African States Charter ,  
<[http:// www.sec.ecowas.int/sitecedea0/english/ap101299.htm](http://www.sec.ecowas.int/sitecedea0/english/ap101299.htm)> (20 January 2005).

matters, on the premise that security was a critical factor in any regional economic development. But it had no preparation for this task. From its inception until the creation of ECOMOG in 1990, ECOWAS had been unable to reach a regional consensus on the establishment of an institutionalized sub-regional organ for security issues and conflict management. Moreover, its charter lacked the legal prerogative permitting it to intervene in the internal affairs of member states. For that reason, ECOWAS' decision to deploy armed forces in Liberia's internal conflict was considered by the francophone member states as violation of its organizational charter and, thus, an illegal extension of the mandate of ECOWAS. Therefore not all of the states in the sub-region supported ECOWAS intervention in Liberia, and the Anglophone that did were experiencing political, economic and social difficulties at home, thus making the financial support of the ECOMOG difficult to sustain.

Prior to the creation of ECOMOG, there was no special institution within the ECOWAS organization to financially support actions related to security. Moreover, because of the failure of member states to pay their contributions on a regular basis, the organization suffered from a lack of sufficient funding even to sustain its normal activities. With no institutional structures in place, ECOWAS improvised a shaky and confused series of ad hoc structure to deal with security issues, including the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC), the ECOMOG, the Special Emergency Fund, and later the Committees of Five, and Nine.<sup>19</sup> At its inception, the SMC was composed mainly of the Anglophone countries: Ghana, Gambia, Mali, Nigeria and Togo. It was only later assigned the mission to mediate the Liberian conflict and, later still, to address the other security issues in the region. Over time, the SMC became the only institution within ECOWAS to monitor the implementation of ECOWAS peace processes and, thus, played an active role in managing the deployment of ECOMOG in Liberia. The two Committees of Five and Nine were established after the deployment of ECOMOG in Liberia. "The Committee of Five became an important instrument of mediation between the various

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<sup>19</sup> Klaas Van Walraven: *Containing conflict in ECONOMIC Community of West African States: Lessons from the intervention in Liberia 1990-1997*. < <http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/ecomog.pdf> > (10 March 2005).

Liberian factions, for some time wresting the intervention initiative from the Nigerians.”<sup>20</sup> This occurred while the Committee of Nine oversaw the implementation of the ECOWAS peace process and acted as a liaison with the UN.

In this context, special representative of ECOWAS in Liberia were entrusted with all administrative and financial tasks, while the command of the forces on the ground was assigned to the Force Commander. To give more credibility to the improvised structure of ECOMOG, while also temporarily lessening the dominant role of Nigeria, the SMC decided that the command of forces would be established in such a way that the contributing countries could play a more salient role. For that reason, the Force Commander’s role was entrusted to Ghana, the deputy force commander’s role to Guinea, and the chief of staff’s role to Nigeria. The SMC stipulated that “the commander was to have full command authority over ECOMOG, which he would derive from the chairman of the ECOWAS Authority through the Executive Secretary.”<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, dissension among the member states of ECOWAS as to the appropriate role of various organs within the structure contributed to most shortcoming and difficulties related to the management of ECOMOG. “Moreover, the political and legal advisory positions in ECOMOG were not filled due to financial difficulties. As a result, the ECOMOG Force Commander was often called upon to perform a political as well as a military role.”<sup>22</sup> Thus deficiencies at the structural level often exacerbated the dominance within ECOMOG of a single country. According to Berman and Sams, “capitalizing on the lack of a functioning security framework, Nigeria pushed through the creation of an entirely new structure—one that would better serve its purposes, the Authority’s decision to establish the SMC with a very broad mandate, and to make Nigeria a member of that body provided Lagos with an opportunity to influence ECOWAS policy on Liberia, which Nigeria fully exploited.”<sup>23</sup> The hasty creation of the

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<sup>20</sup> Klaas Van Walraven: *Containing conflict in ECONOMIC Community of West African States: Lessons from the intervention in Liberia 1990-1997*. < <http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/ecomog.pdf>> (10 March 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Eric G. Berman & Katie E. Sams: *Peacekeeping in Africa: Capabilities and Culpabilities*. (Geneva, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2000) ,107

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 89.

ad hoc structures, such as Committee of Five and Special Emergency Fund, prevented ECOMOG from functioning effectively. As a result, the SMC, acting under the influence of Nigeria, continued to be the sole authority supervising ECOMOG's deployment in Liberia.

Acting as an improvisational force, ECOMOG landed in Monrovia, Liberia, on August 24, 1990 without any visible structure. This lasted throughout the Liberian intervention, and continued into the ones in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. Under these circumstances, ECOMOG became subject to abuse and manipulation by some of its member states. "The ECOMOG forces in Liberia and Sierra Leone were dominated by Nigeria, resulting in a lack of sub regional unity and depriving the force of important legitimacy in fulfilling its tasks,"<sup>24</sup> while "the ECOMOG mission in Guinea Bissau, under a Togolese commander, reported directly to Togolese leader Gnassingbe Eyadema, the ECOWAS chairman."<sup>25</sup>

*b. Regional Security Framework*

At the time of its intervention in the Liberian civil war, ECOWAS lacked any permanent security framework to be implemented in cases of internal conflict. This lack of a regional standing security framework equipped to deal with peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions was a significant weakness. Moreover, the ECOWAS charter did not embrace any clear provisions dealing with security matters. The two previous protocols adopted by ECOWAS were not operational, lacked provisions for the prevention of conflict, and did not empower the organization to intervene in internal conflicts in this region:

1. The protocol of Non-Aggression, adopted and signed in Lagos on April 22, 1978 mandated to ECOWAS member states not to use force in their interstate differences, but to solve their problems peacefully.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Adekeye ,A., 147

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> The protocol of Non-Aggression of ECOWAS, < [http://www.iss.co.za/AF/RegOrg/unity\\_to\\_union/pdfs/ecowas/14ProtNonAggre.pdf](http://www.iss.co.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/ecowas/14ProtNonAggre.pdf),> (20 December 2004).

2. The Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense, adopted and signed in Freetown, on May 29, 1981, stipulated, among other important propositions, that each state provide aid and assistance in cases where other states were subject to threat or aggression.

However, in spite of these provisions, when ECOMOG was created, it had no structural organization, no reliable budget earmarked for its missions, and no ready-trained forces to be deployed on the ground. The composition and structure of forces were hastily improvised to respond to the Liberian crisis. To anticipate the generation of forces, member states of SMC, plus Sierra Leone and Guinea, committed the first contingents of ECOMOG. Meanwhile the ECOWAS Authority explicitly appealed to other member states to contribute contingents in the course of intervention to participate in the force's operation<sup>27</sup>.

After being deployed in Liberia seven years on an ad hoc basis, ECOMOG continued to be deployed in the same manner in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. Years after the creation of ECOMOG, ECOWAS had failed to learn from the Liberian experience. Thus, it failed to establish a standing security framework with the necessary structure for the task at hand, thereby denying ECOMOG the needed capabilities to sustain the other two missions more efficiently.

*c. Operational Problems*

ECOMOG's efficiency as a regional peacekeeping and peace enforcement force can be assessed based on its operational performance, including the following elements: its ability to monitor ceasefires; in its ability to deal impartially with all parties in a conflict; its propensity to decrease violence; and in its ability to ensure a favorable environment for political resolution of the three civil wars.

Initially, ECOMOG entered Liberia for a traditional peacekeeping mission, i.e., to monitor the ceasefire between fighting factions. However, as ECOMOG forces landed in Monrovia, they were attacked by the NPFL, who then controlled almost all of the country outside the capital city. This rapid and unexpected degradation of the

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<sup>27</sup>Klaas van Walraven: *The pretence of Peace-keeping ECOMOG, West Africa and Liberia (1990-1998)*, <<http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/ecom.pdf>> (26 December 2004).

security situation led ECOMOG to shift its mission to that of peace enforcement. However, this was beyond its means at the time, due primarily to the lacks of having sufficient troops on the ground and enough expertise.

The situation grew worse when President Doe was captured by the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) in ECOMOG headquarters, before the eyes of the Force Commander. Soon thereafter, ECOMOG allied itself with the INPFL and the AFL to repulse NPFL forces and create a buffer zone around the capital. These two events demonstrated ECOMOG's inability to deal with the fighting factions in a neutral manner. As ECOMOG was drawn deeper into the Liberian conflict its inability to carry out such a mission without the external support of the UN and the international community became apparent. Many operational problems emerged.

The command and control of forces was perhaps the most intractable problem for ECOMOG in Liberia. ECOMOG's command structure was organized in such a manner as to accommodate the interests of all contributing countries. All forces were formally under the authority of the Forces Commander, but each country's troops were commanded by its Contingent Commander. Each Contingent Commander also served as Deputy Force Commander in his sector. The Force Commander was the sole authority, designating the sectors of the mission area to the respective contingents. But within this structure, each country's contingent maintained its own command structure. Thus, ECOMOG forces had two chains of command: 1) the force commander and 2) the troop commands from contributing countries. This situation caused enormous operational difficulties. Usually, the contingent commander could not make decisions, or take part in combat or offensive operations, without the approval of his home government. This meant that before any tactical decision could be implemented by ECOMOG, each contingent commander had to consult his own government, thereby delaying the implementation of missions, and reducing their effectiveness on the ground. Because of the high level of control by home governments, the contingent commanders enjoyed considerable autonomy from the control of force commander, often resulting in disciplinary problems and jeopardizing ECOMOG's act as a unified force.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Mitikishe Maxwell Khobe: *The evolution and control of ECOMOG operations in West Africa*, <<http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No44/ECOMOG.html>> (15 October 2004).

The troops from contributing countries often served under vastly different conditions, and these incongruities were evident to all. There were often discrepancies in the quality of supplies, wages, and personal equipment, which frequently caused some peacekeeping troops to behave badly. In this context, military professionalism is vital when peacekeepers operate in heavily populated environments; in their peace enforcement mission, ECOMOG forces were in continual interactions with civilian populations<sup>29</sup>. Unfortunately, the lack of professionalism led to the misconduct of peacekeepers; accordingly alleged misconducts had been reported, the type crimes allegedly committed were, abuse, rape; looting; theft and other criminal activities, thereby compromising ECOMOG's credibility during its deployment in Liberia.

Prior to deployment in Liberia, the contributing countries had never had a joint exercise as a single, cohesive force. The diversity of languages, equipment, and doctrine denied the ECOMOG force the synchronicity and homogeneity that a military operation requires to be successful on the ground. There were communications difficulties between Francophone and Anglophone forces, and an overall lack training in counterinsurgency. As result, some contingents demonstrated incompetence and lack of motivation (and *esprit de corps*) in fighting rebel factions. This lack of professionalism made a decisive defeat of the rebels impossible.

ECOMOG suffered from similar operational problems in Sierra Leone in 1998. Despite its initial success in removing the junta from power and restoring the elected government in Freetown, rebellion continued in the hinterland. In the framework of its peace enforcement mission, and in an attempt to secure the rest of the country, ECOMOG engaged in attacks against the AFRC and the RUF. Despite the deployment of thousands of troops "ECOMOG's ill-equipped peacekeepers were unable to defeat the AFRC/RUF alliance in a guerilla war in the densely forested countryside for which their conventional armies were not trained."<sup>30</sup> Eventually the rebels pushed ECOMOG forces back to Freetown, and a battle for control of the capital ensued.

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<sup>29</sup>Karen Guttieri: *Civil-Military Relations in Peace building*. Sicherheitspolitik und Friedensforschung, Vol 22.iss2,2004.

<sup>30</sup> Adekeye Adebajo: *Liberia's Civil War Nigeria, ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa* (London, Lynne Rienner Publishers), 90.

During the 6 January 1999 rebel invasion of Freetown, Nigerian jets bombed rebels' positions in the capital and its soldiers shelled the outskirts of eastern Freetown. ECOMOG eventually forced the rebels to withdraw from Freetown after more than six weeks with the loss of 3,000 civilian lives and massive destruction of the city by arsonist rebels. About 100 Nigerian soldiers died in this attack and 100 were missing in action.<sup>31</sup>

As a result of this incident, ECOMOG revised its strategy and began deploying its forces in strategic locations throughout Sierra Leone, previously having been mainly stationed around Freetown, to prevent surprise attacks by the RUF. ECOMOG again proved to be inadequately prepared to face the challenges of peace enforcement, as operational problems became more complicated. Command and control of forces was again a major problem, which undermined its cohesion. "Because of the high level of distrust among member states, contingents usually arrived in the mission area with different and sometimes conflicting instructions"<sup>32</sup>

Nigerian dominance also created problems at the level of command and control of forces, as it had in Liberia. Nigeria again provided the bulk of the forces, the Force Commander, and the majority of financial and logistical support, and this lack of balance within ECOMOG led to the unilateral manipulation of forces by Nigeria. Contributing countries were usually not consulted about important decisions regarding ECOMOG's mission in Sierra Leone. In retaliation for this practice, contingents of contributing countries would frequently criticize Nigerian unilateral management of forces and decisions. ECOMOG's national contingents did work together at an operational level, and troop contributing countries did not even coordinate their actions<sup>33</sup>. As in Liberia, each contingent had to consult with its own government before

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<sup>31</sup> Adekeye Adebajo: *Liberia's Civil War Nigeria, ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa* (London, Lynne Rienner Publishers), 95.

<sup>32</sup> Mitikishe Maxwell Khobe Chief of Defense Staff, Republic of Sierra Leone: *The Evolution and Conduct of ECOMOG Operations in West Africa*. <<http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No44/ECOMOG.html>> (18 January 2005).

