

Adedoyin Omede  
Copy  
Received 29-11-95

# African Journal of International Affairs & Development

## Commentaries

Jide Owoeye

New International Order: Prospects for  
International Understanding  
Nigeria's bid for UN Security Council Seat

Olu Sanu

## Articles

Mohammed El-Sayed

Salim

Olusola Ojo

\* Adedoyin Omede

Soji Akomolafe

Charles Ukeje

Rufa'i Alkali

Middle East & Africa: An Analysis of Regional  
Systems in Transition  
Africa and the Gulf Crisis  
Nigeria's Military-Security Role in Liberia  
France and Franco-phone Africa: into the 21st Century  
The Organised Private Sector & Foreign Policy  
Lessons of the Green Revolution in Asia

## Reviews

W. Alade Fawole

Charles Ukeje

Lekan Aransi

Charles Ukeje

Abiodun Alao's Brothers at War: Dissidence and  
Rebellion in Southern Africa  
Okwudiba Nnoli's Dead End to Nigeria's  
Development

Philip Mawhood's Local Government in the  
Third World: Experiences of Decentralisation  
in Tropical Africa (ed.)

Jide Owoeye's Nigeria in International Institutions  
(ed.)

## book Shelf

## Editors :

Jide Owoeye, Peyibomi Airewele & Charles Ukeje

ISSN: 117-272X Vol.1. No.1 June 1995

African Journal of  
***International Affairs***  
**&**  
***Development***

***Commentaries***

*Jide Owoeye*  
*Olu Sanu*

New International Order: Prospects for International Understanding  
Nigeria's bid for UN Security Council Seat

***Articles***

*Mohammed El-Sayed*  
*Salim*  
*Olusola Ojo*  
*Adedoyin Omede*  
*Soji Akomolafe*  
*Charles Ukeje*  
*Rufa'i Alkali*

Middle East & Africa: An Analysis of Regional Systems in Transition  
Africa and the Gulf Crisis  
Nigeria's Military-Security Role in Liberia  
France and Franco-phone Africa: into the 21st Century  
The Organised Private Sector & Foreign Policy  
Lessons of the Green Revolution in Asia

***Reviews***

*W. Alade Fawole*  
*Charles Ukeje*  
*Lekan Aransi*  
*Charles Ukeje*

*Abiodun Alao's* Brothers at War: Dissidence and Rebellion in Southern Africa  
*Okwudiba Nnoli's* Dead End to Nigeria's Development  
*Philip Mawhood's* Local Government in the Third World: Experiences of Decentralisation in Tropical Africa (ed.)  
*Jide Owoeye's* Nigeria in International Institutions (ed.)

***book Shelf***



# ***African Journal of International Affairs and Development***

ISSN 117-272x

## **Editorial Board of Advisors**

Robert Scalapino, Professor, Inst. of East Asian Studies Univ. of California, Berkeley  
Olu Sanu, former Career Diplomat and Ambassador of Nigeria  
Wale Omole, Professor and Vice-Chancellor, Obafemi Awolowo University  
M.A. Adelabu, University Librarian, Obafemi Awolowo University  
Ibrahim Gambari, Prof. and Nigeria's Perm. Rep. to the U.N. New York  
Sara Pienaar, *Ph.D.*, National Director, The South African Inst. of Int. Affairs.  
Adamu Aliu, C.E.O. Nigerian National Development Company  
Tunde Adelaja, Director, Rosabel Advertising Limited  
Ali Mazrui, Professor & Director Inst. of Global Gen. Studies, New York  
Adekunle Ajala, Professor, Nigerian Inst. of International Affairs  
Yuzo Itagaki, Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo  
Ibrahim James, Professor of History University of Jos  
Reu, Joung – Yole *Ph.D.*, President, Korea Inst. of the Middle East & Africa  
Pieter Esternhuysen, Head: Publications, Africa Institute of South-Africa Pretoria

## **Associate Editors**

Anthoni Van Nieuwkerk, *Ph.D.*, Foundation for Global Dialogue Braamfontein, Johannesburg  
Mohammed El-Sayed Salim, *Ph.D.*, Faculty of Economics, Cairo University  
G.B. Alli Balogun *Ph.D.*, Eko International Bank Lagos  
Moustafa Hassouna *Ph.D.*, Inst. of Diplomacy & Int. Studies Univ. of Nairobi.  
O. Akomolafe, *Ph.D.*, Dept. of Int. Relations, Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem.  
Biodun Alao, *Ph.D* Centre for Deference Studies, King's College, London.

