

CHAPTER 4

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES

In the West Africa subregion, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has taken the lead—both diplomatically and militarily—in responding to crises. Implicit in this development is the recognition that neither the Organization of African Unity (OAU) nor the wider international community can summon the political will to respond meaningfully to armed conflict in West Africa. Seeking to fill in the void, ECOWAS has deployed three sizeable peace missions—first in Liberia, then in Sierra Leone, and most recently in Guinea-Bissau (see Annex B). In the process of fulfilling its new responsibilities, ECOWAS has undergone a significant transformation. In terms of its activities, goals, and priorities, ECOWAS today is a very different organization than the one that was established in 1975 with primarily economic functions.

Within ECOWAS, subregional rivalries have always threatened to undermine the organization's potential. Of the 16 ECOWAS member States (see Map 4.1), five are anglophone, nine are francophone, and two are lusophone (see Table 4.1). With some 90 per cent of the subregion's population and a significant market share, Nigeria leads the anglophone bloc. Among the anglophone ECOWAS members, Ghana also vies for a leadership position. The francophone States—led by Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal—have long been suspicious of Nigeria's intentions. They have sought to frustrate Abuja's hegemonic ambitions by withholding support for certain Nigerian-led "ECOWAS" initiatives. In addition, the francophone States have created rival economic organizations such as the now-defunct *Communauté économique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*, (CEAO), and its successor, the *Union économique monétaire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (UEMOA), as well as a defence and security-oriented organization known as the *Accord de non-agression et d'assistance en matière de défense* (ANAD).

Map 4.1

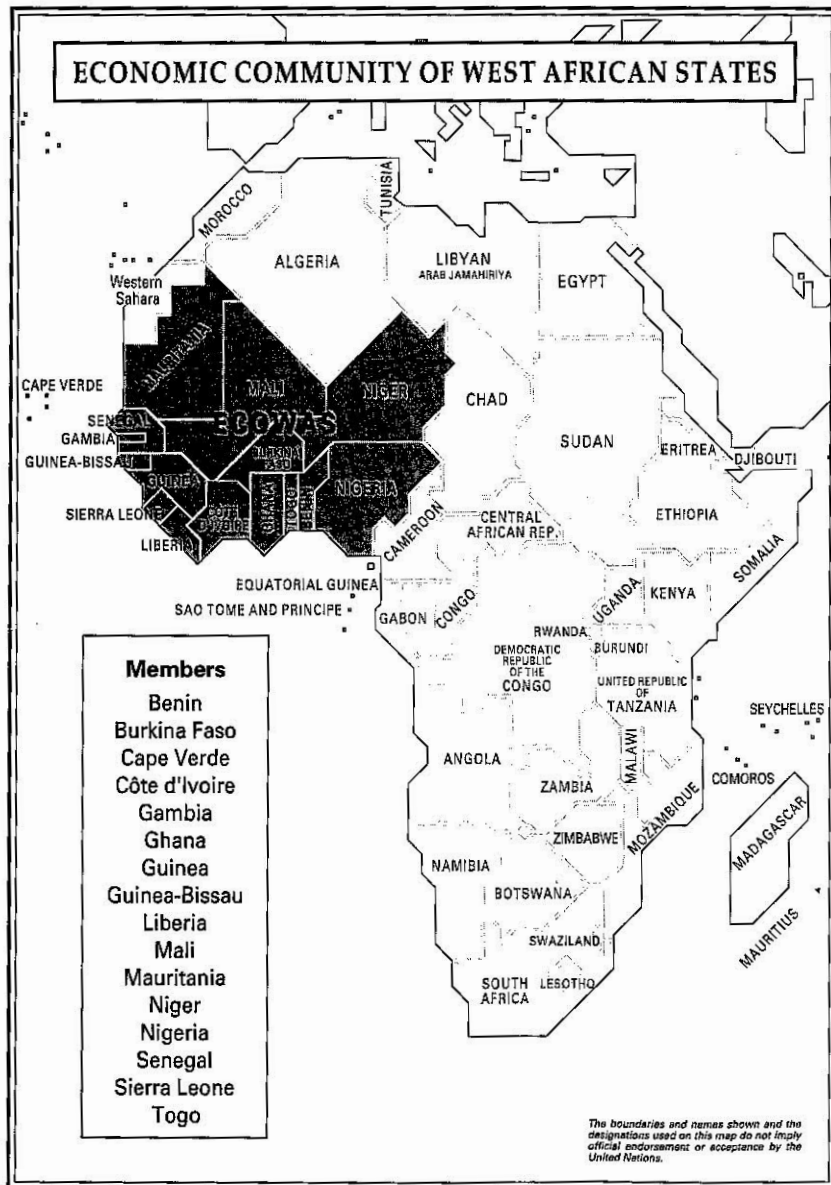


Table 4.1

Official languages of ECOWAS member States			
Country	English	French	Portuguese
Benin		✓	
Burkina Faso		✓	
Côte d'Ivoire		✓	
Cape Verde			✓
Gambia	✓		
Ghana	✓		
Guinea		✓	
Guinea-Bissau			✓
Liberia	✓		
Mali		✓	
Mauritania		*	
Niger		✓	
Nigeria	✓		
Senegal		✓	
Sierra Leone	✓		
Togo		✓	

* Mauritania's official language is Arabic. French is widely used in government circles, however.

Notwithstanding the divisive subregional politics, ECOWAS has managed to deploy three ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peace operations since 1990. Rather than building consensus and strengthening solidarity among ECOWAS member States, these missions have underscored and exacerbated subregional tensions. Moreover, ECOMOG initiatives have suffered from financial, institutional, and operational shortcomings. The intervention in Liberia was fraught with well-documented difficulties. Some implications of ECOMOG's unenviable undertaking in Sierra Leone are similarly troubling. Although aspects of its mission in Guinea-Bissau are also problematic, others illustrate the significant institutional strides that ECOWAS has made.

Attempting to redress past criticisms of ECOMOG operations, ECOWAS has recently taken steps to establish a permanent peace and security mechanism. In October 1998, the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government (the Authority) endorsed a draft framework for a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The proposed mechanism is designed to standardize ECOWAS involvement in peacekeeping and peace enforcement. This is a potentially significant development, as ECOWAS has never had a functioning security framework.

INITIAL EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A SECURITY FRAMEWORK

Economic Integration: a Useful Confidence-Building Measure

The impetus behind the creation of ECOWAS was the desire to develop an economic cooperation and integration scheme within West Africa. In April 1972, Nigeria and Togo agreed to form the nucleus of an all West African Economic Community (WAEC), which would remain open to other States of the subregion.¹ The two countries were ultimately able to

¹ Nigeria had first begun to advocate subregional economic integration in the early 1960s but recognized that the political atmosphere within the subregion was not then conducive to such a course of action. Francophone States in particular were wary of Nigerian domination and were therefore opposed to any all-West African economic
(continued...)

convince the other West African States to support an all-West African economic community, but only after francophone countries completed their plans for the CEAO. In December 1973, a ministerial conference on ECOWAS was held in Lomé, and a Summit of Heads of State and Government adopted a draft treaty on ECOWAS on 28 May 1975 in Lagos.² The Community aimed:

to promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity ... and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its peoples, of increasing and maintaining economic stability, of fostering closer relations among its members and of contributing to the progress and development of the African continent.³

Although economic considerations provided the unifying force behind the establishment of ECOWAS, security concerns weighed heavily in some countries' considerations.⁴ Nigeria, for example, had begun to view economic cooperation as a means to ensure its internal security in light of

¹ (...continued)

integration plan. In the early 1970s, most of the francophone States within the subregion affirmed their commitment to form the CEAO. Thus, Nigeria set about driving a wedge between its francophone neighbours and the other members of the proposed CEAO. Not surprisingly, in view of its April 1972 agreement with Nigeria to form a WAEC, Togo refused to sign the CEAO preliminary agreement in June 1972. See Olatunde J.B. Ojo, "Nigeria and the Formation of ECOWAS," *International Organization*, Vol. 34, No. 4, Autumn 1980, pp. 572-97.