<sup>33</sup> Berman G. and Sams E., 119

acting. , Nigerian domination again undermined ECOMOG cohesion and unity to the point that “some contingents ... at times refused to come to the aid of other contingents without clearance from their home governments.”<sup>34</sup>

On the tactical level as well, ECOMOG failed to apply the lessons of Liberia to Sierra Leone. The inexperience of ECOMOG forces was exacerbated in this case by inadequate knowledge of the forest terrain, and incapacity to counter the guerrilla tactics employed so efficiently by the RUF.<sup>35</sup> Some contingents lacked motivation to engage in vigorous combat against the rebels, and insufficient allowances, low wages, and long periods of deployment led to low morale. Disciplinary problems related to poor living conditions were again in evidence. A significant number of officers were reportedly involved in the illicit diamond trade for personal profit.<sup>36</sup> Also similar to the situation in the Liberian intervention, coordination between forces was inefficient because of a diversity of equipment and doctrines. “Both Anglophone and Francophone countries failed to provide bilingual officers, and communication between national contingents was therefore often difficult.”<sup>37</sup>

In Guinea Bissau the two parties to the conflict agreed in advance to the deployment of an ECOMOG force to monitor the cease-fire, and facilitate a formal end to the conflict. Insofar as this was a consensual peacekeeping mission, the prospects for success should have been better than in the previous two missions. However, for a variety of reasons, ECOMOG troops failed to sustain the cease-fire, and its 600 troops were then unable to effectively carry out the mission. The pace of disarmament, and the control of the belligerents, was slow, which contributed to the resumption of violence between the two parties. Although many countries had criticized the dominant role of Nigeria in Liberia and Sierra Leone, its absence from the intervention in Guinea Bissau meant that ECOMOG was unable to provide sufficient peacekeepers, leading to complete failure of the mission. Moreover, “without substantial French assistance, ECOWAS

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<sup>34</sup> Mitikishe, M.

<sup>35</sup> Kwaku Nuamah & William Zartman: *Case study: intervention in Sierra Leone. National Intelligence Council Project.* <<http://www.ciism.umd.edu/NIC/nuamahzartman.pdf>>, (20 January 2005).

<sup>36</sup> Berman G. and Sams, E., 120.

<sup>37</sup> Adekeye, A., 91.

would have been hard-pressed to field even this smaller ECOMOG force on its own.”<sup>38</sup> Most ECOMOG operational shortcomings, witnessed particularly in Liberia and Sierra Leone, were generated by the lack of homogeneity of forces and the deficiency of military professionalism. In addition, ECOMOG was not well equipped to deal with peace operations in a hostile environment. Unfortunately, this shortage of expertise and skill is inherent in the nature of the West African military environment. Because ECOMOG forces necessarily come from different countries, doctrine, training, language and equipment are radically diverse. The deployment of such a multinational force under those conditions, without previous preparation and coordination, constitutes the main reason for its frequent failures.

*d. Financial and Logistical Problems*

From the beginning of its first deployment in Liberia, ECOMOG lacked reliable financial and logistical support. When ECOMOG was initially created, it was made explicit that each country had to support its troops for the first three months. Three months was the time necessary for ECOWAS to ensure adequate funding to sustain the mission for the duration of the intervention. Unfortunately, at the end of three months, ECOWAS did not provide the resources promised to carry out this responsibility. Its practice of relying only on voluntary contributions of the member states to cover the costs of the military intervention was a miscalculation. This was true because most of ECOMOG’s contributing countries had limited resources; therefore they were often unable to respond, even to the urgent needs of their own forces at home.

In the Liberian case, most of the financial and logistical problems were caused by the incapacity of ECOWAS member states to sustain the high cost of military operations. It was obvious from on the onset of the mission that, without external support, ECOWAS would be unable to fund such a multinational force. Given the lack of reliable funding to sustain ECOMOG, contributing countries continued to support their own forces, individually, despite financial shortages often being experienced at home. Fortunately, the cost of the mission was borne mainly by Nigeria, because this country was the only country within ECOWAS that had, relatively speaking, adequate means and capacities to support such forces. But Nigeria also acted in order to consolidate its own

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<sup>38</sup> Berman ,G and Sams,E 133.

aspirations of building regional hegemony. Many argued that without the Nigerian support, the intervention in Liberia would not have lasted. In the absence of unified logistical structure, most of ECOMOG's other contingents suffered from logistical problems throughout the period of their deployment in Liberia due to their being away from their home countries. "The peacekeepers depended on their own government for transportation, uniforms, foods, weapons and ammunition, although Nigeria provided all participants with fuel and lubricants"<sup>39</sup>. Due to this deficiency, many contingent troops lacked adequate equipment to be deployed in a difficult environment, most of ECOMOG's contingents landed in Liberia with inadequate equipments and obsolete material. Furthermore, their communication equipment was often incompatible, being manufactured in different locations, making all operational liaisons more difficult.

The same problems reappeared in Sierra Leone. With the escalation of fighting against the rebels, ECOMOG became increasingly unable to provide itself with the necessary means and resources to face the new challenges .Financial and logistical deficiencies again kept ECOMOG from pursuing its mission of peace enforcement with adequate zeal, and limited ECOMOG's effectiveness in the field. ECOWAS was once again unable to fulfill its commitment to ensure adequate and permanent funding to sustain ECOMOG during the Sierra Leonean mission. Contributing countries were also unable to cover the cost of the mission in Sierra Leone, or even to sustain their own forces on the ground. The aid pledged by the UN and the international community was also insufficient to respond to the increasing needs of ECOMOG to pursue its mission. Thus, "the international community's response to ECOMOG's difficulties was significantly below that which the situation demanded. The Security Council took many actions, but none that responded meaningfully to the severity of the crisis."<sup>40</sup> Only Nigeria, often criticized for its hegemonic aspirations, continued to regularly bear the burden of this mission.

At the start of the Guinea Bissau conflict, ECOMOG was already exhausted by its deployments in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In order to prevent the

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<sup>39</sup> Berman ,G and Sams,E 133.

<sup>40</sup> Berman G. and Sams E. ,122.

repetition of problems experienced in those interventions, ECOMOG delayed its intervention until the UN and the international community contributed financially to support its mission in Guinea-Bissau. With the reception of the initial aid package from France, and after months of delays, ECOMOG decided to deploy a force to implement the cease-fire and monitor the peace plan. Unfortunately, despite those precautions, the deployment of ECOMOG in Guinea Bissau was very slow, and “repeated some of the mistakes of the Liberia and Sierra Leone interventions. The peacekeepers were logistically ill-equipped for their mission; the number of troops being grossly insufficient to maintain security in the country. Furthermore, the funding for the mission depended entirely on France, an external power which had its own interest in the outcome of the conflict in Guinea-Bissau.”<sup>41</sup>

In short, ECOWAS met difficulties in establishing reliable funding to support its military body, which was a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for efficient implementation of its missions of peacekeeping and peace enforcement. ECOWAS always relied on assistance from the international community, and on the voluntary contributions of its member states. Neither alternative responded to the increasing needs of ECOMOG. In every intervention, regional and international assistance was well below that needed to perform peace-keeping and peace-enforcement missions and undertake stabilization and humanitarian actions in devastated countries. On the other hand, these shortages did not prevent ECOWAS, from pursuing its missions, pending the UN to intervene with sufficient means.

## **2. Regional Political Struggle**

Among the most serious political problems that ECOWAS faced in attempting to resolve the civil wars in West Africa were 1) the lack of regional consensus on security issues and 2) the rivalries between the two main blocs (i.e., Francophone and Anglophone countries). ECOMOG, which depended mainly on the contributions and support of member states, was afflicted with this constant dissension. Many West African countries opposed ECOMOG operations and ironically supported one or another of the fighting factions, both militarily and politically. The political struggle between the Francophone and the Anglophones has its roots in the earliest days of the independence. This struggle has always

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<sup>41</sup> Adekeye A .,139.

been among the biggest obstacles to the economic and political integration of this region, and has had a major influence on security issues in West Africa. This region is considered a zone of French influence, where the French still have vital interests and a conspicuous military presence. Many independent Francophone countries still depend on the French presence in this region for their own security, which often irritates Nigeria's sensitivities, and presents a challenge in its quest for regional hegemony.

By 1963, most of France's African territories had gained political independence. But Paris continued to maintain influence through an intricate network of political, military, economic and cultural ties. Thirteen African countries tied their *Communaute Financiere Africaine* (CFA) franc to the France franc, giving Paris effective control over their foreign reserves. Cooperation agreements gave France priority access to Africa's strategic minerals."<sup>42</sup> Also having antecedents in the past is the friction between France and Nigeria about security issues in West Africa. "During the Nigerian's civil war between 1967 and 1970, the rivalry between Nigeria and France was again evident when France set up a loan scheme with Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon to supply arms to secessionist Biafra. French mercenaries were also sent to assist the Biafrans. French president Charles de Gaulle had been particularly angered by Nigeria's severance of diplomatic relations with France in 1961 to protest French atomic tests in the Sahara<sup>43</sup>.

The creation of ECOWAS in 1975 was at the instigation of Nigeria, intended to limit the expansion of French influence in West Africa through the *Communaute Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (CEAO). The adoption of the ECOWAS protocol of Non-Aggression, "which marked the first stage in the establishment of an ECOWAS security framework"<sup>44</sup>, was a response aimed to counter-act the *Accord de Non-Agression et d'Assistance en Matiere de Defence* (ANAD), which stood for the security framework of the Francophone countries. "But as in the economic sphere, the Anglophone/Francophone rivalry spilled over into the military sphere"<sup>45</sup>. Because of the French "neocolonial ambitions in West Africa", these events still had an effect on the relationship between France and Nigeria, who aspired to a hegemonic role in this region.

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<sup>42</sup> Adekeye ,A.,26

<sup>43</sup> Ibid .,27

<sup>44</sup> Berman,E. & Sams E. ,80

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 35

Afraid of losing its influence in West Africa due to the increasing role of Nigeria, France stirred up the rivalry between Francophone countries, led by Côte d'Ivoire, and Anglophone states, led by Nigeria. Thus, the political struggle between Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire for regional leadership became intense. The political rivalry between the two blocs was fueled by the adoption of the Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defense by ECOWAS. Initially, some Francophone countries opposed the adoption of this protocol, "fearing the potentially overbearing influence of Nigeria."<sup>46</sup> For its part, "Nigeria regarded the protocol as a further chance to weaken France's grip on its former colonies by making them more dependent on Nigeria in the military sphere, as it has tried to do in the economic sphere through ECOWAS."<sup>47</sup> The dissension over security issues culminated with the advent of the Liberian crisis. The decision to create ECOMOG and intervene in Liberia fueled the political confrontation between the Anglophone and the Francophone countries in general, and between Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire in particular. While the former supported the military intervention, the latter advocated a diplomatic process. When the SMC made the decision to intervene in Liberia, the dominance of Anglophone countries in ECOMOG, along with the commitment of Nigeria to solve the Liberian crisis by military means, further inflamed regional rivalries and suspicions. The Francophone countries feared that Nigeria, among the leading English-speaking countries in the SMC, would impose its hegemony over the entire region. There was no agreement within the region about the preferable outcome of the conflict in Liberia. Moreover, the presidents of Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso had a visceral hatred of Liberian President Samuel Doe, and supported the NPFL rebels. Nigeria meanwhile was a long time ally of Doe. The Francophone countries considered the decision to deploy armed forces to intervene internal conflicts improper. From their point of view, the intervention was unilaterally decided by the SMC, which was mandated by ECOWAS only to mediate disputes between member states, not to intervene in internal conflicts. The SMC appeared to have anticipated the peace plan through the establishment of the ECOMOG without engaging in serious negotiations with the warring factions, and without acquiring the approval of the rest of member states of the Community. Needless to say, the

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<sup>46</sup> Adekeye ,A., 35

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

Francophone countries opposed the military option. They argue that the Anglophone bloc had not allowed enough time for the political option, preferring, instead, the use of force in order to press the fighting parties into a peace process brokered by ECOWAS. The hasty deployment of the ECOMOG on an ad hoc basis, without the political consensus of all member states, did not reflect the desire of the majority within the regional organization. Thus, the predominant role of the member states of the SMC, led by Nigeria, had generated substantial controversy in regard to the legitimacy of the mission. “The deployment of an ECOMOG force comprised almost entirely of Anglophone member states underscored the political division within ECOWAS.”<sup>48</sup>

Political disagreements within ECOWAS prevented the majority of member states from contributing forces to the ECOMOG, or financially supporting the mission in Liberia. Côte d’Ivoire’s and Burkina Faso’s continued support of the NPFL to sustain the conflict, and undermined ECOWAS efforts to bring the main fighting parties to the negotiation table early in the intervention. The lack of political consensus with regard to the Liberian crisis also prevented ECOMOG from building an adequate environment for political resolution of civil war in this country.

In Sierra Leone, the political rivalry seemed less pronounced, despite disagreement on the use of the military option against the AFRC/RUF, by Nigeria’s unilateral attempt, on June 2, 1997 to drive the junta out of power. Moreover, the Nigerian action did not prevent ECOWAS member states during a meeting in Conakry, Guinea on June 27, 1997, to reach a consensus upon the Sierra Leone crisis and appeal for the use of force until the exhaustion of all peaceful means, Nigeria for the second time unilaterally deployed its forces on February 15, 1998, this time to topple the military junta and restore the country’s elected president to power on March 1998.

1. Reinstatement of the legitimate government
2. The initiation of dialogue with the rebels
3. The imposition of sanctions and enforcement of an embargo
4. The use of force in the case of non-compliance.