## **Editorial Board**

Editor-In-Chief:	Jide Owwoye <i>Ph.D.</i>
Assistant Editor:	Peyibomi Airewele <i>Ph.D.</i>
Reviews Editors:	Charles Ukeje <i>Msc</i> Ebenezer Obadare <i>Msc.</i>

*Published by College Press Ltd., for Asia-Africa Study Group, Department of International Relations, Obafemi Awolowo University.*

*All Correspondence to the Editor-In-Chief, University P.O. Box 1014, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.  
Tel.: 036-232695, Fax: 036- 232695, 02-2410000*

## Acknowledgement

*The Editorial Board of the African Journal of International Affairs and Development wishes to thank the following whose support made the publication of this journal possible: First Bank of Nigeria Plc; International Breweries Plc; Rosabel Advertising Ltd; Abuja Sheraton Hotels and Towers; Guaranty Trust Bank Ltd; FSB International Bank Plc; Fidelity Union Merchant Bank Ltd; SO & U; Wema Bank Plc.*

### ***New Books from COLLEGE PRESS Ltd.***

**1. *Understanding the New World Order* ISBN: 978-2194-02-6 (Pb) 300pp**

*Edited by Jide Owoeye*

Twenty-one experts analyse the origin and consequences of the post cold war international order for the major countries, regions and blocs both at the centres and peripheries of the new global configuration. **Contributors:** *Butros Ghali, Zbigniew Brezinski, Bolaji Akinyemi, James Ritcher, Noam Chomsky, Young Whan Kihl, Benedicts Anderson, Colin Legum, Yochi Funabashi, Cristopher Coker, Kimberly Elliot, James Mayall, Morten Ougaard, James Schelesinger, Arie Kacowicz, Jorgen Pederson, Francois Heisbourg, James Anderson, Walden Bello, Eric Blantz and Jide Owoeye*

**2. *Nigeria in International Institutions* ISBN: 978-2194-00-x (Pb) 200pp**

*Published in-Association with the Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA)*

*Edited by Jide Owoeye*

This volume explores how international institutions like the UN, IMF, Commonwealth, OAU, OPEC, ECOWAS etc., of which Nigeria is a member, have been coping with challenges in the past. More relevantly, what diplomatic strategies has Nigeria employed to ensure that its national interests are protected as it participates in these multilateral agencies? And, in the more complex emerging post cold world order, how will Nigeria deal with the new challenges in these international institutions? What domestic resources can it mobilize to register a more effective participation in international organisations? This and other questions are addressed very critically in this new book. **Contributors:** *Humphery Asobie, George Obiozor, R.A. Akindele, Tunde Adeniran, Jinmi Adisa, Ogban Iyam, Sola Akinrinade, Said Adejumo, Musa Abutudu, Nereus Nwosu and Okechukwu Ibeanu, Amadu Sesay and Jide Owoeye*

**3. *Japan's Policy in Africa***

**ISBN: 978-2194-04-2 200pp**

*By Jide Owoeye*

This analytical and empirical study traces antecedents to the development of Japan African policy and considers the implications of Japan's imperial past vis-a-vis Africa's colonial legacy for the shaping of that policy. It weighs relevant domestic and external factors which impinge on the political actors both in Japan and Africa. It examines the evolution of foreign diplomacy in Japan, economic relations, cultural and psychological dimensions. Finally, it speculates on the future role of Japan in Africa's international economic and political relations.

**Orders to**

***College Press Ltd***

27 Aare Avenue, New Bodija  
Secretariat P.O. Box 30678,  
Ibadan, Nigeria. Fax Msg. 02 2410000

University P.O.Box 1014  
Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

# Nigeria's Military-Security Role in Liberia

by

Adedoyin Jolaade Omede<sup>\*</sup>

## Abstract

**T**he efforts made by members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) towards keeping the peace in war torn Liberia, witnessed the formation of the community's monitoring (peace-keeping) group otherwise known as ECOMOG. In discharging their functions, member countries had to send in troops (men), materials, and other logistic support. The onus of this mission however, was on Nigeria which was the initiator of peace-keeping force. Through this process, the Nigeria military was deployed along with the armed forces of other member countries to maintain and later, enforce the peace in Liberia. Despite the overwhelming military presence of the Nigerian armed forces, the Liberian crisis remains a 'mission-impossible'. This experience is therefore significant in the consideration of future attempts at peace building in which Nigeria would play a leading role.

## Introduction

When the Liberian crisis attracted international attention in 1990, Nigeria, as a prominent member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) initiated the formation and deployment of a peace-keeping force referred to as the ECOWAS monitoring group (ECOMOG) to stem the carnage in that country. However, the ECOMOG peace-keeping mandate was later changed to that of peace-enforcement. This change in mandate and the earlier perception of the non-neutrality of the Nigerian-led ECOMOG actually prolonged the war in Liberia even after President Samuel Doe, the initial target of the main opposition group had been eliminated.

At the thirteenth (13th) session of the ECOWAS meeting held from the 28 - 30 of May 1990 in Banjul, the Gambia, Nigeria proposed to the community's standing mediation committee the need for the formation of an ECOWAS cease-fire monitoring group (ECOMOG), to resolve the crisis in Liberia. The rationale for the formation of ECOMOG was that the force will not only restore peace and normalcy to Liberia, but will also act as a monitoring force, and a buffer between the various warring factions in the Liberian conflict. Furthermore, the decision to set up ECOMOG was informed by the principle that regional stability,

unity, mutual trust and good-neighbourliness was necessary if the ultimate goal of harmonious and united West-African society is ever to be achieved<sup>1</sup>. Hence, according to the laid down objectives of the ECOMOG, it is obvious that the formation of the peace-keeping force was based on the concepts of collective regional security, crisis management, conflict resolution and peace-keeping.