² The fifteen signatories to the Treaty of Lagos were: Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey (now Benin), the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso). Cape Verde joined ECOWAS in 1977.

³ Article 2, *Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States*, 28 May 1975, reprinted in *International Legal Materials*, Vol. 14, 1975, p. 1,200.

⁴ For a contrasting view, see, for example, Olu Adeniji, "Mechanisms for Conflict Management in West Africa: Politics of Harmonization," *ACCORD Occasional Paper 1/97*, reprinted in *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, 15 October 1997, available on the Internet at <<<http://www-jha.sps.cam.ac.uk/a/a258.htm>>>, para. 10. According to Adeniji, when ECOWAS was created, economic development and state security were viewed as two distinct and unrelated domains. He claims that the issue of regional security was not considered relevant to the ECOWAS project. *Ibid.*

the destabilizing role some West African States had played in the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970).⁵ By reducing its neighbours' dependency on Europe and increasing subregional economic ties, Nigeria hoped to insulate itself against external aggression.⁶

Yet the 1975 ECOWAS Treaty did not include any security-related provisions, as political and ideological issues were still considered too divisive. Instead, economic issues were prioritized as a means of developing cooperative ties. According to Yakubu Gowon, then Nigeria's military ruler, the founders of ECOWAS "played down the political aspect when ECOWAS was formed" and instead endeavoured to build "a bridge of cooperation" by encouraging economic links.⁷

1978 and 1981 Protocols

The adoption of a Protocol on Non-Aggression in 1978 marked the first stage in the establishment of an ECOWAS security framework. The Protocol on Non-Aggression explicitly recognizes that ECOWAS "cannot attain its objectives save in an atmosphere of peace and harmonious understanding among the Member States of the Community."⁸ Accordingly, it obligates member States to "refrain from the threat or use of force or aggression ... against the territorial integrity or political independence of other Member States"⁹ and to "refrain from committing, encouraging or condoning acts of subversion, hostility or aggression against the territorial

⁵ Several of Nigeria's neighbours had supported the Biafran secessionists, both diplomatically and materially. See Clement E. Adibe, *Hegemony, Security and West African Integration: Nigeria, Ghana and the Transformation of ECOWAS*, unpublished dissertation, Queen's College, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, December 1994, p. 102, courtesy of author.

⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 102-03.

⁷ Interview with Yakubu Gowon, *Daily Times* (Lagos), 27 July 1992, p. 5, cited in *ibid.*, p. 111.

⁸ *ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression*, 22 April 1978, Preamble, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Article 1.

integrity or political independence of other Member States.”¹⁰ The Protocol on Non-Aggression was criticized as a mere aspiration, as it failed to create an institutional mechanism for responding to such proscribed acts. It did not allay growing fears of instability within the subregion.¹¹

By adopting the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence (Defence Protocol) in 1981, ECOWAS leaders sought to address many of the limitations inherent in the 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression.¹² Unlike the initial Protocol, it applies not only to conflicts between ECOWAS member States, but also to internal conflicts engineered and supported from outside and to aggressions perpetrated against an ECOWAS member State by non-ECOWAS countries.¹³ The Defence Protocol envisages an elaborate security framework.

The enforcement arm of the Mutual Assistance on Defence framework is the Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC), a standby force comprised of national units earmarked from ECOWAS member States and available in case of “any armed aggression.”¹⁴ The Protocol provides that the ECOWAS Authority would appoint a force commander to head the AAFC.¹⁵ In the situation where an external armed threat or aggression is directed against an ECOWAS member, the written request of the besieged

¹⁰ Ibid., Article 2.

¹¹ Clement Adibe, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Liberia*, Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 1996, p. 15.

¹² For a detailed explanation of the creation and structure of the Defence Protocol see Julius Emeka Okolo, “Securing West Africa: the ECOWAS defence pact,” *The World Today*, Vol. 39, No. 5, May 1983, pp. 177-84. The Defence Protocol entered into force in 1986.

¹³ Comfort Ero, “ECOWAS and Subregional Peacekeeping in Liberia,” *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, September 1995, available on the Internet at <<<http://www-jha.sps.cam.ac.uk/>>>, para. 12.

¹⁴ *ECOWAS Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence*, 29 May 1981, Article 13, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja. The Protocol defines aggression as “the use of armed force by any State against the sovereignty and territorial integrity or political independence of another State or by any other manner incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations and OAU.” Ibid., Article 1.

¹⁵ Ibid., Article 14.

state triggers AAFC action.¹⁶ In the case of a conflict between ECOWAS member States, the AAFC may be authorized to serve as an interposition force.¹⁷ Although the AAFC is forbidden to intervene in a “purely internal” conflict, it is authorized to respond “where an internal conflict in a Member State of the Community is actively maintained and sustained from the outside.”¹⁸

The envisaged Mutual Assistance on Defence framework also includes decision-making and administrative structures. The Defence Protocol provides for the creation of a ministerial-level Defence Council, tasked with completing the preparatory work on defence matters for Authority meetings, examining emergency situations, supervising the activities of the AAFC Force Commander, and submitting a report to the Authority at the end of any AAFC operation.¹⁹ The Protocol also envisions the establishment of a Defence Commission to deal with technical defence issues, comprised of Chiefs of Staff from each ECOWAS member State.²⁰ In addition, the Protocol foresees the appointment of a Deputy Executive Secretary (Military) at the ECOWAS Secretariat to support and oversee defence activities.²¹

Yet none of the structures described in the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence has become fully operational. Member States have never earmarked units of their national armed forces for participation in the AAFC. Neither the Defence Council nor the Defence Commission has been established.²² Moreover, a Deputy Executive Secretary (Military) has never been appointed at the ECOWAS Secretariat. Indeed, the Defence Protocol was regarded with considerable suspicion for a number of

¹⁶ Ibid., Article 16.

¹⁷ Ibid., Article 17.

¹⁸ Ibid., Article 18.

¹⁹ Ibid., Articles 7-10.

²⁰ Ibid., Article 11.

²¹ Ibid., Article 12.

²² Abass Bundu, “The case against intervention,” *West Africa*, 30 June-6 July 1997, p. 1040.

reasons²³ and had not been invoked—until 1990 with the advent of the Liberian civil war.

CREATION OF ECOMOG: AN IMPROVISED RESPONSE

The lack of a functioning security apparatus combined with a determination among a small group of ECOWAS States to intervene militarily in support of a fellow member provided the impetus for the creation of a new structure called ECOMOG. While the Defence Protocol remains in effect and is still cited as the textual authority for many ECOWAS initiatives, its security framework has been largely superseded. Despite the neutral and pacific connotations of its name, ECOMOG was, in effect, an intervention force in Liberia from the outset and it quickly assumed the task of peace enforcement. Although the name ECOMOG has been retained for the subsequent missions in Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, the circumstances surrounding the authorization and deployment of each of these forces have been drastically different. As of June 1999, ECOMOG had not been in accordance with a specific procedure.