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<sup>48</sup> Berman G. and Sams E., 89.

Despite the opposition of Burkina Faso, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to the Unlike the Liberian intervention, there was a relative degree of political consensus upon the Sierra Leonean crisis, among ECOWAS member states, regarding the mandate given to ECOMOG in Sierra Leone. For a while, this political consensus was threatened because of the ambivalence role of Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso and the Nigerian's unilateral action upon the interpretation of the mandate. Fortunately, political developments in Nigeria contributed to the rapprochement between the two blocs. "After Abacha's death in June 1998, relations briefly improved between the Abubakar regime in Abuja and Abidjan."<sup>49</sup> However, Charles Taylor of Liberia, together with the leader of the RUF, presented the biggest obstacles to resolving the civil war in Sierra Leone because of their prominent role in the illegal exploitation of diamonds. Taylor authorized the RUF rebels to use Liberian territory for a safe haven, and supported them militarily in fighting against ECOMOG. Côte d'Ivoire also initially supported the RUF rebels, but during the course of the intervention it became increasingly involved in the peace process. With the rapprochement between Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, the two countries became actively involved in brokering negotiations between the fighting parties. But the dominant role of Nigeria in ECOMOG, together with its unilateral actions in managing the conflict without consulting other countries, remained an obstacle to developing consensus among all member states. Burkina Faso and Liberia continued to support the RUF throughout the course of the civil war, complicating any peace process and undermining ECOMOG's mission in this country.

In Guinea Bissau regional consensus was for the first time in evidence. This consensus was reached for three reasons. First, the political rivalry between Anglophone and Francophone countries had been improving in the years immediately preceding the conflict. The region was already suffering from protracted conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where the antagonism between the two blocs had made it difficult to resolve the crises. Member states of ECOWAS were conscious of the negative consequences associated with the continual competition between the two sides. As a result, they had joined in the effort to mediate between the belligerents, with hopes of convincing them of the necessity of reaching a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The majority of member

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<sup>49</sup> Berman G. and Sams E., 90.

states of ECOWAS condemned both the coup attempt and the unilateral military interventions of Senegal and Guinea. The fact that lusophone Guinea Bissau belonged to neither of the two main linguistic blocs, served to attenuate the political rivalry between Anglophone and Francophone countries. In addition, the active role played by Portugal and other Portuguese-speaking countries (such as Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and São Tome and Príncipe) in brokering a peace plan for Guinea Bissau, pressed ECOWAS member states to reach a consensus in order to prevent external powers from intervening in their region. Finally, the volatility of this region and the threat of contagion to other countries, prompted ECOWAS member states to address this conflict before the regional security situation deteriorated further. In their meeting in Abuja on November 1st, 1998, member states of ECOWAS had no difficulty brokering a peace plan and appealing Senegalese and Guineans forces to withdraw, and deploying ECOMOG to ensure security and order.

### **3. Problems of Peacemaking**

The main problem that ECOMOG faced on the ground during the seven years of intervention in Liberia was the proliferation of fighting factions. This greatly complicated mediation efforts, which in turn complicated ECOMOG's mission and made implementing peace agreements more difficult. During the first five years of ECOMOG's intervention, ECOWAS sponsored a series of peace agreements, all of which ultimately failure due to its inability to deal impartially with different factions in the conflict. "ECOWAS was involved in fourteen mediation attempts. Twelve of these efforts were mostly dead on arrival. The only two that seemed to have a chance were the Cotonou and Abuja II Accords."<sup>50</sup> As political stand-off and military stalemate continued to block resolution of the conflict, new warring movements emerged, driven by looting and illegal exploitation of natural resources. ECOMOG became overloaded with the responsibility of securing a fragmented country that was under the control of many warlords. It did not achieve its original goal of defeating the main faction, nor did it succeed in convincing the parties to the conflict to adhere to a peace pact. After the Cotonou Peace Agreement of July 1993, sponsored by ECOWAS, the UN decided to join the peace process. On

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<sup>50</sup> W.Ofuety-Kodjoe: *The Impact of Peacekeeping on Target State, in The causes of Civil War and The Consequences of Peacekeeping in Africa*. Ricardo, R, Laremont Ricardo (Portsmouth, NH Heinmann, 2002), 122.

September 22, 1993, the Security Council, by means of Resolution 866, established the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). The collaborative effort was established to aid in supervising and monitoring the implementation of the signed peace plans, and to restore ECOMOG's neutrality and legitimacy (something which had been previously contested). According to Adibe, "the United Nations was invited to join the search for peace effort in Liberia only after ECOWAS had failed to make any appreciable progress towards conflict resolution."<sup>51</sup>

The ambitious vision of ECOMOG to resolve the Liberian civil war by bringing the fighting elements under control, turned out to be the wrong approach to coping with problems on the ground. Peace plans were regularly violated by the fighting parties because of the presence of "spoilers." During the civil war in Liberia, the criminal exploitation of natural resources had flourished, existing in a climate of competition between the warlords. These warlords were more motivated by the occupation of more territories for their profitable criminal activities than they were for peace. The leaders of fighting factions were encouraged to pursue their predatory policies in order to draw more wealth to support the effort of war and recruit more rebels to fortify their movements by the availability of exportable resources. Each fighting movement aspired to build more strength in order to eliminate the others, and in order to realize a comfortable position during the negotiation over power. For this reason, a race toward the capture of more exploited resources became an incentive to continue to "spoil" all peace plans that did not correspond to the aspiration of the fighting parties. At a certain phase of the conflict, the ambition of most of the Liberian fighting factions was the rise to power by the means of fighting. Under those circumstances, the warlords, acting as "spoilers" during the peace processes, complicated much of ECOWAS' peacemaking actions; "disputes over power and resources are usually the most difficult to resolve".<sup>52</sup> Moreover, such behaviors compromised the ECOMOG and the UNOMIL mission in monitoring the cease-fire and in pursuing disarmament, demobilization and encampment of fighters, as stated normally by the previous peace agreements.

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<sup>51</sup> Clement Adibe: the Liberian conflict and the ECOWAS partnership. *The third World Quarterly*, Vol 18. No3, pp 471- 488, 1997.

<sup>52</sup> Ricardo, 122

Having spent five frustrating years opposing Taylor's ambitions, Nigeria finally accepted Ghana's idea that only the direct inclusion of warlords in an interim government could bring peace to Liberia. The Akosombo agreement was the first one to allow the warlords to serve on the Council of State without being disqualified from contesting elections.<sup>53</sup>

At the regional level, this change of policy was tied to the domestic political situation in some contributing countries of ECOMOG. "Some of participant countries, including Ghana and Nigeria, began to show some political fatigue with regard to continuing the intervention and finding a mediated solution."<sup>54</sup> Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings, in his role of Chairman of ECOWAS, played an important part in convincing Nigeria to seek a political resolution of the conflict. Nigeria was looking for an exit strategy from Liberia and for an amelioration of its image at home as it sought to cope with its own unfolding internal political crisis. Another factor contributing to the change of strategy was the reconciliation between Charles Taylor and Nigerian President Sani Abacha, which culminated in Taylor's visit to Abuja in June 1995.<sup>55</sup> The Abuja visit rehabilitated Charles Taylor as a credible partner in future peace processes. According to Adekeye, at "the sub regional level, consensus continued to increase following the rapprochement between Nigeria and Charles Taylor in 1995. Burkina Faso, the strongest NPFL supporter throughout the civil war, started to play a more constructive role in support of ECOMOG. Côte d'Ivoire, the other erstwhile backer of the NPFL, took further steps to play a neutral role in the conflict as the instability from the Liberian civil war continued to spill over into its territory."<sup>56</sup> ECOWAS also began to stress the importance of a good relationship between member states, particularly the reconciliation between the Francophone and the Anglophone states, and the need to build a stronger consensus regarding important issues related to the conflict. This change of strategy satisfied the most recalcitrant antagonists, while bringing all parties to the negotiating table to achieve more suitable peace agreements.

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<sup>53</sup> Adekeye Adebajo: *Liberia's Civil War Nigeria, ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa*.(London, Lynne Rienner Publishers. ), 155.

<sup>54</sup> Klaas van Walraven: *The pretence of Peace-keeping ECOMOG, West Africa and Liberia (1990-1998)*, <<http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/ecom.pdf>> (26 December 2004).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid

<sup>56</sup>Ibid, 181

In this context, and following the Abuja peace agreement sponsored by the UN and ECOWAS, and signed on August 19, 1995 (which replaced the Cotonou and Akosombo peace accords), a cease-fire was reached between the different factions. This peace accord produced the beginnings of the resolution of Liberian civil war. Accordingly ECOMOG and UNOMIL were deployed throughout the country to monitor the cease-fire and disarm the combatants.<sup>57</sup>

However the provisions of this agreement had broadened the responsibilities of ECOMOG, particularly in calling for it to disarm and demobilize fighters throughout the Liberian territory. To implement such operations, ECOMOG required more peacekeepers on the ground. As the political situation in Liberia evolved, the UN became more involved in this conflict. Three hundred UN peacekeepers were deployed alongside the ECOMOG forces to supervise the cease-fire and peace process until the execution of the legislative and presidential elections. After this agreement, ECOMOG succeeded to a great extent in disarming and demobilizing fighters by collecting massive quantities of weapons.

In the course of the implementation of this peace plan, many new difficulties surfaced, all related to the shortage of financial and logistical resources to sustain the operation of disarmament, demobilization and humanitarian assistance. This stalemate led, once more, to the resumption of fighting between undisciplined warlords. With the degradation of the security situation, and the failure of the Abuja peace accord, during the OUA meeting in July 1996 in Yaoundé, many heads of state and governments expressed their willingness to ask the Security Council to impose hard sanctions against the Liberian warlords in cases of non-compliance. “The OUA will help sponsor a draft resolution in the UN Security Council for imposition of severe sanctions... including the possibility of the setting up of a war crimes tribunal to try the leadership of the Liberian factions on the gross violations of the humans rights of Liberians.”<sup>58</sup> This meeting led to another Abuja peace plan and prepared the conditions of its successful implementation by

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<sup>57</sup> Klaas van Walraven: *The pretence of Peace-keeping ECOMOG, West Africa and Liberia (1990-1998)*, <<http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/ecom.pdf>> (26 December 2004), 168

<sup>58</sup> Adekeye ,A .,62

appealing to the international community to contribute to funding ECOMOG and UNOMIL so that they could fulfill their missions. Afterwards, ECOMOG became actively involved in implementing the new peace plan, supervising legislative and presidential elections that led to the election of the former warlord, Charles Taylor, as president of Liberia. The settlement of the Liberian crisis was finally achieved by the implementation of the Abuja II peace accord, after seven years of ECOMOG's military operations against the fighting factions

In contrast to the Liberian case, ECOWAS/ECOMOG tried to negotiate with the AFRC/RUF for the settlement of the conflict via political means in Sierra Leone before settling on the use of force. When such diplomatic initiatives failed to convince the junta to resign, Nigeria intervened unilaterally on June 1, 1997, but did not succeed to drive the junta out of power. Because of the coalition between the RUF and the AFRC, the Nigerian forces failed to achieve this goal. After this Nigerian unsuccessful intervention, ECOWAS, with the cooperation of the OAU, convened a meeting on 26 June 1997, in Guinea upon the Sierra Leonean crisis, following the degradation of the security situation in this country. During this meeting, member states of ECOWAS reached a consensus about the Sierra Leonean crisis and called for the reinstatement of the legitimate government, the initiation of a dialogue with the rebels, the imposition of sanctions and enforcement of an embargo, and the use of force in case of non-compliance. Nigeria had succeeded in influencing ECOWAS to formally endorse the use of force to drive the junta/RUF out of power in Sierra Leone. With the failure of diplomatic efforts after the breakdown of the Conakry peace plan, and the escalation of tensions intensified between the Junta and the Nigerian forces present in the country in the framework of Liberian conflict since 1990. This situation prompted Nigeria to intervene militarily for a second time in February 1998, and succeeded to oust the AFRC/RUF from power.

After the Nigerian intervention and the reinstatement of the elected president, the UN became actively involved in this conflict: "...in June 1998, the Security Council established the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for an initial period of six months. The Secretary-General named Special Envoy Okelo as his Special Representative and Chief of Mission. The mission monitored and advised efforts to disarm combatants and restructure the nation's security forces. Unarmed UNOMSIL

teams, under the protection of ECOMOG, documented reports of on-going atrocities and human rights abuses committed against civilians.”<sup>59</sup> The UN mandated ECOMOG to remain in the country in order to deploy its own forces to secure the countryside and contribute alongside the UNOMSIL in disarming and demobilizing combatants, as well as forming and training the new Sierra Leonean army.

Despite the overthrow of the rebels from power in Freetown, fighting continued with the rebel forces in the hinterlands. In an attempt to secure the rest of the country, ECOMOG engaged in offensive attacks against the AFRC and the RUF. Simultaneous to the military intervention, the UN, ECOWAS and ECOMOG continued sponsoring political negotiations. Given the military stalemate, the uncertainty of the political situation in Sierra Leone, and the financial and logistical constraints, these institutions were unable to enforce security, or defeat the rebels. For this reason, they exerted pressure on the parties to the conflict to join the peace process. Their joint efforts led to the Lomé Peace Agreement of July 7, 1999, between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF and AFRC. This peace agreement provided a framework for the transformation of the RUF into a political party, and granted general amnesty to the rebels for atrocities committed in the past against innocent populations. It also called for the deployment of the UN peacekeeping mission, initially run by ECOMOG, in order to implement the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program in Sierra Leone.