## African Concept of Collective Regional Security

Over the years there has been various calls for the formation of an African High Command, a Pan-African Defence Force (PADF) and ECOWAS defence pact that would provide for the collective defence and the protection of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of African states<sup>2</sup>. These demands for an African collective security is what has been summed up as African collective security. The collective 'regional' security is the military aspect of the pan-Africanist concept which implies, a voluntary association of states in which the countries involved pledge themselves to use their military power against any other member state that commits any acts of aggression within the region.

The African concept of collective security, just like

---

*Mrs. Omede, doctoral candidate at the University of Lagos is a lecturer in Political Science at the University of Ilorin where she specialises in Strategic Studies.*

that of the UN which makes provisions for regional security organizations, is based on the need for states to, 'provide a conflict management method that can be utilized in a relatively peaceful environment and which can be achieved through systematically institutionalized procedures for dealing with unacceptable international behaviour<sup>3</sup>. Hence, in the Pan-African context, security is seen in the light of the defence of Africa's independence and solidarity with emphasis on the notion that:

*Africa's security is national security of all African countries, since any threat to African security represents direct or indirect threat to all Africans. (As such), Pan-Africanism shapes the strategic and foreign policies of African states. As a security doctrine and movement, it provides African states with a common focus and a common forum in security development matters as well as foreign policy...<sup>5</sup>.*

African leaders have established appropriate institutionalized organs within the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and ECOWAS for resolving and managing perennial conflicts in the region such as border clashes, ethnic/tribal differences, and political power rivalries. The African attempt at conflict resolution and crisis management is underscored by certain basic attitudes and orientations, that are embodied in the OAU charter. These attitudes include, the unique inclination to combine Pan-Africanism with nationalism, a quest for autonomy in solving African problems and, a drive to liberate the entire African continent from colonialism and racial discrimination<sup>6</sup>.

The process of conflict resolution and crisis management among West African states was however modified in the 'ECOWAS Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance and Defence'. This particular protocol resolves that 'any armed threat or aggression directed against any member state shall constitute a threat or aggression to the entire community<sup>7</sup>'. Under the terms of the protocol, it is stipulated that:

*Mutual aid and assistance would be given to any member state through that Allied Armed Forces (AAFC) which would be composed of units of the armed forces of member state assigned to such duties<sup>8</sup>.*

In addition, ECOWAS members further agreed that:

*In case of internal conflict within any member state engineered and supported actively from*

*outside, likely to endanger the security and peace of the entire community ... The Authority (of Heads of state and Government of ECOWAS) shall appreciate and decide on this situation in full collaboration with the authority of the members-state or states concerned<sup>9</sup>.*

In addition to this protocol, the OAU and ECOWAS have in their various organizational capacities created mediation committees that were aimed at discouraging competitive external intervention and at preventing the transformation of internal conflict into an international conflict<sup>10</sup>. Hence, from the on-going discussion, we can thus argue that the establishment of an ECOWAS standing mediation committee and the subsequent creation of the ECOMOG forms part of an ongoing attempt by African leaders towards resolving conflicts and managing crisis within the sub-region<sup>1</sup>.

### **ECOMOG: Structure and Objectives**

Basically, the concept of peace-keeping involves the maintenance of international peace and security with the ultimate purpose of reducing tension, localizing conflicts, diminishing the risk of direct involvement by a large number of countries, saving vast material resources and irreplaceable human lives<sup>12</sup>. As such, peace-keeping operations like those embarked upon by the UNO and currently by ECOWAS through ECOMOG forces in Liberia, involves the dispatch of military or civilian officials to 'conflict areas to disengage the warring sides, to monitor a cease fire and to ensure compliance with cease fire modalities<sup>13</sup>.

However, it should be noted that the purpose of a peace-keeping operation in ensuring international peace and security is further geared towards providing an 'indispensable mechanism for regulating and settling conflicts (international and regional conflicts)<sup>14</sup>. Thus, peace-keeping has become a useful and highly visible element of the efforts of nations in maintaining not only international peace, but also towards resolving conflicts amongst themselves, and the policing and facilitation of international law, thus, relieving the people of the world from unnecessary conflicts, excessive armaments and the constant threats of war<sup>15</sup>.

The purposes and objectives of the peace-keeping concept, like those of collective security and conflict resolution, was what motivated the ECOWAS leaders to form a peace-keeping mission such as the

ECOMOG, to help solve the quagmire in Liberia. However, the changing of the ECOMOG mandate from that of peace-keeping to peace-enforcement in September 1990 had serious consequences for the ECOWAS peace-keeping force.

The questions that this controversy generated includes the perception that ECOMOG was improperly constituted, and that the peace enforcement mandate flouted the patterns and procedures of peace-keeping regulations. However, to be able to attempt an evaluation of the operation of ECOMOG as a peace-keeping cum peace-enforcement force, the basic assumption; underlying similar operators need to be understood, and these include:

- a. The consent of all the warring factions involved in the conflict to the establishment of the operation, to its mandate, to its composition and to its appointed commanding officer.
- b. The need for a clear and practicable mandate.
- c. The continuing and strong support of the operation by the mandating authority (in case of ECOMOG, the support of all member countries).
- d. The non-use of force except in the last resort in self-defence which includes resistant's attempts to forceful means to prevent the peace-keeping force from discharging their duties.
- e. The willingness of troops contributing countries to provide adequate number of capable military personnel and to accept the degree of risk which the mandate and the situation demand, and,
- f. The willingness of the member states to make available the necessary and logistic support<sup>16</sup>.