Civil War in Liberia

Since Samuel Doe led a bloody military coup in 1980 to become Liberia's President, his rule had been increasingly oppressive and unpopular. Because of a widespread dislike for the minority Americo-Liberian elite that ruled the country since independence in 1847, Doe, though only a sergeant at the time, was welcomed warmly by a large segment of the Liberian population when he came to power. However, his support for his Krahn tribesmen at the expense of other, more sizeable indigenous ethnic groups in Liberia, his ruthlessness, and his incompetence made him increasingly feared and reviled. He did succeed, however, in

²³ These include a fear of Nigerian domination (particularly among the francophone States), a belief that the Defence Protocol encroaches upon a state's sovereign right to conclude defence agreements, and a concern about operational and logistical aspects of force deployment. See Adeniji, "Mechanisms for Conflict Management in West Africa: Politics of Harmonization," para. 4; see also Okolo, "Securing West Africa: the ECOWAS defence pact," pp. 181-84.

cultivating some loyal allies among regional Governments—especially Nigeria.

Although Doe had successfully scuttled numerous attempted coups during his rule,²⁴ the rebellion launched in December 1989 by Charles Taylor appeared ready to succeed. Taylor, though an Americo-Liberian, counted significant numbers of Gio and Mano among his supporters. Doe's Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) responded to the rebellion with characteristic brutality. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) swelled in size, gaining new recruits in the wake of the AFL's heavy-handed tactics and benefiting from Doe's unpopularity with the populace. Whereas Taylor began his putsch reportedly with fewer than 100 men, his NPFL soon numbered several thousand. Although the NPFL splintered when Prince Johnson, an NPFL commander, formed the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), Taylor controlled over 90 per cent of the country within months.²⁵ By April 1990, the NPFL had captured Buchanan, Liberia's second largest city, and Taylor was positioning his troops to lay siege to the capital, Monrovia. The AFL was no longer a unified force, and Doe had essentially barricaded himself in his Executive Mansion.

Standing Mediation Committee

It is against this backdrop that a desperate Doe turned to Nigeria's President Ibrahim Babangida to help him find a diplomatic—or barring that, a military—solution to save his Government. Babangida then attempted to enlist the support of ECOWAS member States to come to Doe's aid. The humanitarian imperative and concerns about the war's destabilizing effects on their own countries as well as regional security prompted several other ECOWAS member States to consider military intervention.

At Babangida's request, the ECOWAS Authority established the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) at the May 1990 ECOWAS Summit

²⁴ According to Doe, there had been 36 coup attempts during his presidency. Lynda Schuster, "The Final Days of Dr Doe," *Granta*, No. 48, Summer 1994, p. 66.

²⁵ Max Ahmadu Sesay, "Collective Security or Collective Disaster? Regional Peace-keeping in West Africa," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1995, pp. 205-06.

in Banjul. The Decision to create the Committee provides that “[w]here there is a dispute, the Chairman of the Authority shall convene the other members of the Committee as early as practicable and inform the member States involved in the dispute or conflict of the preparedness of the Committee to initiate mediation procedures.”²⁶ Although the Decision establishing the SMC makes no reference to a particular conflict, it is clear that the Committee was created to address the Liberian civil war. The SMC’s initial membership comprised the Gambia (as Chairman of the Authority), Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo.²⁷

The Standing Mediation Committee, in turn, established ECOMOG. After the May 1990 Summit, ECOWAS Executive Secretary Abass Bundu consulted with the parties to the Liberian conflict as well as the members of the SMC. A ministerial-level meeting of the SMC was then held in July, at which a Sub-Committee on Defence Matters was established to address military issues relating to a proposed military force.²⁸ The next month, the SMC Heads of State decided that:

ECOWAS shall establish, under the authority of the Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS and under the command of an ECOWAS Member State, a Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to be composed of military contingents drawn from the

²⁶ ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, Decision A/DEC.9/5/90, Relating to the Establishment of the Standing Mediation Committee, Banjul, 30 May 1990, Article 4, reprinted in M. Weller, (ed.), *Regional Peace-Keeping and International Enforcement: the Liberian Crisis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 39.

²⁷ ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, Extract from the Final Communiqué, Establishment of a Standing Mediation Committee, Banjul, 30 May 1990, reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 40. The Decision establishing the SMC specifies that the Committee comprises the current Chairman of the Authority and four ECOWAS member States, whose membership is reviewed every three years. Decision A/DEC.9/5/90, Article 1, reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 39.

²⁸ Adibe, *Hegemony, Security and West African Integration: Nigeria, Ghana and the Transformation of ECOWAS*, p. 166.

Member States of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee as well as from Guinea and Sierra Leone.²⁹

The Standing Mediation Committee's reference to the 1981 Defence Protocol in its decision to create ECOMOG was a formulaic nicety rather than a deference to legal precedent. Even if the Mutual Assistance on Defence framework had been operational, it is questionable whether the Liberian civil war should have triggered its application. Some commentators argue that under the terms of the Defence Protocol, an ECOWAS intervention was not justified because the Liberian conflict was "purely internal."³⁰ Others take exception, maintaining that the Defence Protocol justified a military response because the conflict, though internal, was "engineered and supported actively from the outside likely to endanger the security and peace in the entire Community."³¹

Regardless of the Defence Protocol's applicability, it is clear that the proper procedure for invoking it was not followed. According to the Protocol, "the Authority shall appreciate and decide" whether a given internal conflict is actively supported from outside and likely to endanger peace and security in the subregion—and thus qualifies for an armed response by the Community.³² In this instance, however, there was no such

²⁹ ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee, Decision A/DEC.1/8/90, On the Cease-fire and the Establishment of an ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group for Liberia, Banjul, 7 August 1990, Article 2, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

³⁰ *Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence*, Article 18.2. See, for example, Agostinho Zacarias, *The United Nations and International Peacekeeping*, London: I.B. Tauris and Company, 1996, p. 121; and Kofi Oteng Kufuor, "The Legality of the Intervention in the Liberian Civil War by the Economic Community of West African States," *African Journal of International and Comparative Law*, Vol. 5, No. 3, October 1993, p. 538.

³¹ *Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defense*, Article 4. See, for example, Chike Akabogu, "ECOWAS Takes the Initiative," in M.A. Vogt (ed.), *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt at Regional Peace Keeping*, Lagos: Gabumo Publishing, p. 87.

³² *Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defense*, Article 4(b).

concerted determination by the Authority.³³ Even at the time, several ECOWAS member States claimed that the appropriate decision-making channels had not been followed. It is also unclear whether Doe sent the requisite “written request for assistance” to the ECOWAS Chairman, with copies to other members.³⁴ Some commentators claim that Doe initially requested assistance from President Babangida, who in turn brought the issue before ECOWAS.³⁵ In July 1990, Doe did write to the Chairman and members of the newly-constituted Standing Mediation Committee—rather than ECOWAS Heads of State—requesting the deployment of an ECOWAS peacekeeping force.³⁶ By that point, however, it was arguable whether he still exercised sufficient control over the country to entitle him, as “President,” to make such a request.³⁷ (Doe was President in name only at the time he wrote the letter; a few weeks later his title was formally taken from him when an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) was created³⁸ with Amos Sawyer as President.)

³³ Kufuor, “The Legality of ECOWAS Intervention in the Liberian Civil War,” p. 538.

³⁴ *Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defense*, Article 16.

³⁵ W. Ofuately-Kodjoe, “Regional Organizations and the Resolution of Internal Conflict: The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia,” *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Autumn 1994, p. 282. Yet Harry Moniba, Doe’s Vice President, maintains that “the coming of ECOMOG was due to a letter written by the Doe Administration to the Chairman of ECOWAS asking them to send a peacekeeping force. I know because I have copies of those correspondence.” James Butty, “Interview with Harry Moniba,” *West Africa*, 25 February-1 March 1992, cited in Jinmi Adisa, “The Politics of Regional Military Cooperation: The Case of ECOMOG,” in Vogt (ed.), *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt at Regional Peace Keeping*, pp. 216-17.