On October 22, 1999, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was created and the size of forces was expanded. “The Security Council authorized the establishment of UNAMSIL, a new and much larger mission with a maximum of 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers, to assist the Government and the parties in carrying out provisions of the Lomé peace agreement. At the same time, the Council decided to terminate UNOMSIL.”<sup>60</sup> ECOMOG and UNAMSIL continued jointly to monitor the peace process. But the Lomé peace agreement, particularly Article XIII (Transformation and New Mandate of ECOMOG), was a prelude to ECOMOG’s withdrawal from Sierra Leone. This article stipulated that “the Parties agree to develop a timetable for the phased withdrawal of ECOMOG, including measures for securing all of

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<sup>59</sup>Adekeye ,A .,62

<sup>60</sup> Adekeye ,A .,62

the territory of Sierra Leone by the restructured armed forces. The phased withdrawal of ECOMOG will be linked to the phased creation and deployment of the restructured armed forces.”<sup>61</sup>

Considering the new situation in this region, particularly the increase of the UN involvement and with the transition to democratic rule in Nigeria, Nigeria started expressing its intention to withdraw from Sierra Leone. Because of an aggravation of the financial and logistical hardships experienced by ECOMOG, other contributing countries followed in Nigeria’s footsteps. This led to the withdrawal of the majority of ECOMOG’s forces from Sierra Leone and the takeover by UN forces.

ECOWAS/ECOMOG failed in its mission of peacemaking in Sierra Leone because of the presence of spoilers who had an “egregious past,” and who were motivated more an interest in plundering natural resources than by the fulfillment of any political agenda. The illegal exploitation of mineral resources by many regional actors, particularly Liberia, contributed significantly to sustaining the RUF war efforts, thus protracting the conflict and preventing ECOMOG from fully implementing its mission.

In the Guinea Bissau case, ECOWAS attempted to mediate between the two belligerents in order to solve this conflict following the outbreak of violence. But external mediation again diluted its efforts. “Following consultations with the lusophone CPLP, consisting of Portugal, Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Mozambique, São Tome and Príncipe, Guinea Bissau’s warring factions signed a Memorandum of Understanding on a Portuguese frigate, Corte-Real, on 26 July 1998. The agreement called for the withdrawal of Senegalese and Guinean troops from Guinea-Bissau and their replacement by military observers from lusophone states.”<sup>62</sup> ECOWAS reacted by holding a meeting in Abuja on November 1st, 1998 to negotiate a cease-fire between the two antagonists, and brokering a peace plan for this conflict. A decision was reached that forced president Joao Bernardo Vieira and General Mane to sign a peace agreement that called for a cease-fire, the

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<sup>61</sup> Lomé Peace Agreement Between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone of 7 July 1999, < <http://www.unrec.org/eng/conflicts/sierraleone.htm> > (25 December 2004).

<sup>62</sup> Adekeye ,A., 117.

establishment of a unified national government, ordering the withdrawal of Senegal and Guinea's military forces from the country and a simultaneous call came for the deployment of ECOMOG.

Thus, ECOWAS mediation here successfully negotiated a cease-fire and a peace accord between the belligerents. It also mandated ECOMOG to interpose its own forces in a mission of peacekeeping. Despite the efforts of ECOWAS to resolve this conflict, financial and logistical hardships again prevented the successful implementation of the peace process. In addition to the burden being borne by ECOWAS/ECOMOG simultaneously in Liberia and Sierra Leone, their mission in Guinea Bissau became overtaxed, anticipating its premature withdrawal from Guinea Bissau without achieving all of its assigned goals. The main difficulties faced by ECOMOG in achieving its mission in Guinea-Bissau were caused by two factors. First, the financial and logistical hardships already being experienced in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the lack of support from the international community, hindered the deployment of sufficient peacekeepers to monitor and implement the peace agreement. And second, the two protagonists in the conflict sabotaged ECOMOG's efforts to implementing the peace process.

In the three conflicts studied, ECOWAS tried to address the crises through political means and mediation. But the complexity of the political situations in those countries, combined with ECOWAS' inability to play an efficient mediator role, contributed to the stalemate of most peace processes. Initially, ECOWAS became embroiled in the conflict in Liberia, supporting one faction against the others, and imposing solutions instead of encouraging discussion between parties. This was due in large part to its lack of expertise in conducting peacemaking missions. Over time, ECOWAS became more aware of its role as leader organization in resolving regional crises. This responsibility enhanced ECOWAS to respond to new challenges with neutrality and impartiality.

#### **4. International Cooperation**

Because of the increased political instability in West Africa and the motivation of African countries to handle regional security issues, the international community has

become increasingly involved in the training and the equipment of African forces for peacekeeping missions. It was also partly motivated by ECOMOG's shortcomings in Liberia.

France, the USA and the UK joined efforts in order to help build African capabilities in peace operations, with the cooperation of the UN. In May 1997, they announced their "P-3 Initiative, which sought to begin dialogue with African countries as to how to best promote peace and security on the continent."<sup>63</sup>

In 1997, the USA set up the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). "ACRI's objective was to enhance the capacity of African nations to better perform peacekeeping and relief tasks and thus encourage regional self-reliance. This policy initiative seeks to promote common doctrine, interoperability and standard communications technology among African forces. ACRI encourages joint training exercises between African forces to hone their capacity to respond in emergency situations"<sup>64</sup> . Since its inception, particularly in West Africa, Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Benin and Côte d'Ivoire, have received training relating exclusively to peacekeeping doctrines. Already, many ACRI trained troops were deployed in peacekeeping missions in Guinea Bissau.. "In supporting of the program's objectives to encourage broad-based peacekeeping cooperation throughout Africa, ACRI had expended \$15 million in FY 1997 FY, \$22 million in FY 1998, and planned to expend more during the following years."<sup>65</sup> In parallel with the ACRI, the American Operation Focus Relief (OFR) program was also created to contribute to the training of African forces to intervene in complex peace operations. "OFR was more particularly a response to the needs of ECOWAS countries engaged in Sierra Leone through the ECOMOG force and the UN mission. Battalions from Senegal, Nigeria and Ghana were trained under this programme, which has now been wound

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<sup>63</sup> Eric G .Berman and Katie E.Sams :*Keeping the Peace in Africa*.

<http://www.unidir.ch/pdf/articles/pdf-art129.pdf> ( 8 February 2005).

<sup>64</sup> US Department of state, African Crisis Response Initiative .

<http://www.usinfo.state.gov/regional/af/acri/fact0500.htm>.( 4 February 2005).

<sup>65</sup>African Crisis Response Initiative.

[http://www.defenselink.mil/policy/isa/africa/acri\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/policy/isa/africa/acri_factsheet.pdf).( 4 February 2005).

up.”<sup>66</sup> With the program of the *Renforcement des Capacites Africaines de Maintien de la Paix* (RECAMP), France was more active in training the military from many countries in Africa, particularly those that were Francophone. “The RECAMP program was deliberately placed under UN auspices and coordinates with OAU. Its purpose is to increase the military capacity of African countries to engage in peace-keeping operations should they wish to. It helps strengthen Africa's sub-regional organizations on security issues by contributing to the development of a climate of mutual trust.”<sup>67</sup> “Côte d'Ivoire has developed With French support, a Peace-Keeping Training Center in Zambakro (currently located in Koulikouro, Mali).”<sup>68</sup>

Those programs provided an opportunity for West African countries to enhance the training of their forces by using the same equipment and doctrine, a necessary tactic for uniting the multinational forces deployed in peacekeeping efforts. Accordingly, “various observers believe that the quick entry of well-trained combat forces could have prevented much of Africa’s recent suffering. UNAMSIL’s failure in Sierra Leone -- followed by the success of British combat forces during mid-2000-- has greatly encouraged this belief.”<sup>69</sup> Due to the efforts of many countries involved in training and equipping West African militaries, their performance and the capabilities should be increasing, in turn, helping them to conduct better peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions in the future.

## 5. Conclusion

In sum, from 1990 to 2000 ECOMOG was involved in three internal conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. It endured a decade of deep struggles to bring peace and stabilize the sub-region of West Africa. ECOMOG’s interventions aimed at ensuring peace enforcement and in peacekeeping and peace building in the three

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<sup>66</sup> The European Union and peacekeeping in Africa .Report of the Assembly of Western European Union The Interparliamentary European Security and Defense Assembly of 1 December 2004., <[http://www.assemblee-ueo.org/en/documents/sessions\\_ordinaires/rpt/2004/1880.pdf](http://www.assemblee-ueo.org/en/documents/sessions_ordinaires/rpt/2004/1880.pdf) > (4 February 2005).

<sup>67</sup> Reinforcement of African Peace-keeping Capacities . <[http://www.un.int/france/frame\\_anglais/france\\_and\\_un/france\\_and\\_peacekeeping/recamp\\_eng.htm](http://www.un.int/france/frame_anglais/france_and_un/france_and_peacekeeping/recamp_eng.htm)>.(4 February 2005.)

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> Herbert M.Howe:*Ambiguous order , Military Forces in African States* (London, Lynne Rienner Publishers,2001), 254.

countries. However, in the absence of any international response, these interventions were an improvisational response that lacked any formal regional mechanism or organizational structure to achieve such complex missions. Thus, as a pioneer in peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations, ECOMOG encountered difficulties, achieved some successes and experienced failures. These first three interventions turned out to be much more difficult than ECOWAS had anticipated. With minimal domestic resources and inexperienced military personnel, ECOMOG tried to achieve collective security in West Africa, a goal the UN had been pursuing for decades without success. Among these difficulties were the shortage of logistical and financial resources, efficient command and control of forces, lack of planning and poor coordination, the lack of consensus between member states of ECOWAS, and a lack of international support.

Many scholars and observers are still debating the successes and failures of ECOMOG's interventions in West African countries. As Adekeye Adebajo stated: "a key challenge ... for the ECOWAS security mechanism is to learn the lessons from the fact that all three ECOMOG interventions were highly improvised. There was no clear mandate on exactly what the troops would be doing. Peacekeepers were sent into fragile environments without adequate logistical support and funding and without a political settlement."<sup>70</sup> Other observers have considered the fact that ECOMOG's interventions were successful operations since the civil wars were ended through its means. This assessment was supported by Mitikishe Maxwell Khobe, former Chief of Defense Staff, of the republic of Sierra Leone when he declared:

All ECOMOG intervention operations have so far been successful. They have forced armed groups to accept negotiations that, in most cases, led to a cease-fire. ECOMOG is normally asked to monitor and enforce the provisions of the cease-fire. Because the factions that signed these cease-fire agreements do not do so in good faith, violations are rampant. This compels ECOMOG to use force to get the recalcitrant parties to adhere to what was agreed. Sometimes, this will involve outright and large-scale military operations against the most belligerent insurgent group or groups. ECOMOG missions, at this stage, change from intervention to peace enforcement. At all stages, the ECOWAS Secretariat is kept informed.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Adekeye ,A., 138.

<sup>71</sup> Mitikishe ,M.,.

ECOMOG was deployed in Liberia for seven years, and accomplished some successes. Despite the challenges it met over the years of the intervention in this country, to a certain extent ECOMOG played an important role in creating favorable conditions for the peaceful resolution of the civil war. Since the beginning of its deployment in 1990, ECOMOG became increasingly engaged in ensuring security and order in this country. The protection of civilian populations was among its priorities, who had suffered from the actions of all parties in the conflict. Thus, with the cooperation of humanitarian organizations, ECOMOG became engaged in many humanitarian operations. ECOMOG also contributed significantly to preventing the conflict from spilling over into neighboring countries. This was done by restricting the rebels' circulation across porous borders.

Throughout the course of the intervention in Liberia, ECOMOG supported ECOWAS in its efforts to broker peace plans, and influenced fighting factions to comply with the provisions of the peace agreements. Its peace enforcement actions convinced parties to put down their arms and opt for the peaceful resolution of their conflicts. During the implementation of the Abuja peace plan, ECOMOG actively participated in monitoring the cease-fire agreement, disarmament and demobilization of combatants, and supervising new elections.

In Sierra Leone, ECOMOG succeeded in reinstating constitutional order and legality by restoring the elected president to power and evicting rebels from the capital. This important achievement did not prevent ECOMOG from continuing its mission to pacify the country and engaging in peace enforcement actions against the rebels in the hinterlands. Those peace enforcement actions contributed to the reduction of atrocities committed by the rebels against innocent populations. After the takeover by the UN, ECOMOG continued to be deployed in Sierra Leone to support them in effort to stabilize the country by implementing the peace process and training the new Sierra Leonean military troops.

In Guinea Bissau, ECOMOG was engaged in separating the belligerents and monitoring a cease-fire. However, the logistical and financial problems encountered by this body prevented it from continuing its mission, thus anticipating its early withdrawal.

Despite its limited means and resources, ECOMOG performed peacekeeping and peace enforcement roles in order to prevent the continuous degeneration of the security situation in a volatile region. The most notable achievements of ECOMOG in this regard were first, its commitment to sustain the deployment of forces for ten years, despite the casualties and financial and logistical problems; second, its ability to put an end to the conflict and to prevent the relative escalation of conflicts into inter-state confrontations that would destabilize all regions; and third, ECOMOG's strong capability to convince fighting factions to work together for a peaceful resolution to the conflicts. Moreover, ECOMOG's intervention in these conflicts initiated a movement toward consensus on issues related to regional security, after decades of dissension among member states of ECOWAS.