When the ECOMOG was established at the 13th session of the ECOWAS in Banjul, Gambia, it was tasked with the following responsibilities:

- a. Conducting military operations for the purpose of monitoring cease-fire, and restoring law and order to create the necessary conditions for free and fair elections.
- b. Assisting the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee in supervising the implementation and ensuring compliance by the warring factors with the provision of the cease-fire throughout the territory of Liberia.
- c. Remaining in Liberia if necessary until the

successful holding of general elections and the installation of an elected government<sup>17</sup>.

However, for ECOMOG, to be able to carry out its assigned functions more effectively, all parties to the Liberian conflict were directed by the Article of the cease-fire decision to among all others, comply with the following instructions:

- a. Cease all activities of a military and paramilitary nature as well as all acts of violence.
- b. Surrender all arms and ammunition to ECOMOG.
- c. Refrain from importing or acquiring or assisting or encouraging the importation and acquisition of weapons of war materials.
- d. Fully cooperate with ECOWAS standing mediation committee and ECOMOG for the maintenance of the cease-fire and the restoration of law and order<sup>18</sup>.

Alas, these rules and regulations were not to be respected by the main opposition group - the Charles Taylor led National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Taylor, who believed that the ECOMOG should not be in the country because of the alleged Nigerian President's support for the late Liberian President Samuel Doe, resorted to the use of artillery and infantry assault on ECOMOG troops. In fact, the NPFL assault was to continue for a long time during which all the peace initiatives by both the ECOWAS and ECOMOG was flagrantly violated by all the warring factions, and in particular, the NPFL<sup>19</sup>.

Consequently, in order to stem the offensive and aggressive assault by the NPFL, ECOWAS convened a peace meeting on the 29 - 30 of June 1991 at Yamoussoukro in Cote D'Ivoire extending to the 29 - 30 October of the same year<sup>20</sup>. In addition a one-day extra-ordinary summit of the ECOWAS was held in Cotonou, the Republic of Benin in October 1991, when it was discovered that the NPFL refused to abide by the Yamoussoukro peace-plans. More importantly, the Cotonou summit 'officially' directed ECOMOG to ensure that the Yamoussoukro peace-plan is respected by all the Liberian warring factions. By this instruction however, ECOMOG was given the mandate to enforce peace and security in Liberia, and more importantly, ensure that the NPFL abide by the economic sanctions imposed upon it at the 15th summit of the ECOWAS in Dakar in August 1992.

The 'official' ECOWAS directive backing the

peace- enforcement mandate and the new mandate itself has generated heated controversies vis-a-vis the continued stay of ECOMOG in Liberia. Critics of the peace enforcement mandate pointed out that ECOMOG is fast constituting itself into an Army of occupation<sup>21</sup>. On the contrary however, the Nigerian authorities believed that the peace enforcement mandate, and the prolonged stay of ECOMOG in Liberia was needed for the political stability and security of the West Africa sub-region. To buttress this view, the former Nigerian Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. Gen. Salihu Ibrahim reiterated that:

*In a peace-keeping operation, you cannot draw the line neatly because the warring factions may not have quite accepted peace yet. When that point of agreement has been reached, then we can safely withdraw and have at the back of our mind that there is peace in that country (Liberia) and subsequently in West Africa<sup>22</sup>.*

Finally, the former Nigerian Foreign Affairs Minister Maj-Gen., Ike Nwachukwu (rtd) reiterated that 'Nigeria will remain in Liberia until peace and sanity reigns in that country and until a democratically elected government is in place there<sup>23</sup>. However, it is pertinent to note that ECOWAS heads of states, in their bid to resolve the Liberian crisis have initiated several peace conferences and summits both within the sub-region and one in Geneva. Prominent among these peace initiatives are:

- a. The thirteenth summit of the Authority of Heads of States and Government of the ECOWAS held from 28 - 30 May, 1990 in Banjul, Gambia which established the ECOWAS standing mediation committee for the purpose of providing an appropriate mechanism for resolving the situation.
- b. The July 5-20 1990 ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee peace negotiations between the warring parties in Freetown, Sierra-Leone.
- c. The August 6-7, 1990 first session of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee held at the Kairaba conference center, Banjul, Gambia which created the ECOMOG for the purpose of keeping the peace, restoring law and order and ensuring that the cease fire is respected.
- d. The August 30, 1990 ECOWAS convened national conference in Banjul the Gambia, attended by the various interest groups,

political parties and warring parties in Liberia except the NPFL. At this conference, Dr. Amos Sawyer was elected as the interim President of Liberia.