³⁶ In the letter, Doe stated that “it would seem most expedient at this time to introduce an ECOWAS Peace-Keeping Force into Liberia to forestall increasing terror and tension and to assure a peaceful transitional environment.” “Letter addressed by President Samuel K. Doe to the Chairman and Members of the Ministerial Meeting of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee,” reprinted in Weller (ed.), *Regional Peace-Keeping and International Enforcement: the Liberian Crisis*, p. 61.

³⁷ Ero, “ECOWAS and the Subregional Peacekeeping in Liberia,” para. 14.

³⁸ ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee, Decision A/DEC.2/8/90, On the Constitution of an Interim Government in the Republic of Liberia, Banjul, 7 August 1990, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

The establishment of ECOMOG was thus an improvised response to the Liberian conflict. As Clement Adibe has observed, “the [May 1990] Banjul Summit basically handed over the issue of the Liberian conflict to the SMC rather than institute the mechanism for collective security as provided for by the Defence Protocol.”³⁹ 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.

ECOMOG IN LIBERIA (1990 TO DATE)

Anglophone-Francophone Divide and Fears of Nigerian Domination

The decision to establish ECOMOG and the manner in which that decision was taken exacerbated long-standing tensions between anglophone and francophone States. Several francophone States, particularly Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire, strongly objected to the deployment.⁴⁰ The leaders of these two countries supported Charles Taylor and the NPFL in their bid to oust President Doe.⁴¹ When Doe had seized power in 1980, he killed then President William Tolbert and imprisoned Tolbert’s eldest son, Adolphus, who died in custody. This incensed Ivorian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny who had been a close friend of

³⁹ Adibe, *Hegemony, Security and West African Integration: Nigeria, Ghana and the Transformation of ECOWAS*, p. 162.

⁴⁰ For example, Burkina Faso’s President, Blaise Compaoré, stated: “We learnt from the international media, the momentous decision by some member States of ECOWAS to send a supposedly reconciliatory force to Liberia, without first fully briefing other countries on the exact assignment of the force. As far as we are concerned, the Mediation Committee of ECOWAS is not competent to intervene in a member State’s internal conflict.” *Newswatch*, 27 August 1990, p. 16, cited in Adisa, “The Politics of Regional Military Cooperation: The Case of ECOMOG,” pp. 214-15.

⁴¹ See, for example, Abiodun Alao, “Peacekeeping in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Liberian Civil War,” *Brassey’s Defence Yearbook*, London: Brassey’s, 1993, p. 341.

President Tolbert and the father-in-law of Adolphus. Houphouët-Boigny's same daughter subsequently married Burkinabé President Blaise Compaoré. Beyond fulfilling personal vendettas,⁴² francophone States more generally viewed Taylor's ascension to power as a means of checking Nigeria's hegemonic designs.⁴³

The deployment of an ECOMOG force comprised almost entirely of anglophone member States underscored the political division within ECOWAS. In light of the opposition to ECOMOG, both francophone members of the Standing Mediation Committee—Mali and Togo—rescinded their initial offers to contribute troops.⁴⁴ All four of Liberia's anglophone counterparts in ECOWAS participated: the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. The sole francophone participant, Guinea, had experienced a massive influx of refugees since the outbreak of the civil war.⁴⁵ The anglophone countries were concerned about the possible implications of Taylor's ascension to power on their *own* futures.⁴⁶ Moreover, each initial troop-contributing country was governed by an authoritarian leader concerned with maintaining his own power at home. For them, President Doe was thus in some sense a kindred spirit. Like Doe, Nigerian President Babangida, Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings, and

⁴² For additional explanations for why Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire supported Taylor, see Emmanuel Kwesi Aning, "The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict: The case of Liberia and West Africa," *CDR Working Paper 97.4*, June 1997, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.cdr.dk>>>.

⁴³ Ofuately-Kodjoe, "Regional Organizations and the Resolution of Internal Conflict: The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia," p. 271.

⁴⁴ See Sesay, "Collective Security or Collective Disaster? Regional Peace-keeping in West Africa," p. 213.

⁴⁵ Within two months of the rebellion's launch, more than 80,000 Liberian refugees had crossed into Guinea. (See "Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia: Country Report," *Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)*, No. 2, 1990, p. 35.) While some 60,000 Liberian refugees had crossed into Côte d'Ivoire (see *ibid.*), the refugees posed a greater security threat to Guinea than they did to Côte d'Ivoire, as Guinea's territory and population were considerably smaller than those of Côte d'Ivoire.

⁴⁶ Dissidents from the Gambia, Guinea, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone had reportedly trained with Taylor's NPFL, with the understanding that Taylor would support them if he was successful. Ofuately-Kodjoe, "Regional Organizations and the Resolution of Internal Conflict: The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia," pp. 272-73.

Guinean President Lansana Conté, had all seized power through military coups. Sierra Leonean President Joseph Momoh had been hand-picked by his predecessor to rule Sierra Leone's one-party-State, and Gambian President Dauda Jawara had governed his country since its independence in 1965.⁴⁷ Of all of them, Babangida was particularly interested in preserving Doe's presidency.⁴⁸

Yet even the anglophone countries participating in the force were wary of Nigeria at the outset, as evidenced by disagreements with Nigeria over the nature of ECOMOG's mission. According to ECOMOG's first Force Commander, Lt-Gen. Arnold Quainoo of Ghana, Accra viewed the mission as an "interposition" force, intended to deploy in Monrovia and preserve the status quo. Quainoo saw his task as keeping the belligerents where they were and restoring law and order. The force did not intend to support one faction over another or to carry out attacks.⁴⁹ Nigeria saw the force differently. In its view, ECOMOG was a vehicle by which to save Doe and block Taylor's ascension to power. Initially, an interposition force would serve that purpose. After President Doe was captured—ironically at ECOMOG headquarters—and subsequently killed, Nigeria's anti-Taylor policy became increasingly evident.

Nigeria did try to camouflage its dominant role in the force by consenting to a non-Nigerian force commander. As negotiations concerning the composition of an eventual force continued, Quainoo visited the Gambia, Guinea, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone (at the request of President

⁴⁷ Sesay, "Collective Security or Collective Disaster? Regional Peace-keeping in West Africa," pp. 212-13.

⁴⁸ Presidents Babangida and Doe had a close personal relationship. Babangida, like Doe, had overthrown a civilian Government and had managed to consolidate power. At that point, Nigeria was already under increasing international pressure to transfer power back to a democratically-elected Government. The military Government in Nigeria therefore saw value in having Doe remain in power—and indebted to Nigeria. Interview with Kayode Samuel, former Special Assistant to the Nigerian Head of State (1993-1995), current Programme Coordinator of Democracy-in-Peace Initiative, African Refugee Foundation, 13 March 1999, Lagos.

⁴⁹ Interview with Lt-Gen. (Rtd) Arnold Quainoo, former Force Commander of ECOMOG in Liberia, current Executive Director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution, 17 March 1999, Accra.

Rawlings). According to Quainoo, President Babangida explained that Nigeria could not take the lead role in a peacekeeping initiative because it would look like Nigeria was supporting Doe. Babangida indicated that Doe had recently appealed to Lagos for help and that Nigeria was “only waiting for an excuse to go” and had earmarked troops for an eventual force.⁵⁰ In view of its impressive United Nations peacekeeping experience, Ghana was the obvious other choice to lead the force. Guinea would have been the ideal country to command the force given anglophone-francophone tensions, but no suitable candidate was identified. Similarly, there were no appropriate Gambian or Sierra Leonean candidates for force commander. Quainoo was the personal choice of Rawlings.⁵¹ Under ECOMOG’s initial command structure, the Deputy Force Commander was Guinean and the Chief of Staff was Nigerian.⁵²

ECOMOG’s Deployment

Despite the initial opposition to ECOMOG within ECOWAS, plans for deployment proceeded. Each troop-contributor pledged to provide at least one infantry battalion (roughly 700-750 men).⁵³ Ghana and Nigeria also provided air force personnel and some fixed-wing aircraft that would be stationed at Sierra Leone’s Lungi airport. Each country was to take responsibility for ferrying its troops and equipment to the Sierra Leonean capital, Freetown, by a certain date.⁵⁴

ECOMOG troop-contributors did not coordinate their logistical needs and capabilities prior to deployment. In this context, Quainoo described

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Jinmi Adisa, “ECOMOG Force Commanders,” in Vogt (ed.), *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt at Regional Peace Keeping*, pp. 239-41.