At the end of ten years of ECOMOG interventions, ECOWAS seemed to have learned lessons in terms of organizations; it became more aware of the importance of its shortcomings and looked for adequate solutions to overcome the past flaws. The organization took important steps to reform its institutions to better face the challenges of future missions. In order to correct past flaws, it revised its constitutional treaty and implemented many changes to move toward more standing and institutionalized structures in order to deal more effectively with future security issues. ECOWAS has already established the mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and peacekeeping, in order to meet the security challenges presented in West Africa. It is important to note that the rapprochement and the reconciliation between the regional blocs played a salient role in alleviating regional rivalry and division, thus achieving a better consensus on the important issues that could otherwise endanger and destabilize the whole region. All of this being so, we should expect the current ECOWAS interventions in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire to be more effective than the pre-reform missions. Are they? It is to this question that we now turn.

### III. ECOWAS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND LIBERIA

#### A. INTRODUCTION

The eruption of new conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire in 1999 and Liberia in 2000 again threatened regional stability in West Africa. The experience of the recent past suggested that the longer a conflict continues, the more likely it is to become intractable and to diffuse across borders. For this reason, ECOWAS was got involved early in an effort to prevent the escalation of fighting between factions in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. In contrast to past crises, ECOWAS favored mediation and negotiation to resolve those conflicts, instead of imposing solutions through deployment of forces. This approach of using various political mediations between parties to the conflicts is one sign that the organization is maturing as a conflict manager.

The previous chapter demonstrated that earlier interventions were undertaken in a relatively ad hoc manner, without the support of the international community, and in the context of regional political divisions. The ten years of civil war, in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea Bissau triggered the change of many things at the international and regional levels. ECOWAS developed a much more collaborative relationship with the UN, and this union became actively involved in maintaining peace and security in the region. Thus, the international community demonstrated a new will and commitment to help build West African capabilities to ensure peace and security by their own means. ECOWAS also implemented innovations in its organization to build more permanent structures, moving from an ad hoc basis to a standing and institutionalized structure for dealing with the regional security issues. ECOWAS took an initial step in this direction when it adopted the Protocol of Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution Peacekeeping and Security on December 10, 1999 in Lomé, Togo, to establish a sub regional conflict management system and to improve the effectiveness of future peace operations.<sup>72</sup> Finally, regional political struggles between Francophone and

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<sup>72</sup>Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security adopted on 10 December 1999 in Lomé, Togo.

<[http://www.iss.co.za/AF/RegOrg/unity\\_to\\_union/pdfs/ecowas/ConflictMecha.pdf](http://www.iss.co.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/ecowas/ConflictMecha.pdf)>. (2 February 2005).

Anglophone countries declined, due to democratic transitions in some countries and to a new awareness among ECOWAS member states of the importance of reaching consensus to meet the challenges of regional security.

In the past, deficiencies in both external and internal factors had negatively influenced ECOWAS and ECOMOG, thereby caused most of their shortcomings. The salient question now was, “Would all these changes and innovations contribute to the enhancement of ECOWAS peacemaking missions and ECOMOG peacekeeping operations?” The interventions in Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire give us some initial insight into this question, although conclusions can only be tentative at this early date due to the relatively scarcity of information and research relating to the subject. It is also important to note that, because of a large external response and the rapid involvement of the UN in taking charge of peacekeeping tasks, ECOMOG’s recent interventions are substantially different from the former ones. For example, ECOMOG was not deployed in Côte d’Ivoire until after French forces were already on the ground. In Liberia, on the other hand, ECOMOG was deployed as a vanguard force with US assistance for a short period of time until the UN was able to generate its peacekeeping forces and takes over one month later. This chapter will give a background of the two conflicts in order to explain both the volatility of the security situation in West Africa, and the urgent necessity of intervening to prevent the spill over of violence into other countries. It will then attempt to assess those interventions based on the international and regional political development towards conflict management in West Africa

## **B. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CONFLICTS IN LIBERIA**

### **1. Conflict in Liberia**

Conflict in Liberia renewed as a consequence of an inadequate resolution of the following problems inherited from first civil war:

1. After seven year of violence, the fragile security situation that reigned in Liberia prevented the newly elected government from ensuring order and security throughout the country.
2. The program of disarmament, demobilization and integration of combatants sponsored by the UN and ECOWAS was hastily implemented and not completely finished.

3. The premature withdrawal of ECOMOG from Liberia (under the pressure of Charles Taylor) handicapped the UN in pursuing its mission of peace building in a deteriorating environment without sufficient security forces on the ground.
4. The problem of refugees was inadequately solved; the refugee camps became the place to recruit for new insurgents that were plotting against the central government and against neighboring countries.
5. The policy of political exclusion implemented by Taylor toward his opponents.

All these factors played an important role in the degradation of the already volatile security situation that prevailed at the end of the first civil war. Despite the election of Charles Taylor as president through an apparently valid and regular procedure, salient political problems inherited from the former Liberian crisis persisted. Most of his opponents, as well as part of the Liberian population, were not convinced that the polls were accurate because of the inadequate security environment prevailing at the time of the election. There was also an unequal access to resources and means to campaign for the election. Liberians voted for him to prevent the escalation of more violence because they knew he would resume the killing if he did not win the election.<sup>73</sup> This led to increasing claims and complaints by the opposition about the irregularity of those elections, thereby damaging Taylor's legitimacy among some groups of the Liberian population. To establish his authority, Taylor surrounded himself with various groups of security forces, ready to put down any opposition to his regime. Then, he tried to achieve a monopoly on power by hijacking the institutions of the state for the personal enrichment of himself, his kinsmen, and loyalists, while ruthlessly suppressing rival leaders and groups<sup>74</sup>.

The program of national reconciliation stipulated by the Abuja II peace plan failed because Taylor "cracked down on opposition and attempted to institutionalize his dominance of the Liberian state."<sup>75</sup> As a result, many opponents were arrested, killed or left the country. Despite his position as president, Taylor continued his criminal

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<sup>73</sup> Fredeick H.Fleitz :*Peacekeeping Fiascoes of the 1990's* (Westport CT, Praeger Publishers, 2004), 111

<sup>74</sup> Roland Paris: *At War's End Building Peace After Civil Conflict*. (Cambridge, the presse syndicate of the university of Cambridge, 2004), 95

<sup>75</sup> Adebajo, A., 68

activities, smuggling weapons, in disregard of the UN arms embargo, and by plotting against neighbors by supporting and arming rebel groups in Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. At the domestic level, the security situation remained precarious four years after the end of the civil war. The mobilization of armed ethnic groups by rival warlords from the civil war led to continuing political problems in postwar Liberia.<sup>76</sup>

Taylor's policy of harassment and exclusion was the main cause of the outbreak of violence in Liberia. The rise of insurgency in 1999 was a logical response to his predatory behavior. As a result, fighting between the government's forces and the main fighting faction, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) became intense. In the course of conflict, the LURD became more powerful by capturing more territory. By 2003, the escalation of conflict and the proliferation of other fighting factions, like the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), which split away from the LURD, led Liberia to a climate of more violence and anarchy, with disastrous effects on the precarious humanitarian situation in this country.

## **2. Conflict in Côte d'Ivoire**

During the colonization period, the southern part of Côte d'Ivoire always received most of the economic development projects. Consequently, the northern part remained less developed. After its independence from France, Côte d'Ivoire was the most stable country in West Africa. Economically, it was the most prosperous nation of this region, drawing numerous immigrants from neighboring countries for labor to support its economic growth. Post-independence, President Felix Houphouët-Boigny did not improve the policy of favoring the southern part of the country in terms of economic development, but had managed to maintain a semblance of national unity and stability through his thirty three years in office.<sup>77</sup>

Following his death in 1993, this division between the north and the south remained among the most intractable problems in Côte d'Ivoire. The problem of division was created under President Bedié, who manipulated this situation for his own political agenda. The political situation worsened in this country when General Robert Guei led a

<sup>76</sup> Adebajo, A.,68

<sup>77</sup> Alexander K.D Frempong:*Trajectories of Sub-regional Conflict Management :an Assessment of ECOWAS* ,< [http:// www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/ anniversary-dakar/frempong.pdf](http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/anniversary-dakar/frempong.pdf)>.( 8 February 2005)

coup d'état in 1999 that ousted Henri Bedié. This event further inflamed the north-south division, particularly after Alassane Ouattara was banned from the presidential election in 2000, on the premise that his parents were from Burkina Faso and he therefore did not meet the citizenship requirements to be a presidential candidate. As a result, the concept citizenship, which had been used as a political instrument of manipulation since the death of Houphouët-Boigny, became the most salient issue in this crisis.<sup>78</sup>

After the irregular election of Gbagbo as president, violence and xenophobia became more apparent towards the northern population, often considered as foreigners and as the cause of economic and social problems in Côte d'Ivoire. According to Human Rights Watch, the election violence began with security forces targeting civilians on the basis of their political affiliations. Following Gbagbo's victory, security forces began targeting civilians solely and explicitly on the basis of their religion, ethnic group, or national origin.<sup>79</sup>

In September 2002, a troop mutiny in Abidjan led to the outbreak of a full-scale rebellion and civil war in the country. In the aftermath, the country became divided into two parts based along ethnic and religious lines. The southern part was controlled by central government under Gbagbo and the northern part was controlled by the rebels under the lead of the 'New Forces', comprised of Patriotic Movement of Cote d'Ivoire (MPCI), Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP) and Popular Ivorian Movement for the Far West (MPIGO). This led to an escalation of the conflict between the two parties, triggering external political mediation and military intervention to separate the belligerents.

### **C. EVOLUTION OF ECOWAS/ECOMOG'S INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES**

In the aftermath of the three interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, ECOWAS initiated several processes to improve the effectiveness of its

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<sup>78</sup> Jessica Kohler. From Miraculous to Disastrous: The Crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. Geneva, Centre of applied Studies in International Negotiations (CASIN), August 2003.

<<http://www.casin.ch/pdf/cotedivoire.pdf>> (10 February 2005).

<sup>79</sup> Human Rights Watch. Côte d'Ivoire: Politicians Incite Ethnic Conflict Available

<[http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/WebResources?ReadForm&Country=Cote+d'Ivoire&p=SU\\_rvcod](http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/WebResources?ReadForm&Country=Cote+d'Ivoire&p=SU_rvcod)>. (6 February 2005).

organizational structure. This was accomplished through the institution of a standing and permanent structure to better deal with regional security issues. Its efforts finally succeeded when the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution Peacekeeping and Security were established. The Mechanism replaced previous protocols relating to security matters; it was adopted by the majority of member states during their Summit in Lomé in 1999. The Mechanism is comprised of many institutions and organs, all aiming at improving economic development, stability, peace and security in West African countries. The factors dealing with the consolidation of peace and security are the following:

### **1. Institutions**

The Mediation and Security Council, made up of nine members, is responsible for overseeing the activities of the organs and for making decisions relating to security issues, particularly the deployment of ECOMOG, and appointment of Force Commander

The Executive Secretary, among other responsibilities, is accountable for the functioning of the Community and for the implementation of decisions of the Authority; he also has power to initiate actions for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security in the sub region peace operation,<sup>80</sup> and recommend the appointment of the Special Representative of the ECOWAS and the Force Commander.

### **2. Organs Supporting Those Institutions**

The Defense and Security Commission is comprised of defense chiefs of staff of member states of ECOWAS, and is responsible for the preparation of the mission and the generation of forces to be deployed for peace operations.

ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) is a multipurpose stand-by force ready to intervene at any time for regional crises under the auspices of the Mediation and Security Council. In this context, the Mechanism calls for the establishment of a brigade-sized stand-by force ready for the deployment at short notice.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Protocol relating to Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Peacekeeping and Security. <[http://www.iss.co.za/AF/RegOrg/unity to union/ pdfs/ecowas/ConflictMecha.pdf](http://www.iss.co.za/AF/RegOrg/unity%20to%20union/pdfs/ecowas/ConflictMecha.pdf)> ( 15 January 2005)

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

This new organizational transformation seems to have all the instruments to prevent previous organizational shortcomings. The adoption of this Mechanism is a significant improvement in the institutional structure, but the funding and logistical support of peace operations was not clearly addressed. The establishment of a Special Peace Fund, designed to be funded by voluntary contributions, was not an efficient way to draw enough funding. The protocol's stipulation that the cost of any mission be funded by voluntary contributions from member states for the first three months of any mission. This domestic option and funding to be provided by the UN and international community thereafter had already been tested during the previous interventions and proven to be inadequate.

ECOWAS's financial capacity is so limited given the magnitude of the task involved in rendering the Mechanism effectively operational. ECOWAS relies on the Community levy or donor assistance. Records show that only countries like Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria have consistently honored their financial obligations towards the Community.<sup>82</sup>

With regard to the applicability of the Mechanism, ECOWAS member states still lacked the will to implement its provisions; as of August 2002, only three states out of fifteen had ratified the protocol.<sup>83</sup> The advent of new crises in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire presented an opportunity to test the applicability and the efficiency of the instrument. The institutions and organs of the Mechanisms reacted quickly to initiate peacemaking efforts in the two cases, as stipulated by the provisions of this Mechanism. But its response to the peacekeeping task was still inadequate. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the designation of Force Commander, the deployment of troops of contributing countries, the generation of adequate numbers of forces, and the adoption of a peacekeeping mandate took approximately two months. The delay was due largely to financial and logistical constraints.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> West Africa Network for peacebuilding: An assessment of the ECOWAS Mechanism for conflict prevention and good governance. <[http://www.wanep.org/programs/image/ecowas\\_assessment\\_report.pdf](http://www.wanep.org/programs/image/ecowas_assessment_report.pdf)>. (8 February 2005).