- e. The November 27-28, 1990 First Extra-ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of States and Government held in Bamako, Mali which reiterated and endorsed the ECOWAS peace plan, thus calling on all member states to contribute forces to ECOWAS in order to enlarge its peace keeping capacity.
- f. The February 12-13, 1991 third summit of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee in Lome, Togo, setting up the conditions and procedures for the disarmament, encampment of all warring parties and the monitoring of the cease-fire agreement by ECOMOG.
- g. The Yamoussoukro I, II, III and IV of June 29-30, 1991; July 4-6, 1991; September 16-17, 1991 and October 29-30, 1991 respectively. The final communique of the Yamoussoukro agreement upheld the modalities for disarmament and encampment, in addition to envisaging a 60 day period during which peace and security would return to the war torn country.
- h. The April 6-7, 1992 Geneva meeting of the informal consultative group of the ECOWAS Committee of Five on Liberia. At this meeting, it was agreed that ECOMOG should create a buffer zone along the Liberia-Sierra Leone border, while a revised program for the implementation of the earlier Yamoussoukro peace plans was also agreed upon.
- i. The July 27-29, 1992 15th session of the Authority of Heads of States and Government held in Dakar Senegal, stipulated a 30-day ultimatum to the NPFL to comply with the Yamoussoukro Accords, failure of which comprehensive sanctions would be imposed on the NPFL<sup>24</sup>.
- j. The July 25 1993 ECOWAS Peace Conference on Liberia in Cotonou, Republic of Benin.



## Nigeria's Role

Controversial as it may be, Abuja's view of Nigeria's initiative in Liberia considers that move as being perfectly consistent with the country's national interests, military tradition and defence of the nation's territorial integrity and sovereignty<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, the initiative has also been seen as a new thrust in Nigeria's foreign policy orientations, General Babangida, former Nigerian military president and the initiator of the peace-keeping force, asserted that:

*Nigeria has evolved to the point of acceptance of the fact and reality that the conduct of our international relations and foreign policy may at times involve certain contractual military and other obligations beyond our borders<sup>26</sup>.*

In addition to projecting the new international image of leadership within the sub-region, Nigeria's role in keeping the peace in Liberia has further been described as fulfilling a noble task to mankind and to mother Africa. Speaking further on the Nigerian-led ECOMOG intervention in the Liberia crisis, General Babangida wondered:

*Should the refusal of one faction no matter how persuasive were its arguments prevail over the will of all other groups with legitimate interest in the conflict in Liberia? Or would the position of ECOWAS be more noble and much more better understood if because (sic) of one function refused to intervene... and abandon Liberians to their fate<sup>27</sup>.*

On why Nigeria troops were deployed to Liberia, he opined that:

*Unless arrested, the carnage in that country (Liberia) could have spilled over to neighbouring countries, leading to external non-African intervention and thereby posing a security threat to us all. We therefore decided to send our troops to participate in this laudable peace keeping mission... We have repeatedly declared that Nigeria has no territorial interest in that country or indeed any where outside our own border<sup>28</sup>.*

Furthermore, the Nigerian leadership perceived the nation's initiative at peace-keeping in Liberia as a novel approach to conflict resolution within the sub-region. Rtd. Gen. Yakubu Gowon, Nigeria's former head of state under whose regime the nation witnessed a civil-war between 1967 and 1970, explained that the Nigerian move at solving the crisis in Liberia is quite commendable. General

Gowon argued:

*Any responsible leader in a country like Nigeria... that is faced with a problem in the region that may threaten the existence of a member country and possibly may spread to others should stop it because if not stopped, it could set entire region ablaze with instability, revolution etc.<sup>29</sup>.*

Finally, the present Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) - Maj. Gen. Abdusalam Abubakar also stressed on the fact that, Nigeria's presence in Liberia is perfectly consistent with the country's foreign policy objectives which makes Africa its centrepiece. According to him,

*Nigeria's heavy human and material commitments in ECOMOG and military cooperation in the field of training and developments with other African countries is consistent with Nigeria's policy of being our brothers keeper. As such, it is imperative that the security and peace challenges in Africa today demands the aggressive pursuit of Nigeria's foreign policy<sup>30</sup>.*

The formation of the ECOMOG peace keeping was backed up by the deployment of military personnel from contributing countries. This also includes equipment and other logistic support. In fulfilling its own part of the bargain, the Nigerian government gave a marching order to the Nigerian military on 5th of August 1990, directing it to form a battalion to represent the country in the proposed ECOMOG operations. However, the actual formation of the Nigerian Battalion called (NIBATT -1) took off on the 12th of August 1990.

The ECOMOG mission code-named 'OPERATION LIBERTY' witnessed the formation of the Nigerian contingent (NIGCON) and was the first military Battgalion (NIBATT -1) to be sent to Liberia. It is felt within the Nigerian Army, that the ECOMOG mission will be used as a testing ground for both the effectiveness and viability of its arsenal, and act also as deterrent to any hypothetical enemy.

Consequent upon the formation of NIBATT-1, the Battalion group was composed of the following units:

- a. The 123 Guards Battalion.
- b. One Reconnaissance Company (Rece Coy)
- c. One Artillery Battery and
- d. One Engineering Platoon<sup>31</sup>

It is interesting that the *modus operandi* of Nigerias' military contingent in Liberia was

somewhat sharpened by the forceful posture of the NPFL from which it experienced immediate and devastating artillery assault on arrival. Since then, it was dragged into a long drawn 'battle' with the NPFL forces. It is found that the fortunes of NIBATT- 1 in Liberia, particularly its inability to disarm and encamp the warring factions were due to deficiencies in the area of tactics, choice of weapons, training, planning, strategy and logistics.