⁵² Interview with Quainoo, 17 March 1999, Accra.

⁵³ Ibid. There are conflicting reports as to the size and composition of the initial force. According to an ECOWAS Department of Public Information publication, the 2,655-strong force comprised 900 Nigerians, 800 Ghanaians, 500 Guineans, 350 Sierra Leoneans, and 105 Gambians. Bisi Olawunmi, “Liberia: Peace at Last, An ECOWAS Success Story,” *The West African Bulletin*, No. 5, November 1997, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁴ Interview with Quainoo, 17 March 1999, Accra.

ECOMOG's response as, "ad hoc more than anything else." Participants did not indicate what equipment they intended to bring or what equipment they lacked. According to Quainoo, each country simply "did what it could."⁵⁵ The contingents were expected to assemble in Freetown and travel from there to Monrovia by sea.⁵⁶ Quainoo indicated that the mission planners did not make sophisticated logistical calculations prior to deployment.⁵⁷ The numerous logistical and transportation problems delayed the force's arrival in the mission area.⁵⁸

Moreover, ECOMOG's concept of operations was not determined in advance of deployment. According to Quainoo, the force's rapid deployment was the main consideration, and staff duties and planning were secondary. ECOMOG's initial aim was limited to simply reaching Monrovia. Once deployed, the force would then concern itself with becoming familiar with the terrain and the locations of the warring parties. While still in Freetown, however, they had decided that each participating battalion would deploy in a designated "sector," except for the Gambian battalion, which was tasked with securing ECOMOG headquarters.⁵⁹

When the ECOMOG force deployed on 24 August 1990, it had to contend not only with these logistical and operational uncertainties but with a hostile landing. Charles Taylor understood correctly that ECOMOG, whatever its stated intentions, would complicate his efforts to take control of the country. Even an interposition force as described by Quainoo that simply sought to preserve the status quo and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian relief to a besieged country was anathema to Taylor, who saw

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ In the end, Nigeria airlifted the Gambian and Guinean troops to Freetown. Segun Aderiye, "ECOMOG Landing," in Vogt (ed.), *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt at Regional Peace Keeping*, p. 97.

⁵⁷ Interview with Quainoo, 17 March 1999, Accra.

⁵⁸ See Aderiye, "ECOMOG Landing," pp. 99-100. Some blamed the delay on Taylor's resistance and the uncertain security situation in Monrovia. Ibid.

⁵⁹ Interview with Quainoo, 17 March 1999, Accra. The Gambian army was less experienced than the other participating armies, being only a few years old at that point. Ibid.

victory at hand.⁶⁰ On the eve of ECOMOG's arrival in Liberia, Taylor called the "peacekeeping" force a "flagrant act of aggression."⁶¹ The next day, the NPFL shelled the port and the beaches, as well as sent troops out on motorboats to intercept and harass the approaching landing craft ferrying the peacekeeping troops. With the assistance of the INPFL, ECOMOG fought back the NPFL and managed to set up camps in Monrovia as planned.⁶²

From "Interposition" Force to Intervention Force

Nigeria largely abandoned its efforts to disguise its dominant role in ECOMOG in the wake of Doe's murder in September 1990. The Nigerian Government blamed Quainoo for Doe's capture, which was carried out by Johnson and his INPFL in the ECOMOG compound on 9 September.⁶³

⁶⁰ While Taylor may have been confident that the AFL and INPFL were no match for his NPFL, others paint a different picture. Lt-Col. George Aryiku, who commanded the initial Ghanaian battalion serving in ECOMOG, indicated that three battalions of the AFL were still under unified command and that the INPFL was getting stronger every day, benefiting from defections from the NPFL. Furthermore, Doe's alliance with Johnson, made prior to ECOMOG's arrival, was a serious setback for Taylor. Interview with Col. George Aryiku, former Ghanaian Battalion Commander, ECOMOG in Liberia, 25 February 1998, Dakar.

⁶¹ "BBC Monitoring Report," 23 August 1990, reprinted in Weller (ed.), *Regional Peace-Keeping and International Enforcement: the Liberian Crisis*, p. 86.

⁶² Interview with Quainoo, 17 March 1999, Accra.

⁶³ Quainoo insists that he had not been aware of Doe's visit, which had been arranged by his Guinean deputy, and had not assured Doe of any protection. He further believes that Doe went to ECOMOG's headquarters because Doe thought that some arrangement had been made for him as a result of Guinea's intervention. (Ibid.) Others maintain, however, that ECOMOG miscalculated its security precautions (see Sesay, "Collective Security or Collective Disaster: Regional Peace-Keeping in West Africa," p. 213), that Quainoo was incapable (Herbert Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Winter 1996/1997, pp. 155, 161), or that Quainoo was an accomplice (Adisa, "ECOMOG Force Commanders," pp. 247-48). Mark Huband posits that Doe's demise was primarily attributable to Johnson's cunning. According to Huband, Johnson had lulled Doe into a false sense of security by forging an
(continued...)

Accordingly, Nigeria pushed to assume a greater role in commanding the force. Quainoo's Guinean deputy was replaced by a Nigerian, who was given the title of Field Commander, and Nigeria retained the Chief of Staff position. Quainoo himself was dispatched to Freetown and instructed to carry out his duties from there while the Nigerian Field Commander assumed responsibility for the day-to-day actions of the force.⁶⁴ A Nigerian has commanded ECOMOG ever since (see Table 4.2). Yet the ostensible retention of Quainoo as Force Commander was designed to be only a short-lived, face-saving measure for Ghana. The Nigerian Field Commander, Maj-Gen. Joshua Dogonyaro, took over the direction of ECOMOG's military operations immediately⁶⁵ and launched a "limited offensive" against Taylor's NPFL.⁶⁶

The strategy pursued by Dogonyaro further antagonized Taylor and failed to secure a political environment conducive to finding a diplomatic solution. In November 1990, at the first Extraordinary Summit of Heads of

⁶³ (...continued)

alliance against Taylor that was both militarily opportunistic and calculated to ensnare Doe. See Mark Huband, *The Liberian Civil War*, London: Frank Cass, 1998, pp. 191-97.

⁶⁴ Interview with Quainoo, 17 March 1999, Accra. Quainoo refused to continue working based in Sierra Leone and returned to Ghana. Ibid.

⁶⁵ See Adisa, "ECOMOG Force Commanders," p. 249.

⁶⁶ See Adibe, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Liberia*, p. 34.