<sup>83</sup> ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution Peacekeeping and Security. <[http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF\\_Reports/OPER\\_ECOWAS.pdf](http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF_Reports/OPER_ECOWAS.pdf)> (10 February 2005).

#### D. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The ACRI continued to be implemented. It “helped train and equip more than 6,000 troops from seven African nations in the years 1997 to 2000.”<sup>85</sup> At its completion in 2002, another program, the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA), was established to pursue the training and equipment of African peacekeepers.

ACOTA focuses mainly on training military trainers and also equips African national armed forces. One of the main differences between ACRI and ACOTA is that the latter also includes weapons training, as well as increasing the experience of troops in areas such as human rights, interaction with civil society, international law, military staff skills and small unit operations.<sup>86</sup>

At the same time, Britain had contributed to the establishment of the Kofi Annan peacekeeping training center in Ghana, and there were also financial contribution being made by Canada, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. Britain had trained the military of Ghana in peacekeeping processes through the African Peacekeeping Training Support Program. The United Kingdom’s military support to African states has also played a crucial role in the development and effectiveness of local peacekeeping operations.

France had also been more active in training militaries from many of Africa’s countries, particularly the Francophone ones, with the RECAMP program. Consequently, field exercises involving militaries from West African countries had been jointly executed. France had also contributed to equipping some African militaries for peacekeeping missions. Due to the lack of necessary equipment for peace operations witnessed during previous ECOMOG interventions, France had proposed to position

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<sup>84</sup>Lansana Gberie and Prosper Addo.Challenges of Peace Implementation in Côte d’Ivoire <<http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Monographs/No105/Contents.html>>.(20 February 2005). This report is based on the proceedings of an international experts’ workshop with the theme “Challenges of Peace Implementation in Côte d’Ivoire ”, held at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre from 31 May to 2 June 2004

<sup>85</sup> ACOTA Rated Highly During House Hearing on Peacekeeping in Africa By Jim Fisher-Thompson Washington File Staff Writer.<<http://www.japan.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20041014-09.html>>.( 6 February 2005)

<sup>86</sup> The European Union and peacekeeping in Africa .Report of the Assembly of Western European Union The Interparliamentary European Security and Defense Assembly of 1 December 2004,pp 26. <[http://www.assemblee-ueo.org/en/documents/ sessions\\_ordinaires/rpt/2004/1880.pdf](http://www.assemblee-ueo.org/en/documents/ sessions_ordinaires/rpt/2004/1880.pdf) >.( 8 February 2005).

equipment for three battalions that met UN standards on three of its bases in Africa. This equipment included communications equipment, vehicles and a field hospital with surgical unit of a 100-bed capacity<sup>87</sup>.

Conscious of its dearth of logistical and financial means, ECOWAS developed partnerships with the international community to support its mission in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. In Côte d'Ivoire, international cooperation played an important role in sustaining ECOMOG. The US and France both contributed to the transportation of contingent troops, and offered much necessary equipment for the mission (e.g., vehicles and transmission equipment). The financial cost of the mission was partially supported by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain.<sup>88</sup> According to Nestor Djido, a spokesman for the ECOWAS: "For the first time, the international community and Africans have worked together effectively in the resolution of a conflict. We know Africa, but need their support."<sup>89</sup> In Liberia the US played a useful role in supporting the 3600 West African peacekeepers by providing transportation and equipment through a civilian company.

These programs provided an opportunity for West African countries to enhance the training of their forces on identical equipment and doctrine, both of which are critical for a multinational force deployed together in peacekeeping missions. Also, financial and logistical contribution of the international community had increased from previous interventions. Due to the efforts deployed by Western countries in training West African militaries, and the financial and logistical support provided from the international community, the performance increased, thus enabling African countries to conduct future peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions more efficiently.

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<sup>87</sup> The European Union and peacekeeping in Africa .Report of the Assembly of Western European Union The Interparliamentary European Security and Defense Assembly of 1 December 2004,pp 26. [http://www.assemblee-ueo.org/en/documents/sessions\\_ordinaires/rpt/2004/1880.pdf](http://www.assemblee-ueo.org/en/documents/sessions_ordinaires/rpt/2004/1880.pdf)>(8February 2005).

<sup>88</sup> General Abdoulaye Khalilo Fall former Force Commander of ECOMOG in Côte d'Ivoire and later Force Commander United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Côte d'Ivoire, <<http://www.mandelainwentorg/ef/military/fall.htm>> ( 8 February 2005).

<sup>89</sup> *Nicole Itano Special to The Christian Science Monitor*. Next door, lessons for Liberia; Western troops and African peacekeepers teamed up to end the Ivory Coast civil war.

<<http://www.proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=26&sid=10&srchmode=1&vinst=PROD&fmt=3&>>.(8 February 2005).

## **E. REGIONAL POLITICAL RIVALRY AND ECOWAS PEACEMAKING**

### **1. Regional Political Rivalry**

The recrudescence of conflict anywhere in West Africa threatens regional security. The conflicts in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire have their roots in regional political and economic instability. The spillover effects of these conflicts in turn reached other neighboring countries, particularly Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea, where people had sought refuge.<sup>90</sup> In these countries, refugees become potential recruits for insurgencies (which often plot against others, and had a destabilizing affect in this region). As a result, fighting factions in Liberia were supported by Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, while fighting factions in Côte d'Ivoire were supported by Liberia and Burkina Faso.

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<sup>90</sup> Cliff Bernath and Sarah Martin in a regional report: Peacekeeping in West Africa, June 2004.

<<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.ns>> (8 February 2005).

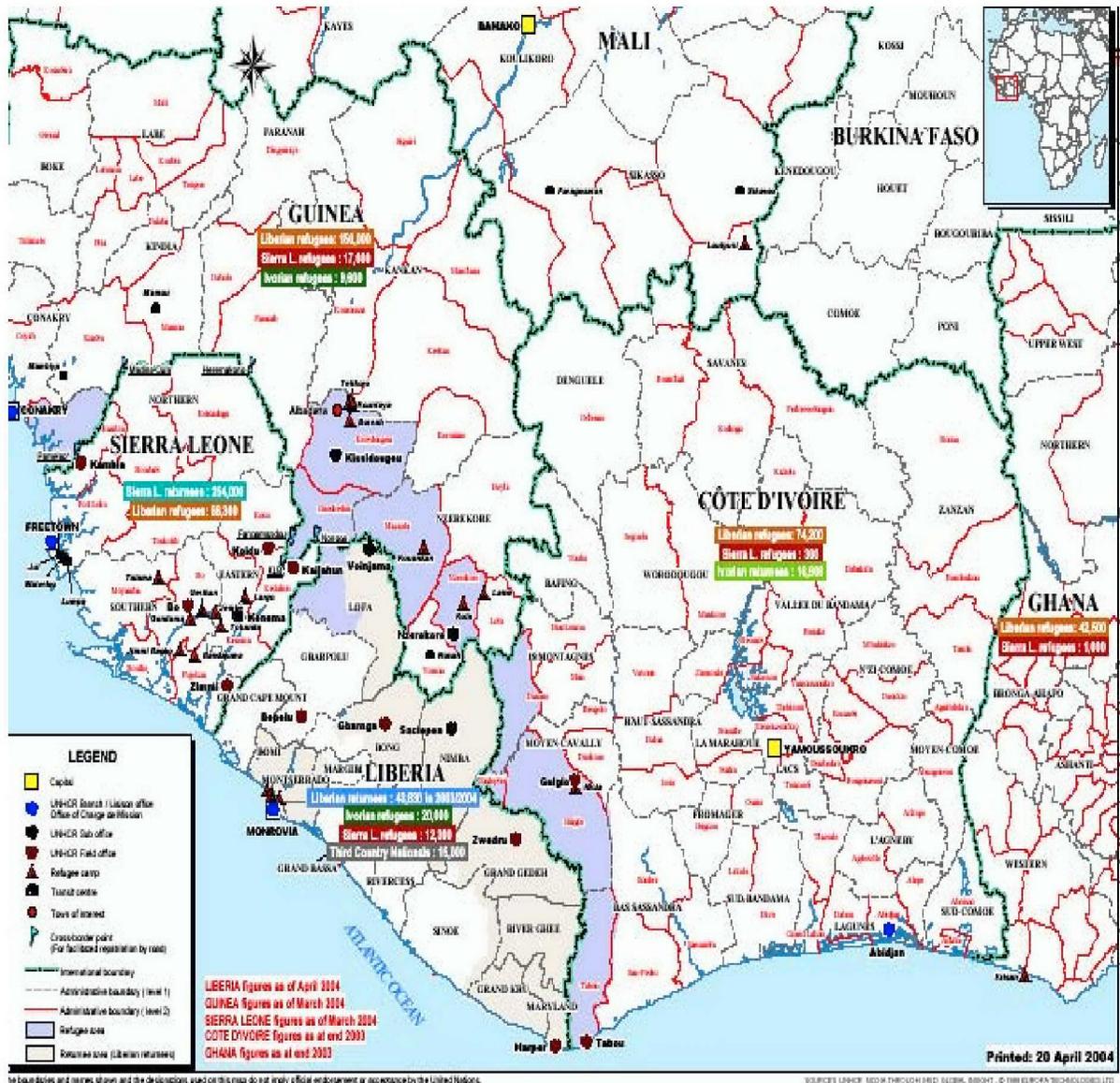


Figure 1. Map of Refugees in West Africa<sup>91</sup>

91 Map of refugees in West Africa < <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/SKAR-64GC2E?OpenDocument-14k>> ( Mar 13, 2005).

Following the eruption of violence in Côte d'Ivoire, this country accused Liberia and Burkina Faso of colluding in an effort to undermine its security by supporting rebel movement. According to the International Crisis Group, leaders of the main rebel group in Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI) planned the rebellion from their place of exile in Burkina Faso, and President Blaise Compaoré was aware of at least the outlines of their plans.<sup>92</sup> Liberia was also directly involved in Côte d'Ivoire's conflict by creating the two rebel movements, the MJP and the MPIGO, in retaliation for Côte d'Ivoire's support of MODEL in Liberia.

Although it may not be determinable whether or not Taylor and Blaise Compaoré were plotting together against Côte d'Ivoire, it is known that Compaore did have an interest in this country, namely over two million Burkinabe immigrants. With an escalation of conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, most of these immigrants will return home, thereby creating a destabilizing effect on Burkina Faso, already plagued with economic problems. Moreover, Burkina Faso, as one of the poorest countries in this region, had little interest in destabilizing Côte d'Ivoire because its own economy was closely tied to Côte d'Ivoire. As a landlocked country, Burkina Faso depended heavily on Côte d'Ivoire for the transport and export of its goods through roads and ports of the latter country.<sup>93</sup>

Despite signs of a growing rivalry between the three countries, ongoing peace building in Liberia, together with the ongoing peace process in Côte d'Ivoire and the prominent role of ECOWAS in conciliating member states, may alleviate tensions. A reduction in friction between neighbors would then contribute to a relative consensus in this region. In contrast to the earlier interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, recent peacemaking efforts have been implemented in the framework of a political consensus upon main security issues. The former political rivalry between the two main blocs, i.e., Francophone and Anglophone countries, seems to have been transformed into a regional consensus for building a stable and secure region. Most countries of this community now recognize the danger a lack of agreement presents to the

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<sup>92</sup>International Crisis Group report on 28 November 2004 :Cote d'Ivoire the war is not yet over <<http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=238981=1>>.(14 February 2005).

<sup>93</sup> Jessika Kohler: From Miraculous to Disastrous: The Crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. Geneva, Centre of applied Studies in International Negotiations (CASIN), August 2003. <<http://www.casin.ch/pdf/cotedivoire.pdf>> (10 February 2005).

political stability of every country. Consequently, this amelioration of regional relationship and the rapprochement between the two blocs are contributing to the gradual elimination of rivalries and instability in this region.

## **2. ECOWAS Peacemaking**

With the eruption of violence in Côte d'Ivoire in September 2002, ECOWAS, fearing possible spillover of violence across borders, became involved in mediation between the two parties in the conflict.<sup>94</sup> At this time, ECOWAS took swift steps to search for a solution to the crisis. On September 29, 2002, ECOWAS convened an emergency summit meeting in Accra, which set up a Contact Group. This group was comprised of representatives from Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo, together with the African Union, formed to promote dialogue between the two parties in the conflict, and to discuss a general framework to resolve the crisis.<sup>95</sup> The mediation of the Contact Group led to a cease-fire, on October 17, 2002. Following this cease-fire, negotiations ensued in Lomé, Togo, where parties in the conflict reaffirmed their commitment to the cease-fire agreement and pledged to refrain from human rights abuses, while acknowledging the need to preserve the territorial integrity of Côte d'Ivoire and to respect the country's institutions.<sup>96</sup>

Given the divergence of antagonist positions, ECOWAS failed to broker a peace plan amenable to all parties. Repeated violations of the cease-fire by both parties triggered the intervention of external mediators. New negotiations in France, with the help of ECOWAS, led to the Lina Marcoussis peace plan adopted by all parties on January 24, 2003.<sup>97</sup> The Marcoussis Conference succeeded in addressing key issues of contention, including citizenship, land ownership and eligibility for the presidency.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Lansana Gberie and Prosper Addo. Challenges of Peace Implementation in Côte d'Ivoire <<http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Monographs/No105/Contents.html>>. (20 February 2005).

<sup>95</sup> United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire Côte d'Ivoire – MINUCI. <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home.shtml>>. (5 February 2005).

<sup>96</sup> Ibid

<sup>97</sup> Lina Marcoussis Peace Agreement <[http://www.usip.org/library/pa/cote\\_divoire/cote\\_divoire\\_0124003en.html](http://www.usip.org/library/pa/cote_divoire/cote_divoire_0124003en.html)>. (10 February 2005).