In terms of tactics, NIBATT-1 lacked the necessary combat intelligence and information network that could have acquainted it properly with the military capabilities of the insurgent forces, particularly NPFL. Besides, knowledge of the topography and terrain of Liberia was seriously lacking. No wonder NIBATT-1 had to rely on unvetted locals for the information about the NPFL's position and combat capabilities. In addition, the contingent failed to adopt guerilla or other non- conventional warfare which ironically was the tactics that the NPFL was most competent in. As a result of this shortcomings, the ECOMOG troops suffered lots of casualties in the hands of the NPFL 'guerilla' forces<sup>32</sup>.

In the of choice of weapons, analysis of the NIBATT-1 experience revealed that, most of the weapons employed by the Nigerian contingent proved very ineffective towards ending the Liberian crisis. Substantial evidence for instance have shown that the use of the FN rifle by the NIBATT-1 proved to be too cumbersome, while the use of the B10 (82mm) anti-tank gun was found not very suitable for a mobile operation like the Liberian crisis. Also, the general purpose machine gun (GPMG) used by NIBATT-1 was very problematic. The GPMG lacked the necessary replenishment of automatic links (bullets), and troops had to resort to the use of 'used' links for refilling. In addition, the contingent relied on the use of the reconnaissance (recco) vehicles (which were inadequate for the movement of Nigerian troops into the Liberian hinterland) instead of the armoured personnel carriers (APC). Besides, ammunition were either expired or in short supply<sup>33</sup>.

In the area of training, planning and preparations for the peace- keeping mission, the NIBATT-1 was found to be very deficient. Troops drawn from the various units were not given enough opportunity to train and interact together. Physical training, battle drills and medical fitness training were not undertaken by the troops. The implications of these lack of unpreparedness includes:

- a. Uncoordinated combined arms training resulting in the non-harmonization of the various units forming the NIBATT-1.
- b. Inadequate mobilization of necessary equipment for the operation. For instance, the non-integration of the different units resulted in the use of un-coordinated and incompactible communication equipment, which further reflects the non-standardization of arms procurement in the Nigerian military communication gadgets.
- c. Lack of esprit-de-corps among officers and men was particularly glaring and this hampered command and control the of battalion.
- d. Lack of proper logistic planning and execution resulted in inadequate feeding of troops, shortage of medical support, uniforms and even funds. In fact, troops in most cases had to be fed only once a day, with the quantity and quality of food intake falling below acceptable world standard<sup>34</sup>.
- e. Lack of a clear-cut burial policy. Dead Nigerian troops had to be transported back home and hurriedly buried en-masse. This is certainly depressing for troop morale and integrity of their national assignment.

Other arms of the military that is, the Nigerian Navy (NN) and the Nigerian Air-force (NAF) were also found to be deficient in their supportive roles. Though the Nigerian Navy provided logistic support in terms of ferrying troops and materials between Lagos - Freetown - Monrovia, it was discovered that most of the equipment and armaments of the Navy were out of order. As for the Nigerian Air Force (NAF), it was evidenced that the organization provided logistic and close air support through airlifts, aircraft reconnaissance and aerial bombardment of NPFL bases. Nevertheless it was also revealed that NAF's air-support were sometimes belated. This however, has been attributed to the limitations of the C-130 aircraft used by the Nigerian Air Forces<sup>35</sup>.

Notwithstanding, the shortcomings of most of the weapons used by the Nigerian contingent at the onset of the peace-keeping mission in Liberia, evidence indicate that some weapons such as the recoiled propelled grenade (RPG) 7 and the B-10 guns were very effective in curtailing the NPFL assaults. The RPG 7 was very effective in terms of

anti-tank and anti-personnel operations, while the B-10 (82mm) anti-tank guns was most effective as a defensive weapon. In fact, the 'enemy' that is, the NPFL forces, were said to 'dread' the RPG7<sup>36</sup>.

Despite the relative effectiveness and display of military superiority and fire power by NIBATT-1, the Nigeria-led ECOMOG did not and was not able to disarm and encamp the NPFL rebel forces. This inability, has been ascribed to the NPFL's well-equipped armoury comprising of modern armaments and other anti-personnel weapons (APW).

Indeed, investigations revealed that the NPFL forces are well-equipped with weapons such as, the Assaults Rifles; RPG's Mortars; Machine Guns (MG); MOWAC and other sophisticated weapons supplied by Libya, France and Germany through Burkina Faso and Cote D'Ivoire. In addition, the NPFL also has in its arsenal the 5.56mm calibre weapons used against the ECOMOG at the onset of the cross-fire between the two groups. The NPFL also acquired some long-range missile launchers, while it amassed a new offensive force of one thousand and seven hundred (1,700) men in Bensonville aimed at boosting-up its estimated force of 20,000 troops<sup>37</sup>.