Table 4.2

ECOMOG Commanders * (as of 30 June 1999)			
Name	Country	Title	Dates
Lt-Gen. Arnold Quainoo	Ghana	Force Commander	07/90 - 09/90
Maj-Gen. Joshua N. Dogonyaro	Nigeria	Field Commander	09/90 - 02/91
Maj-Gen. Rufus M. Kupolati	Nigeria	Field Commander	02/91 - 09/91
Maj-Gen. J. Ishaya Bakut	Nigeria	Field Commander	09/91 - 10/92
Maj-Gen. Olatunji Olurin	Nigeria	Field Commander	10/92 - 10/93
Maj-Gen. John N. Shagaya	Nigeria	Field Commander	10/93 - 12/93
Maj-Gen. John Mark Inienger	Nigeria	Field Commander	12/93 - 08/96
Maj-Gen. Samuel Victor L. Malu	Nigeria	Force Commander	08/96 - 01/98
Maj-Gen. Timothy M. Shelpidi	Nigeria	Force Commander	01/98 - 03/99
Maj-Gen. Felix Mujakperuo	Nigeria	Force Commander	03/99 - present

* "Force Commander" was the designation given to ECOMOG's first commander, Lt-Gen. Arnold Quainoo. In the wake of President Samuel K. Doe's capture and murder, however, the ECOMOG command was reshuffled. A Nigerian was given the title "Field commander," and Quainoo subsequently stepped down. The term "Field Commander" was then used to designate the individual with overall responsibility for the force until the end of Maj-Gen. Samuel Victor L. Malu's tenure, after which the term "Force Commander" was reinstated.

State and Government in Bamako,⁶⁷ ECOWAS Heads of State endorsed an ECOWAS Peace Plan.⁶⁸ The Summit also secured a cease-fire agreement between the warring parties. In December 1990, Côte d'Ivoire as well as representatives from the warring factions attended a ministerial meeting of the Standing Mediation Committee.⁶⁹ In the meantime, Taylor was becoming increasingly incensed by Nigerian activities. On the eve of a February 1991 Standing Mediation Committee Summit meeting, Taylor reportedly called for Nigeria's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Liberia.⁷⁰ The Committee's Summit meeting exacerbated tensions, rather than eased them.⁷¹ As fears of renewed violence increased, Dogonyaro was suddenly recalled to Nigeria.⁷² Although Dogonyaro had brought ECOMOG closer to achieving its military aims of defeating Taylor, his strategy had diminished prospects for a negotiated political settlement.⁷³

ECOWAS member States continued to pursue uncoordinated and competing strategies. In mid-1991, the francophone countries took the

⁶⁷ Houphouët-Boigny had endeavoured to convene an ECOWAS Summit the previous month in Yamoussoukro. Several anglophone member States had refused to attend, however, and the Summit was cancelled. Osioma B.C. Nwolise, "The Internalization of the Liberian Crisis and Its Effects on West Africa," in Vogt (ed.), *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt at Regional Peace Keeping*, p. 69.

⁶⁸ The Summit was attended by 13 of the 16 ECOWAS member States; Guinea, Liberia, and Mauritania were absent. Nnamdi Obasi, "The Negotiation Process," in Vogt (ed.), *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt At Regional Peace Keeping*, p. 185.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; see also Adibe, *Hegemony, Security and West African Integration: Nigeria, Ghana and the Transformation of ECOWAS*, p. 231.

⁷⁰ Dave Enahoro, "Multinational Military Intervention: the Liberian Experiment," in Chris A. Garuba (ed.), *International Peace and Security: The Nigerian Contribution*, Lagos: Gabumo Publishing, 1997, pp. 139-40.

⁷¹ See Adibe, *Hegemony, Security and West African Integration: Nigeria, Ghana and the Transformation of ECOWAS*, pp. 232-34. Prior to the meeting, a rapprochement between Taylor and Johnson to challenge Amos Sawyer's presidency had created a troubling new dynamic and had put the Bamako cease-fire on shaky ground. The meeting failed to address a number of the warring parties' concerns. *Ibid.*

⁷² For an explanation of the possible reasons for Dogonyaro's unexpected withdrawal, see Adisa, "ECOMOG Force Commanders," pp. 252-55.

⁷³ See Adibe, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Liberia*, p. 40.

lead in mediating the conflict while the Nigerian-led ECOMOG still sought a military solution. A francophone-dominated Committee of Five (comprised of Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Togo) was established in June 1991. It was hoped that this group, chaired by Ivorian President Houphouët-Boigny, would have more influence with the warring parties.⁷⁴ Yet in the end, the meetings held under the auspices of the Committee of Five were no more successful than the Standing Mediation Committee meetings had been.⁷⁵ In an effort to harmonize ECOWAS policy, Joint Meetings of the Standing Mediation Committee and the Committee of Five were held in October and November 1992, but they failed to achieve their objective.⁷⁶ Moreover, ECOWAS member States continued to support and create different Liberian factions. Burkinabé and Ivorian support for Taylor continued throughout the war. Guinea and Sierra Leone assisted the United Liberation Movement of Liberians for Democracy (ULIMO).⁷⁷

Taylor's relations with the Nigerian-dominated ECOMOG remained tense and conflict-ridden throughout the war. Taylor responded to the provocations of Nigeria and ECOMOG by launching a major offensive code-named Operation Octopus in October 1992 to seize Monrovia. He almost succeeded. Prince Johnson managed to survive the offensive, but

⁷⁴ Ofuatey-Kodjoe, "Regional Organizations and the Resolution of International Conflict: The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia," p. 285. According to Adibe, the anglophone countries made the "tactical decision ... to drop the mediation process in the court of the francophone States." Adibe, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Liberia*, p. 30.

⁷⁵ Ofuatey-Kodjoe, "Regional Organizations and the Resolution of International Conflict: The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia," p. 285. The Committee of Five held four meetings during 1991 in Yamoussoukro (in June, July, September, and October) and one the following year in Geneva (in April).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ ULIMO would eventually split into two factions: ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K under the leadership of Roosevelt Johnson and Alhaji Kromah, respectively. The split occurred in 1994 along ethnic lines: Johnson is a Krahn (and of no relation to Prince Johnson, a Gio), and Kromah, a Mandingo.

his INPFL was routed and he soon left the country.⁷⁸ ECOMOG suffered significant casualties, but ultimately managed to defend itself and the capital.⁷⁹ In response, Nigeria reinforced its troops and ECOMOG undertook a full-scale offensive against the NPFL, often fighting alongside ULIMO soldiers and the AFL. ECOMOG occasionally provided intelligence, transportation, and weapons to various factions opposing the NPFL throughout the conflict.⁸⁰ Notwithstanding the ever-growing concern about ECOMOG's actions⁸¹ and Nigerian heavy-handedness,⁸² Abuja continued its military campaign.

Security Council's Initial "Hands Off" Approach and Subsequent Efforts to Make ECOMOG More Credible and Effective

The international community's response to ECOMOG's foray into Liberia was largely one of "wait and see."⁸³ In June 1990, the US, with UK

⁷⁸ See Huband, *The Liberian Civil War*, p. 213. Johnson was subsequently flown to Nigeria. Ibid.

⁷⁹ Some 3,000 people were killed and 8,000 wounded in the three-week offensive. Indeed, Taylor was so close to achieving his objective that Victor Malu, the ECOMOG Chief of Staff at the time, was forced to shoot his pistol at one point to defend ECOMOG headquarters from advancing NPFL fighters. Ibid., pp. 213-14.

⁸⁰ Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," pp. 156-57. See also, UN Document S/1994/1167, *Seventh Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, 14 October 1995, para. 25, criticizing ECOMOG's involvement with the warring factions.

⁸¹ ECOMOG was repeatedly accused of human rights violations. See, for example, "Waging War to Keep the Peace: The ECOMOG Intervention and Human Rights," *Human Rights Watch*, June 1993.

⁸² At this stage, Benin's President Nicephore Soglo reportedly claimed that Nigeria had hijacked ECOMOG. Terrence Lyons, *Voting for Peace: Postconflict Elections in Liberia*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999, p. 29. Burkina Faso also reportedly called for ECOMOG's withdrawal. Enahoro, "Multinational Military Intervention: the Liberian Experiment," p. 142.