<sup>98</sup> Alexander K.D Frempong: Trajectories of Sub-regional Conflict Management :an Assessment of ECOWAS , <<http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/anniversary-dakar/frempong.pdf>>. (8 February 2005).

This peace plan included a power sharing agreement, in which the rebels were given important positions in a government of national reconciliation. Unfortunately, the implementation of the provisions of this peace plan has been problematic. Despite the diplomatic efforts of ECOWAS and French representatives to resolve the conflict, the belligerents continue to cling to their entrenched positions.

ECOWAS also sponsored negotiations following the renewal of fighting in Liberia, in an effort to broker a peace plan. ECOWAS mediation in Liberia contributed to the formation of an International Contact Group for Liberia (IGCL), and the designation of General Abdusalami Abubakar, former military leader of Nigeria, to mediate the Liberia crisis.<sup>99</sup> While political negotiations continued under the auspices of ECOWAS and the ICGL, fighting between rebels and the government intensified throughout the country, particularly around Monrovia, creating a critical humanitarian problem. According to aid agencies, over 100,000 people were living on the streets of the capital, seeking shelter and food supplies. Insecurity disrupted aid work in the capital, creating a situation where aid workers were unable to gain access to the majority of the Liberian territory.<sup>100</sup> Due to this degradation of the humanitarian situation in Liberia, ECOWAS and ICGL urged the government of Liberia, LURD, and the MODEL to halt fighting in order to alleviate the suffering of a large segment of the Liberian population. They called all parties to the conflict to cooperate with the ECOWAS mediators in reaching a cease-fire and brokering a peace process. After rounds of mediation, in Accra on June 17, 2003 all parties were convinced to adhere to a cease-fire, and held to the hope of sponsoring a final political settlement of the conflict.

Over a period of two months, intensive peace talks continued between the representatives of parties in the conflict and political parties. On August 18, 2003, a peace agreement had been reached in Accra between the government of Liberia, LURD, MODEL and political parties in the country. The agreement declared an immediate end to

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<sup>99</sup> West Africa Network for Peace building: An Assessment of the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Good Governance, <[http://www.wanep.org/programs/image/ecowas\\_assessment\\_report.pdf](http://www.wanep.org/programs/image/ecowas_assessment_report.pdf)> (8 February 2005).

<sup>100</sup> ProQuest. Liberia: Ceasefire leads to peace hopes. <<http://www.proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=26&sid=10&srchmode=1&vinst=PROD&fmt=3&s>> (8 February 2005).

the war, the resignation of Charles Taylor, and provided for the establishment of a National Transitional Government that would take over from the interim government headed by President Blah.<sup>101</sup>

#### **F. ECOMOG INTERVENTION IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND LIBERIA**

Following a new outbreak of violence in Côte d'Ivoire in September 2002, and a new cease-fire on October 17, 2002, ECOWAS proposed the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Côte d'Ivoire. On October 26, 2003, the Defense and Security Commission of ECOWAS submitted a proposal to the Mediation and Security Council to deploy 2386 peacekeepers, made up of troops from Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo, to monitor the ceasefire, while elaborating upon the mandate for the mission in Côte d'Ivoire. The two agencies adopted a clear mandate for ECOMOG, which stipulated the following:

1. Monitoring the cessation of hostilities
2. Facilitating the return of normal public administration services and the free movement of goods and services.
3. Contributing to the implementation of peace agreement
4. Guaranteeing the safety of the insurgents, observers, and humanitarian staff.<sup>102</sup>

Unfortunately, contributing countries failed to generate the necessary forces to be deployed for this mission quickly enough because of financial and logistical constraints of member states. Due to the gravity of the situation, and the inability for ECOWAS to react quickly, French troops then present in the country deployed their forces along the cease-fire line. This arrangement was in the framework of a mutual agreement between warring factions in order to grant ECOWAS the needed time for it to generate its forces.

Two months later, during a meeting in Dakar on December 18, ECOWAS leaders finally decided that ECOWAS' Peace Force for Côte d'Ivoire (ECOFORCE) would be

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<sup>101</sup> Peace Agreement Between The Government of Liberia (GOL), The Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), The Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and The Political Parties in Accra Ghana on August 18, 2003.<<http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2003/gov-lib-18aug.pdf>>, (8 February 2005).

<sup>102</sup> Lansana Gberie and Prosper Addo.Challenges of Peace Implementation in Côte d'Ivoire <<http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Monographs/No105/Contents.html>>.(20 February 2005).

deployed by December 31, 2002. They also appointed General Papa Khalil Fall from Senegal to act as the Force Commander of ECOFORCE, and Raph Uwechue from Nigeria as the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS for Côte d'Ivoire. The leaders appealed to the African Union and the UN to step up their involvement in assisting ECOWAS to resolve the Ivorian crisis.<sup>103</sup>

Despite the will and the commitment of member states to deploy such forces to ensure the ceasefire, the dearth of domestic financial and logistical resources prevented the generation and deployment of forces in a timely manner. ECOWAS called on the international community to respond to the needs of peacekeeping forces in Côte d'Ivoire by lending it their support. ECOWAS began deploying its first forces from Senegal and Ghana in January 2003. Later Benin, Niger and Togo committed troops to form the ECOMOG force in Côte d'Ivoire. In order not to compromise the neutrality of ECOMOG, Mali did not commit the forces pledged because of the presence of many Malian immigrants in Côte d'Ivoire.

Because of financial and logistical shortcomings, it took ECOWAS two months to deploy peacekeepers, while it took the French only a few days to prepared to secure the cease-fire. Moreover, once ECOMOG forces arrived in Côte d'Ivoire, it took them two more months to become fully operational because of lack of adequate equipment and vehicles.

The Force Commander had to use his own initiative, his own knowledge of the country, and his own acquaintances to get things moving. Even so, it took more than 100 days to set up a basic force headquarters, When the main body of Detachment SOUTH deployed in Abidjan in March 2003, it had no vehicles and no place to work. It is mainly through the assistance of the French, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, and through personal contacts of the Force Commander and the efforts of the Chair of the Defense and Security Commission (Lt Gen Obeng of Ghana) that this force was able to build up slowly, to survive, and then succeed.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire Côte d'Ivoire – MINUCI.<<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home.shtml>>. (5 February 2005)

<sup>104</sup>Lansana Gberie and Prosper Addo.Challenges of Peace Implementation in Côte d'Ivoire <<http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Monographs/No105/Contents.html>>. (20 February 2005)



Figure 2. Map of Cote d'Ivoire Showing the Deployment of ECOMOG Forces Along the Line of Cease Fire<sup>105</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Map of Map of Cote d'Ivoire showing the deployment of ECOMOG forces along the line of cease fire <<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep03.html.66>> (14 March 2005).

It is important to note that ECOMOG's deployment was made possible only by massive support by the international community. French troops provided transport, uniform, and food, while the US provides communication equipments and vehicles (now these vehicles patrol Abidjan's "zone of confidence" through the center of the country).<sup>106</sup> Once the first 1264 peacekeepers were deployed on the ground and took over the mission from the French, they faced many challenges in ensuring that the cease-fire held. Not only the peacekeepers were fewer in number, to face the increase of violence following the proliferation of other groups in the West of the country, but they also lacked funds and logistics. Despite the international community's support, problems persisted. For that reason, "in March 2003, the ECOWAS Defense and Security Commission recommended an increase in the size of ECOFORCE from 1264 troops to 3411" to secure the cease-fire and prevent the further deterioration of security situation.

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During the deployment of ECOFORCE in Côte d'Ivoire, peacekeepers from contributing countries had efficiently implemented the mission assigned to them. In May 2003, ECOFORCE was deployed in a joint operation with the French, *Forces Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire* (FANCI) and the *Forces Nouvelles*. This operation aimed at securing the West by imposing the cease-fire and creating a demilitarized zone. Over the period of this operation, ECOFORCE performed well.<sup>108</sup> The organizational problems witnessed in the past did not surface during this intervention. Improved training and organization contributed to the amelioration of difficulties at the operational level. Despite the delay of deployment and other logistical shortcomings, ECOMOG, with the support of international community, contributed effectively to halting the fighting and assisting in the stabilization of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. According to the Force Commander, ECOMOG enjoyed significant achievements in Côte d'Ivoire, along with

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<sup>106</sup> Nicole Itano Speacial to the Christian Science Monitor. Boston  
< <http://www.proquest.umi.com>,> ( 20 February 2005).

<sup>107</sup> Report of the Security Council mission to West Africa ,26 june-5 July2003.  
<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home.shtml> (8 February 2005).

<sup>108</sup> International Crisis Group report on 28 November 2004 :Cote d'Ivoire the war is not yet over  
<<http://www.crisis9.web.org/home/index.cfm?id=238981=1>>. (14 February 2005).

French forces. Over the period of its first operational duty from March 29, 2003 to its merger into the United Nations' operation on April 4, 2004, its achievements included:

1. A shift away from the monitoring of the cease-fire line, to the control of the zone of confidence, casting away further the specter of direct confrontations;
2. The restoration of the broken dialogue between the belligerents parties (e.g., war prisoners were released, and a joint D.D.R implementation plan was developed)
3. Trade and humanitarian corridors were opened;
4. The impartial forces' operations were expanded throughout the territory in the aim of restoring confidence and assisting the regrouping of combatants;
5. An important civil-military activities program was implemented, including a priority fold in free medical assistance to the populations,<sup>109</sup>

Although the peacekeepers efficiently monitored the cease-fire and demonstrated their capabilities in dealing with complex situation in Côte d'Ivoire, the Force Commander added that ECOMOG still suffered from some inherent weaknesses, despite the commitment of the international community to build ECOWAS' capabilities. Its slowness in the mobilization of troops, its lack of adequate equipment, its poor logistical support facilities and its modest funding continued to constitute the main shortcomings of ECOMOG in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>110</sup>

For these reasons, ECOWAS continued to call upon the UN Security Council, over the period of intervention to establish a UN force to take over from ECOFORCE in Côte d'Ivoire. According to General Sheikh Diarra, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECOWAS in charge of Defense and Security Commission, "the request was determined

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<sup>109</sup> Declaration of General Abdoulaye Khalil Fall former Force Commander of ECOMOG in Côte d'Ivoire and latter Force Commander of United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Côte d'Ivoire. <<http://www.mandela.inwent.org/ef/military/fall.htm>>. (15 February 2005).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

by a dearth of necessary funding to maintain ECOMICI (ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire) in the country until 2005, when new elections are scheduled, as well as a requirement for a significantly wider troop's deployment to the country."<sup>111</sup>

In comparison with past interventions, ECOMOG had improved, in terms of organization and operational performance. However, the ECOMOG intervention in Côte d'Ivoire shows that financial and logistical constraints, despite the aid of many donors, continue to undermine its effectiveness. The international community's financial contribution was still not enough to cover the substantial needs of ECOMOG. The domestic financial and logistical shortage of its contributing countries prevented it from earmarking forces for ECOMOG at the right moment. The combination of those factors contributed to the delay in the generation and deployment of forces. It became apparent that, in the absence of a reliable and centralized funding and logistical structure managed by ECOWAS; these kinds of problems would continue to hinder the efficiency of ECOMOG as regional peacekeeping body.

Subsequently, following the cease-fire between the government of Liberia, LURD, and MODEL, ECOMOG intervened, following the cease-fire signed on June 17, 2003. ECOWAS agreed to deploy about 3000 peacekeepers in Liberia for the second time, provided that it got the financial and logistical support from the UN and the international community it needed. Conscious of challenges faced during the generation and deployment of ECOMOG in Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS, after obtaining the consent of the UN, opted for the deployment of only part of its forces, troops already deployed in Sierra Leone, pending the contributing countries of ECOWAS to activate the necessary forces.

Drawing on the past experiences in this country, and in order to prevent past shortcomings as they related to the mandate given to ECOMOG, ECOWAS defined precisely the attributions of this body, as the following:

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<sup>111</sup> Segun Adeyemi, *Janes Defense Weekly Correspondent Lagos*. ECOWAS seeks UN peace force in Cote d'Ivoire. <<http://www.4.Janes.com/k2/docprint.jsp?K2DocKey>>.(20 January 2005)

1. Facilitating and monitoring the disengagement of forces
2. Obtaining data and information on activities relating to military forces of the parties to the Ceasefire Agreement and coordinating all military movements
3. Establishing conditions for the initial stages of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) activities
4. Ensuring respect by the Parties for the definitive cessation of hostilities and all other aspects of the Ceasefire Agreement
5. Ensuring the security of senior political and military leaders
6. Ensuring the security of all personnel and experts involved in the implementation of this Agreement in collaboration with all parties
7. Monitoring the storage of arms, munitions and equipment, including supervising the collection, storage and custody of battlefield or offensive armament in the hands of combatants.<sup>112</sup>

In contrast to previous intervention in Liberia, all parties in the conflict accepted the deployment of ECOMOG as interposition forces. ECOMOG did not meet any opposition from the parties in the conflict. They called on ECOMOG to secure the cease-fire, create a zone of separation between the belligerent forces and, thus provide a safe corridor for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and free movement of persons.<sup>113</sup>

The peacekeepers began to be deployed in Liberia under the command of the Nigerian Brigadier, General Festus Okonkwo, as Force Commander of ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL). The Nigerians were the first to be deployed, transferred from the UN forces deployed in Sierra Leone. “On 4 August 2003, the first Nigerian commandos arrived aboard United Nations helicopters.”<sup>114</sup> They were assisted by US troops deployed from American war ships especially for this mission who provided logistical support to ECOMOG forces. Once it was completely established, this body was

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<sup>112</sup> Peace Agreement Between The Government of Liberia (GOL), The Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), The Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and The Political Parties in Accra Ghana on August 18, 2003.