To further build up its military might and to effectively curtail the ECOMOG's offensive, the NPFL has continued to receive arms from various countries sympathetic to its cause. For instance, in the second week of October 1992, the NPFL received a ship-load of consignment of arms and ammunition from undisclosed sources. The armaments received includes, some twenty (20) armoured personnel carriers (APC) and several tonnes of artillery pieces; a consignment of Four (4) Tanks and a number of anti-aircraft missiles (AAM) which were off-loaded to the NPFL through the port of Buchanan. Also, an unmarked Russian made aircraft discharged artillery weapons that included large numbers of M16 and AK-47 assault rifles<sup>38</sup>.

The constant supplies of arms and ammunitions to the NPFL forces further complicated the ECOMOG's objectives of disarming and encampment of all warring factions in Liberia. One of the former field commanders of ECOMOG in Liberia Major General Adetunji Olurin explained that the Charles Taylor led NPFL had acquired enough arms and ammunition within the two years that ECOMOG was still operating as an observer of the peace process. Accordingly, Taylor was able to get ammunitions into his territory successfully

because ECOMOG's mandate at that time was to keep the peace in Liberia. The commander further explained that the disarmament and encampment of the warring factions would have been completed had it not been for the recalcitrant behaviour of Taylor-leader of the NPFL - who continued to launch attacks on ECOMOG<sup>39</sup>.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Nigeria's peace-keeping cum peace-enforcement role in Liberia would appear to have received less commendation than criticism. To begin with, the non-condemnation of human rights violation of late President Samuel Doe by Nigerian leaders has irked observers who argue that had the human rights violations and the excesses of the Doe's regime been curtailed, the Liberian situation might not have deteriorated into such a crisis.

Second, the timing, formation and deployment of the Nigeria led ECOMOG seemed very much a deviation from the normal peace-keeping principles which stipulates that, a peace-keeping force could be sent to troubled spots only when thus had already been agreed upon by the disputants. Moreover, the formation of the ECOMOG runs counter to the constitutional procedures of the ECOWAS under whose auspices it operated. The ECOWAS procedure requires that, invitations to normal summit be sent out by the Chairman after which a quorum will be established at the next meeting. Following this, the meeting of the council of ministers would then meet to prepare the ground for the summit of the Heads of States and Governments of the ECOWAS. Thus Nigeria's intervention appears suspect, particularly when viewed against the background of the open friendship between Babangida and Doe as well as the searing perception that like Doe, the political leaders of countries contribution to ECOMOG were an 'alignment of reactionary regimes with the purpose of rescuing a repressive dictatorship that had lost legitimacy and control of the apparatus of state power'<sup>40</sup>. Hence their actions inevitably engendered a stalemated offensive resulting in the wearing out of ECOMOG which consequently suffered unacceptable level of casualty - a development which not only threatened a division in ECOWAS itself but also led to the widespread advocacy particularly in Nigeria, that the mission be called off.

Admittedly, this advocacy had other premises. It

is felt, for instance, that the withdrawal of ECOMOG would enable the various warring factions in Liberia to come up with an 'endogenously derived' solution to their problems. Apart from the withdrawal option, it has also been suggested that the interim government be reconstituted so as to include and incorporate all the warring factions such as the NPFL, the United Movement for the Independent of Liberia (ULIMO), the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), and the remnants of Late President Doe's Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)<sup>41</sup>.

In spite of the implications listed above, the fact remains that ECOMOG is still enforcing the peace in Liberia. The international community - the United Nations (UNO) in particular is yet to deploy its troops to Liberia. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that the ECOMOG peace-keeping mission has brought 'relative security' to Liberia thus stemming the refugee problem and the flagrant human rights violations that characterised the initial situation in the country. To that extent, Nigeria's initiative at keeping the peace in Liberia, is incontrovertibly a bold attempt at maintaining peace and security within the sub-region in particular and Africa in general.

However, it is one's view that for any meaningful resolution of the Liberian crisis, Nigeria must ensure that the Charles Taylor-led NPFL is fully incorporated into the negotiations of the peace process. Nigerian leaders should ensure that dialogue and diplomacy majorly with the NPFL and other interest groups is carried out. Experiences of the recent past have vividly shown that force and military options cannot solve political problems at all times. In addition, we also believe that ECOMOG be 'upgraded' into a 'truly' multinational peace-keeping force. There is not much gain in retaining it as a Nigerian show' if it must acquire

the credibility and widespread regional acceptability it needs to function effectively.

Finally, we would recommend that in spearheading or actively involving itself in future sub-regional, regional or global peace-keeping mission, Nigeria should ensure that such efforts incorporate the following principles:

- a. The consideration of the willingness on the part of the various combatants in a crisis.
- b. Adopting a tight command and control between both the various warring factions and the peace-keepers themselves.
- c. An explicit declaration of the mandate of the peace-keeping operations that will reflect the political consensus behind the deployment of forces.
- d. Cognisance should be taken of the geography of the country where the peace-keepers are to be deployed.
- e. The neutrality of the peace-keepers should be ensured. They should not give room for doubts about their 'honest intentions' in such a mission.

Finally, future Nigerian initiatives at spearheading efforts at maintaining peace and security in the region or elsewhere, should be geared towards preventive diplomacy as an alternative to crisis diplomacy. This, should be the hallmark of its attempts at regional leadership. In so doing however, its limited economic and military capability dictates that it should endeavour to seek the moral, financial and logistic support of the relevant international organisations such as the OAU or UN. This will go a long way in enhancing the needed credibility and widespread acceptability for its attempts at peace building in the region.