⁸³ Ofuatey-Kodjoe posits that when the Liberian civil war broke out, Western countries were preoccupied with other crises and, therefore, reluctant to intervene directly. The Gulf War, and later the conflicts in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia diverted Western attention (and resources) away from Liberia. Ofuatey-Kodjoe, (continued...)

support, sent warships to Liberia's coast in the event that an evacuation of their citizens and foreign diplomats and their families became necessary. Washington, however, had no intention of intervening either to support Doe or to stabilize the rapidly deteriorating situation.⁸⁴ When ECOMOG was deployed, the United Nations Security Council neither approved the undertaking nor made formal reference to it. It remained silent even after Doe was murdered. The Council's first reference to ECOWAS's efforts and the Liberian civil war was only in January 1991, at which point the President of the Council merely "commended" the efforts of ECOWAS and called upon the parties to the conflict to respect the cease-fire agreement.⁸⁵ Significantly, the Council did not refer to ECOMOG by name. Sixteen months passed before the Council again formally addressed the conflict, commending ECOWAS's efforts in another Presidential Statement.⁸⁶ The first Security Council resolution did not materialize until November 1992, when the Council imposed an embargo on all deliveries of weapons and equipment to Liberia, except for those destined for ECOMOG's use.⁸⁷

African countries from the subregion and beyond supported such a hands-off approach and were instrumental in shaping the Council's *laissez faire* attitude towards the deteriorating situation in Liberia. Granted, they were pushing against an open door, but it would be wrong to criticize the West's and the Council's failure to become meaningfully engaged in the conflict without appreciating African sensitivities and policies. Nigeria, for example, was reportedly determined to keep the Liberian issue out of the Security Council, so that it could have more control over the ECOMOG

⁸³ (...continued)

"Regional Organizations and the Resolution of Internal Conflict: The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia," p. 270.

⁸⁴ See Schuster, "The Final Days of Dr Doe," pp. 67-68.

⁸⁵ UN Document S/22133, *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, 22 January 1991.

⁸⁶ UN Document S/23886, *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, 7 May 1992.

⁸⁷ UN Document S/RES/788 (1992), 19 November 1992.

intervention.⁸⁸ Côte d'Ivoire, a member of the Council during 1990-1991, reportedly frustrated early attempts to get the Council to consider the Liberian crisis.⁸⁹ Ethiopia and Zaire, the two other African members on the Council in 1990, were also opposed to the Council dealing with the issue, succumbing to Nigerian pressure and fearful of establishing a precedent that could be applied to them.⁹⁰ African countries and the OAU have a long-standing policy of trying to keep African issues out of the Council—except for large-scale humanitarian disasters that are simply beyond the scope of the continent's leaders and regional organizations to cope with on their own. The OAU supported ECOWAS efforts to promote peace in West Africa in line with this policy, and in deference to subregional initiatives, as an appropriate first line of action.

The US, however, did provide financial and logistical support for Senegal to join ECOMOG in 1991 in an effort to strengthen the force and address complaints of Nigerian domination,⁹¹ but the initiative did not succeed militarily or politically. With US assistance, Senegal agreed to contribute troops in September 1991.⁹² While the first contingent arrived in Monrovia in October 1991, the full battalion did not deploy to the interior of Liberia until April 1992. After the NPFL killed six Senegalese soldiers in May 1992, the battalion was transferred to Monrovia. In light of the escalating violence, Senegalese President Abdou Diouf announced in

⁸⁸ Ofuately-Kodjoe, "Regional Organizations and the Resolution of Internal Conflict: The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia," p. 270.

⁸⁹ Sesay, "Collective Security or Collective Disaster? Regional Peace-keeping in West Africa," p. 209.

⁹⁰ Ofuately-Kodjoe, "Regional Organizations and the Resolution of Internal Conflict: The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia," p. 270; Sesay, "Collective Security or Collective Disaster? Regional Peace-keeping in West Africa," p. 209.

⁹¹ The decision by Mali to contribute six soldiers to ECOMOG in early 1991 (Adibe, *Hegemony, Security and West African Integration: Nigeria, Ghana and the Transformation of ECOWAS*, p. 234) was a symbolic measure that, not surprisingly, did not allay Taylor's concerns.

⁹² The US pledged to pay a significant portion of the operation's costs. It ultimately provided US\$ 15 million worth of military equipment. Robert A. Mortimer, "Senegal's Rôle in Ecomog: the Francophone Dimension in the Liberian Crisis," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 1996, pp. 296-97.

January 1993 that Dakar would withdraw its peacekeepers from ECOMOG.⁹³

The Security Council's policy towards the Liberian civil war changed after the signing of the Cotonou Peace Agreement on 25 July 1993. Previous peace agreements, such as those concluded in Yamoussoukro, had elicited little adherence among the signatories and only passing reference by the Council.⁹⁴ There was a growing appreciation that years of imperceptible progress had given way to a situation that had clearly worsened and showed little sign of improving in the wake of Operation Octopus and the ECOMOG counter-offensive. The Cotonou Agreement called for the creation of a United Nations Observer Mission to supervise and monitor its implementation⁹⁵ as well as for African troops from outside West Africa to participate in ECOMOG.⁹⁶ The Council formally established the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) in September 1993⁹⁷—more than three years after ECOMOG had become involved in Liberia.

The introduction of contingents from African countries outside the subregion to democratize and professionalize ECOMOG was a short-lived initiative that failed to achieve its objective. Subsequent to the Cotonou Agreement, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe agreed to contribute a battalion each.⁹⁸ Prior to deploying, however, Zimbabwe withdrew its pledge.⁹⁹ In January 1994, some 1,500 troops from Tanzania and Uganda

⁹³ See *ibid.*, pp. 299-302.

⁹⁴ See, for example, UN Document S/RES/788, and UN Document S/RES/813 (1993), 26 March 1993.

⁹⁵ UN Document S/26272, Annex, *Cotonou Agreement*, 9 August 1993, Article 3.1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Article 3.2

⁹⁷ UN Document S/RES/866 (1993), 22 September 1993.

⁹⁸ UN Document S/26868, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, 13 December 1993, para. 21.

⁹⁹ Numerous reasons have been proffered for Zimbabwe's ultimate decision not to provide troops. According to one Zimbabwean Government official, financial considerations were the root cause. (Interview with Amb. Eliot Manyika, Deputy Secretary, Zimbabwean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 January 1998, Harare.)
(continued...)

arrived in Monrovia.¹⁰⁰ Although the inclusion of these East African peacekeepers into ECOMOG reduced Nigeria's domination, it created other difficulties. There were complaints that Tanzania and Uganda performed inadequately on those infrequent occasions when they actually saw combat and that they were not committed to ECOMOG's mission.¹⁰¹ The veteran ECOMOG peacekeepers also resented the fact that the East African contingents had better equipment and more secure financing. According to the Chief of the Tanzania People's Defence Force, however, sometimes the financial and material support that Tanzania was promised did not materialize in time.¹⁰² In early 1995, Tanzania announced the withdrawal of its contingent, citing the financial burden and the lack of progress in the peace process,¹⁰³ and Uganda followed suit.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ (...continued)

Zimbabwe was also concerned about certain political and military aspects of the mission, such as the force's exit strategy and mandate. (Interview with Maj-Gen. Edzai Absolom Chanyuka Chimonyo, Chief of Staff (Operations and Plans), Zimbabwean Ministry of Defence, 27 January 1998, Harare.) Zimbabwe's relationship with Nigeria may also have influenced its decision not to deploy; Zimbabwe would not have been keen to serve under Nigerian command. Interview with Zimbabwean Government official, 26 January 1998, Harare.

¹⁰⁰ The Tanzanian and Ugandan battalions comprised 773 personnel and 796 personnel, respectively. UN Document S/1994/168, *Second Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, 14 February 1994, para. 24.

¹⁰¹ Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," p. 169. In one instance when part of the Tanzanian contingent was confronted by NPFL forces, they reportedly surrendered their equipment rather than fight. Ibid.