<<http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2003/gov-lib-18aug.pdf>> (8 February 2005).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid

<sup>114</sup> Tim Werner. New York Times. New York, N.Y August 15, 2003.

<<http://www.proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=50&sid=4&srchmode=1&uinst=PROD&fmt=3&st>>. (8 February 2005).

comprised of troops from Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. The first ECOMOG peacekeepers deployed in Liberia contributed to the securing of the capital and participated in the hand over of power from Taylor to his vice president. ECOMOG's mission in Liberia stretched from August 4, 2004 to October 1, 2004 and contributed efficiently to the stabilization of situation in this country. During the short period of its deployment, ECOMOG efficiently contributed to ensure the security of returning Internal Displaced Persons. In this field, ECOMOG forces also worked closely with international organizations and NGOs to improve the security situation throughout the country, thereby enhancing the work of humanitarian organizations in their assistance for the suffering populations in Liberia.<sup>115</sup> Many observers and government officials averred that ECOMOG forces had contributed to the stabilization of this country after many years of intermittent civil wars. In this context, the US Ambassador to Liberia (in Monrovia) presented the Embassy's official certificate of appreciation to all ECOMOG contingents for their outstanding service during their deployment in Liberia. The same official, during a ceremony of departure of some contingents at the end their deployment stated:

While it is true that the United States Marines did deploy in Liberia, that our Joint Task Force did provide several other forms of support as well, ECOMIL was the main body in accomplishing those peacekeeping objectives, showing distinction and bravery throughout in the face of danger and uncertainty. ECOMIL deserves enormous credit. In essence, they played an essential role in stopping a war and ending much human suffering.<sup>116</sup>

During this period, ECOMOG's image improved dramatically *vis à vis* its treatment of the Liberian population. Peacekeepers showed their professionalism and uprightness toward civilian populations who had suffered from actions and abuses during the last intervention. Despite these achievements on the ground, the challenges that

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<sup>115</sup> US. Agency for International Development. Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA).Office of US of Foreign Disaster Assistance. Liberia-Complex Emergency Situation Report 11 of September 17,2003<[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/countries/fy2003\\_index.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/countries/fy2003_index.html)> (15 February 2005).

<sup>116</sup> Speech of John.W. Blaney, Ambassador of the US in Monrovia during a ceremony of departure of ECOMOG contingents after the end of their mission in Liberia. <<http://www.monrovia.usembassy.gov/Liberia/feb272004.html>>, (15 February 2005).

plagued the operation in Côte d'Ivoire resurfaced in Liberia. Fortunately, this mission lasted only one month before the UN took over.

Aware of the logistical and financial constraints witnessed in the Côte d'Ivoire mission, ECOWAS appealed to the international community for help to sustain ECOMOG's deployment in Liberia. Despite these precautions, logistical problems once again threatened the implementation of the mission. According to a US observer on the ground:

As humanitarian crisis abated, ECOMIL's logistical situation grew tenuous. Deployment delays, equipment shortages and shortfalls in basic quality life were combining to threaten ECOMIL's ability to create a secure environment for humanitarian organization to operate outside Monrovia. To improve coordination and situational awareness, the Joint Task Force (JTF) Commander directed a South European Task Force (SETAF) officer to serve as a liaison directly to the US Department of State in Washington, DC working directly with state and Pacific Architects and Engineering (PA&E) officials, this logistical advisor helped develop a viable support plan to sustain the ECOMIL force through the arrival of the UN follow-on force.<sup>117</sup>

As in the Côte d'Ivoire intervention, ECOMOG continued to rely on external financial and logistical support. Since ECOWAS did not establish its own financial and logistical capabilities to fund the Special Emergency Fund, ECOMOG could not fulfill its peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions efficiently. The international community cannot be expected to contribute enough to respond to the needs of a sub-regional organization, such as ECOMOG. This has been established during both past and recent interventions, where contributions from the international community in supporting and equipping ECOMOG's force have been far below the requirements. For example, the UN faced many challenges to re-hat the 3500 ECOMOG peacekeepers in Liberia because

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<sup>117</sup> Joint efforts prevent humanitarian disaster in Liberia by Thomas W Collins. Army. Arlington, February 2004. Vol.54, Iss.2; pg.24.5pag..

<<http://www.proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=16&sid=2&srchmode=1&vinst=PROD&fmt=3&st>>.(8 February 2005).

they were not sufficiently equipped and fell below the UN operational and logistical requirement, this because the troops were inadequately equipped by a private American contractor, Pacific Architects and Engineers.<sup>118</sup>

Nevertheless, it is clear that ECOWAS has achieved much in term of its organization and capabilities to deploy well-trained peacekeepers. In previous interventions ECOMOG was characterized by a lack of professionalism, while in current intervention peacekeepers had demonstrated their skill and knowledge in dealing with peacekeeping operations. Improvement at the operational level of forces, due mainly to previous training in a common doctrine and with identical equipment, is also apparent. In this context, the international initiatives in building these capabilities have proven successful. Cohesion and cooperation between different contingents on the ground has also increased. Equitable representation of forces from different countries in ECOMOG had been achieved during these interventions, preventing past shortcomings related to the dominance of one country. The only handicap that persists is that ECOWAS has proven to be unable to respond to needs of its forces in term of financial and logistical resources. Despite the remarkable realizations in term of organization and training of peacekeeping forces, funding issues remain the Achilles heel of ECOMOG.

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<sup>118</sup> Lessons Learned Study on the Start-up Phase of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit. Department <<http://www.pbpu.unlb.org/PBPU/Document.aspx?docid=268>> (10 February 2005).

## IV. CONCLUSION

The perception of peacemaking and peacekeeping operations has changed substantially over the last two decades. The end of the Cold War contributed to the end of rivalries between the US and USSR regarding security issues, at the same time triggering the appearance of new actors at the regional level in dealing with regional security matters. In Africa, ECOWAS, over the course of the last fifteen years has evolved from being purely an economic entity to embracing a desire to secure regional peace and stability. For this reason, ECOWAS and ECOMOG represent an ambitious regional initiative in face of the recrudescence of violence and regional instability in West African conflicts. The interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire have secured a place for ECOWAS/ECOMOG among the organizations dealing with the preservation of international peace and security. The most successful element of the ECOWAS/ECOMOG in coping with West African conflicts is the achievement of settlements to conflicts and the reduction of violence in those countries. This organization has undergone significant transformation to meet the challenges presented by security matters and regional political developments. The transition from operating in merely an ad hoc manner when coping with regional conflict, into one having a more standing framework to manage those crises, has often demonstrated the ability of this organization to consolidate its institutions. Despite the lack of means and experience in this field, ECOWAS/ECOMOG was always determined to respond to regional armed conflicts, to ensure regional stability. Aware of the prominent role of regional stability, ECOWAS aimed at ensuring a security environment that was suitable for economic development and social progress.

In the area of peacekeeping and peacemaking, ECOWAS/ECOMOG has been involved in this region in two phases. In the 1990's, ECOWAS/ECOMOG first intervened in Liberia, and subsequently in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, to mediate violent civil wars and reduce violence and the suffering of civilian populations in affected countries. In the second phase, ECOWAS/ECOMOG intervened to bring peace again in Liberia, and to stabilize the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The first three interventions turned out to be much more difficult than the last two. During the first

interventions, ECOMOG lacked the necessary organizational structure and experience to deal with peacekeeping operations in highly unstable regions. Moreover, the lack of financial and logistical means on one hand, combined with the deficiencies of the support of the international community on the other, complicated most of ECOWAS/ECOMOG tasks. Despite these difficulties, ECOWAS/ECOMOG has made great accomplishments during its interventions.

The most notable achievements of ECOWAS in West Africa are, first, its evolution from being merely focused on regional economic development and integration to being an important actor in dealing with security issues at the regional level. Second, fifteen years of suffering casualties from financial and logistical problems and yet sustaining the deployment of its forces has demonstrated its commitment to the peace process. Third, it has demonstrated an ability to put end to conflict and to prevent the escalation of conflicts to inter-state confrontations that would destabilize all regions. Finally, after many years of political dissension and regional rivalry upon false problems, ECOWAS has demonstrated an ability to achieve a regional consensus upon security issues.

From the beginning of its deployment in Liberia in 1990, ECOMOG and ECOWAS were engaged in ensuring security and order in this country and searching for a peaceful resolution to civil war. Over the period of the intervention, ECOMOG participated in the protection of civilian populations to alleviate their suffering. Also, they joined with others in their efforts to broker numerous peace plans, urging fighting factions to comply with the provisions of peace agreements. ECOWAS/ECOMOG convened peace talks among the fighting parties in Liberia, which, after seven years of fighting, culminated with the peaceful resolution of the protracted conflict. Following this peace agreement, ECOWAS/ECOMOG actively contributed to monitoring the cease-fire, disarmament, and demobilization of combatants. With the cooperation of the UN, ECOWAS/ECOMOG helped to implement a peace process, particularly the preparation and supervision of elections in Liberia.

In Sierra Leone, ECOMOG succeed in reinstating the constitutional order and legality by restoring the elected president to power and evicting rebels from the capital.

This action was a first step by ECOWAS, aimed at deterring other insurgents from altering the democratic path in this region, and to halting the phenomena of coup d'état. Through its peace enforcement actions, it also contributed significantly to the reduction of atrocities committed by rebels against innocent populations. Acting in parallel with its military actions, ECOWAS showed its commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflict by sponsoring many peace talks. After the involvement of the UN, ECOMOG contributed to stabilizing and training the new Sierra Leonean military.

In Guinea Bissau, despite the mixed results of this intervention, ECOWAS/ECOMOG succeeded in separating the belligerents, monitoring a cease-fire, and prompting foreign forces to leave the country and respect its sovereignty.

Those interventions were, at the time, an improvised response to conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, in the absence of a necessary structure to deal with such crises. As a result, ECOWAS/ECOMOG faced numerous obstacles and difficulties in carrying out its mission. The regional political division and organizational, financial and logistical challenges were amongst the most intractable shortcomings and weaknesses of ECOWAS during this period.

Regional political divisions were among the more serious problems that ECOWAS faced during its attempt to resolve the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Many West African countries opposed ECOWAS military options against the fighting parties and, instead supported these countries in fighting ECOMOG. This lack of regional consensus upon security issues and the rivalries between the Francophone and Anglophone countries negatively influenced the role of ECOWAS and ECOMOG in their peacemaking and peacekeeping missions. ECOWAS' ad hoc manner of responding to regional conflicts in West Africa was a source of organizational problems. In the absence of an institutional organization and standing security framework, ECOWAS/ECOMOG improvised all their actions in dealing with those conflicts, in term of organization and deployment of forces and decision-making. In past interventions, ECOWAS was unable to sustain the high cost of military operations. Since the beginning, ECOWAS relied on

voluntary contributions of its member states in covering the costs of the military intervention. Unfortunately, their limited resources left them unable to respond, even to the urgent needs of their own forces.

During the second interventions, ECOMOG demonstrated that it had learned some lessons from the past mistakes. ECOWAS had developed a regional mechanism and structure aimed at preventing ad hoc responses and maintaining ways of negotiations, while creating an environment through which member states could resolve their internal problems. It introduced an important change by creating a standing structure to overcome the regional political division with regard to security issues. ECOWAS, with the cooperation of the international community, played an important role in achieving some breakthroughs in peacemaking in Liberia. In Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS became increasingly involved in mediation between the parties to the conflict since the outbreak of violence. Its efforts were successful to convince the two sides to adhere to a cease-fire pending a political solution to the conflict.

In Côte d'Ivoire, ECOMOG was deployed to monitor the cease-fire. Despite its delay in the generation of forces for the operation, it has efficiently contributed the stabilization of this country by separating the belligerents and halting the fighting. ECOMOG was deployed in Liberia as a vanguard force from August 4, 2004 to October 1, 2004, the time it took to transfer authority to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The first ECOMOG peacekeepers were drawn from the UN Mission in Sierra Leone and used by the UN resources for their initial deployment in Liberia. During this period, ECOMOG had contributed efficiently to the stabilization of key areas in this country. It had secured the ceasefire between the fighting parties, assisted to the hand over of power by Charles Taylor and contributed in ensuring a secure environment for the transit and delivery of humanitarian assistance in a devastated country.

During these interventions, ECOWAS/ECOMOG overcame most of structural and organizational shortcomings witnessed during the first interventions. However, the financial and logistical problems persisted. ECOWAS remains unable to respond to the needs of its forces in term of financial and logistical resources. In Côte d'Ivoire, the problem of generation of forces and the delay of their deployment were caused mainly by

the lack of financial and logistical resources. ECOWAS relied heavily on external assistance and support to deploy its forces in this country. The same handicap was witnessed in Liberia where, without logistical support from the US, ECOMOG could not have completed its assigned mission efficiently.

Over the last fifteen years, ECOWAS had steadily evolved, through the two phases of interventions, to respond to regional crises more efficiently. The role of ECOWAS/ECOMOG in peacemaking and peacekeeping at the regional level dictated its sharing some responsibilities with the UN. However, ECOWAS/ECOMOG is still facing intractable financial and logistical problems to sustain its peacekeeping missions. Drawing upon the experience of past interventions, ECOWAS has been unable to sustain ECOMOG financially and logistically for more than one month at a time. For this reason, the financial and logistical support and expertise of the UN and the international community are vitally necessary to enhance future peace operations.

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