## Notes

1. See *The official Journal of the ECOWAS*. Vol. 21, 1992. pp. 44-45
2. For full details, see the OAU charter on African Security and the ECOWAS Defence Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence, chapter 2, Art. 2, in *The Official Journal of the ECOWAS*. Vol. 3, June 1981, p. 9.
3. Mark R. Amistutz, *An Introduction to Political Science: The Management of Conflict*. (1982: Scott, Foresman and Co. Glenview, Illinois, USA). pp. 408-9.
4. Rodee C. Carlton et al., *Introduction to Political Science*. 4th Edition. (1983: McGraw Hill Inc. U.S.A.) p. 49-50.
5. See, *Le Monde*, May 28-29 1978. See also *African Research Bulletin*, 1-31 July, 1974 p. 4914. Also see, Kwame Nkrumah, *Spread of Freetown: A statement of African Ideology*. (1961: Praeger Pub. New

- York, USA), see the Chapter on Pan-Africanism.
6. Berhanykum Andemicheal, *Relations Between The O.A.U. and The U.N.* (1975: Africana Pub. Co. N.Y. USA) p. 9.
  7. See *the Journal of ECOWAS*, Vol. 3, June 1991. p.9
  8. *The Journal of ECOWAS*, p. 9.
  9. See The Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence. ECOWAS Secretariat, Lagos, 29 May 1981. See also, *The Official Journal of the ECOWAS*, Vol. 3., 1981. p.9
  10. Berhanykum Andemicheal, The OAU and UN, pp. 19-20.
  11. See The Final Communiqué of the First Session of the Community Standing Mediation Committee held in Banjul, the Gambia, 28-30 May, 1990, in *The Official Journal of the ECOWAS* Vol. 21, 1992. p. 41 and 47.
  12. Aleksandar M. Belonogov, 'Soviet Peace keeping Proposals' in *Survival* xxxii, Vol. 13, May/June 1990. pp. 206- 7.
  13. Aleksandar M. Belonogov, *Survival*, pp. 206-7.
  14. Augustus R. Norton and Thomas G. Weiss, Super-Powers and Peace-keepers, in *Survival* xxxii, Vol. 3, May/June 1990.
  15. Gustav Hagglund, Peace-keeping in a Modern War Zone, in *Survival* Ibid. pp. 247-8.
  16. Brain Urquhart, 'Beyond the Sheriffs Poss', in *Survival*, May/June 1990, Vol xxxii, no. 3. p. 198.
  17. See Article II of the ECOWAS Decision; A/Dec. 1/8/90 of the Community Standing Mediation Committee on the Cease-Fire and Establishment of an ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group for Liberia, in, *The Official Journal of the ECOWAS*. Vol. 231. 1992.
  18. See, *The Official Journal of the ECOWAS*, 1992. 9. 7.
  19. See, Omede, A.J., *Nigeria's Peace-keeping Initiative in West Africa: The Liberian Case Study*. A paper presented to the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences Seminar, University of Ilorin, Kwara state, Nigeria, 1993.
  20. For full detail, see The Final Communiqué of the Third Meeting of the Committee of Five on the Liberian Crisis Held in Yamoussoukro Cote D'Ivoire on the 29-30 October 1991, in *The Official Journal of the ECOWAS*. Ibid., pp. 22-26.
  21. *The African Guardian*, September 14, 1992. p.8.
  22. *The Newswatch* (Lagos) November 2, 1992. 9. 40
  23. *The African Guardian*, (Lagos) September 28, 1992. p. 26.
  24. See *The Official Journal of the ECOWAS*. Vol. 21, 1992.
  25. See, *The Soja Magazine* (A Nigerian Army Publication) Jan - Feb., 1991 Edition. p. 10.
  26. *The African Guardian* (Lagos) April 21 1991. p. 13.
  27. *The African Guardian* (Lagos) 1991. p. 13.
  28. See, *The African Guardian* (Lagos), April 21, p. 13.
  29. *The African Concord* (Lagos) August 10, 1992. p. 22.
  30. See, The Briefing of the Chief of Defence Staff on the occasion of signing a military training agreement with Sierra- Leone on Jan. 11 1994, in Lagos.
  31. Confidential Information Contained in a Nigerian Army Restricted Paper.
  32. Confidential Information.
  33. Confidential Information.
  34. Private Interviews.
  35. Confidential Information.
  37. Confidential Information. Also, some of the weapon types of the NPFL were gathered from some Soldiers who recently returned from Liberia.
  38. See *The African Guardian* (Lagos) of September 14th, 1992. p. 8.
  39. See The Full Text of the Address of the ECOMOG Field Commander to Newsmen at the ECOMOG Information Secretariat Lagos, Nigeria, on the 25 of January, 1993.
  40. *The African Guardian*, April 29, 1991. p. 16.
  41. See M.A. Vogt (ed.), *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt At Regional Peace-keeping*, (Lagos: Gabumo Pub. Co. Ltd., 1992) pp. 367 and 378.