¹⁰² R.P. Momba, "The Role of Regional Bodies in Preventive Diplomacy and Peacekeeping," in Jakkie Cilliers and Greg Mills (eds), *Peacekeeping in Africa (Volume II)*, Halfway House: Institute for Defence Policy, 1996, p. 116. Momba indicated that Zimbabwe had incorrectly believed that all necessary arrangements for financial and material support had been made prior to deployment. Ibid.

¹⁰³ UN Document, S/1995/158, *Ninth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, 24 February 1995, para. 18.

¹⁰⁴ UN Document S/1995/279, *Tenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, 10 April 1995, para. 10.

UNOMIL had a potentially important role to play, but was never able to function as intended. An “honest broker” was of critical importance, given the enmity that existed between Taylor and ECOMOG. This was especially so because a replacement for Nigeria, which provided the bulk of the force and much of the logistical infrastructure, was not likely to materialize (even if Nigeria were willing to disengage). The Security Council agreed to United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s request for a force of 303 observers and support personnel.¹⁰⁵ While UNOMIL reached full strength in February 1994, the observers were not able to be deployed as planned.¹⁰⁶ In November 1995, as a result of continued fighting throughout Liberia, the Council amended UNOMIL’s mandate and reduced the authorized strength to 160 observers.¹⁰⁷ The number of United Nations observers actually deployed was much less than the number authorized. For half of 1996, UNOMIL’s “strength” ranged from five to 10 observers.¹⁰⁸ In October 1996, the Secretary-General estimated that the need for military observers would not exceed 92—an

¹⁰⁵ See UN Document S/26422, *Report of the Secretary-General on Liberia*, 9 September 1993, paras. 12-24, which sets out the Secretary-General’s suggestions for the force. The Secretary-General proposed 303 military observers, a military medical unit of some 20 staff, and 45 military engineers. (See *ibid.*, paras. 18-20.) The Council accepted his proposals. UN Document S/RES/866.

¹⁰⁶ As of April 1994, UNOMIL observers were stationed at only 27 of the 39 projected team sites to monitor activities at border crossings, airports, sea ports, and other sensitive areas. See UN Document S/1994/463, *Third Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, 18 April 1994, para. 17.

¹⁰⁷ UN Document S/RES/1020 (1995), 10 November 1995.

¹⁰⁸ When Monrovia was again under siege in April 1996, the US evacuated 88 of the 93 UNOMIL observers to Sierra Leone and Senegal. (UN Document S/1996/362, *Seventeenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, 21 May 1996, para. 19.) 10 of these “relocated” observers remained in Freetown on “standby,” ready to return to Liberia when the situation permitted it. The remainder were repatriated. (*Ibid.*) Six months later, the number of military observers deployed in Liberia stood at 10. UN Document S/1996/858, *Nineteenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, Annex, 17 October 1996.

appraisal the Council supported. ¹⁰⁹ In the month prior to the July 1997 elections, 86 military observers were deployed. ¹¹⁰

Persistent Operational Difficulties

Given Taylor's antipathy towards ECOMOG, and ECOWAS member States' competing objectives, it is no surprise that these various efforts failed to make ECOMOG more effective—especially in light of the force's formidable operational shortcomings. ECOMOG was continually beset with financial difficulties for the duration of its mission in Liberia. In 1990, the Standing Mediation Committee created a Special Emergency Fund ¹¹¹ and determined that all of the expenses relating to ECOMOG operations would be drawn from that fund. ¹¹² The Special Emergency Fund was to be endowed with an initial amount of US\$ 50 million, derived from voluntary contributions by ECOWAS member States and donor Governments and institutions. ¹¹³ Yet the Fund received no contributions. ¹¹⁴ Each troop-contributing country thus bore the financial burden for its contingent. Western assistance was slow in coming. Even after the United Nations established a Trust Fund for Liberia in September 1993 and convened a Conference on Assistance to Liberia in October 1995, ECOMOG remained

¹⁰⁹ See UN Document S/1996/858, para. 28. In his Twentieth Progress Report, the Secretary-General reiterated his intention to abide by the revised deployment scheme as spelled out in his previous report. (See UN Document S/1996/962, *Twentieth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, 19 November 1996, para. 37.) The Council approved this course of action in resolution 1083. UN Document S/RES/1083 (1996), 27 November 1996.

¹¹⁰ UN Document S/1997/478, *Twenty-third Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, Annex, 19 June 1997.

¹¹¹ ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee, Decision A/DEC.3/8/90, On the Establishment of a Special Emergency Fund for ECOWAS Operations in the Republic of Liberia, Banjul, 7 August 1990, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

¹¹² ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee, Decision A/DEC.1/8/90, Article 3.

¹¹³ ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee Decision A/DEC.3/8/90, Articles 1-3.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Roger Laloupo, Director, Legal Affairs, ECOWAS Secretariat, 11 March 1999.

in a precarious financial state. Troop-contributing countries repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the force due to financial difficulties.

The insufficient funding had an adverse effect on troop morale and discipline. Due to a lack of funds, troops rotated infrequently.¹¹⁵ Junior officers from certain contingents sometimes went unpaid for several months,¹¹⁶ a situation that engendered jealousy and hostility among the troop-contributors. Tales of corruption whereby soldiers and officers pawned equipment and supplies for personal enrichment are not uncommon. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali pointedly, if diplomatically, acknowledged this problem in a 1996 Report to the Security Council:

While reports have been received that some individual ECOMOG soldiers may have been involved in looting or may have provided arms to fighters, such actions were neither systematic nor a matter of policy. If they did occur, they may reflect the chronic lack of resources suffered by the force, all the way down to the foot soldier, who is expected to operate in a hostile environment without proper equipment and sometimes without having been paid for weeks.¹¹⁷

The problem of graft was so bad that ECOMOG was seen by many to stand for "Every Car or Moveable Object Gone."¹¹⁸

Logistical problems also hindered ECOMOG operations. Financial constraints reportedly prevented the ECOWAS Secretariat from providing logistical support to ECOMOG troops. ECOWAS initially had agreed that each troop-contributing country would be self-sufficient for the first 30 days, after which the ECOWAS Secretariat would take over. ECOWAS was

¹¹⁵ 'Funmi Olonisakin, "African 'Home-made' Peacekeeping Initiatives," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 3, Spring 1997, p. 364. Some soldiers reportedly remained in Liberia for the duration of the civil war. Liz Blunt, "ECOMOG: Mission Accomplished," *BBC Focus on Africa*, April-June 1998, p. 17.

¹¹⁶ Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," p. 169.

¹¹⁷ UN Document S/1996/362, para. 23.

¹¹⁸ Comfort Ero, "The Future of ECOMOG in West Africa," in Jakkie Cilliers and Greg Mills (eds), *From Peacekeeping to Complex Emergencies: Peace Support Missions in Africa*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 1999, p. 61.

unable to fulfill its commitment, however, and troop-contributing countries had to continue to resupply their own troops.¹¹⁹ There was also an absence of centralized logistic distribution, which showed the gap between the logistical capabilities of the different contingents.¹²⁰ ECOMOG participants suffered shortfalls in lift and other logistical capabilities, and most of them relied heavily upon Nigeria.¹²¹

Sometimes ECOMOG troops did not possess the necessary equipment to perform their duties. In addition to maintaining its own contingent, Nigeria also provided most of the heavy weapons, military aircraft and naval vessels, as well as the oil products for the entire operation.¹²² The force was not equipped to conduct counter-insurgency operations. In mid-1995, ECOMOG reportedly had only one functioning helicopter—designated for the Force Commander’s personal use.¹²³ Inadequate maintenance of equipment was also a problem.¹²⁴ Most troop-contributing countries had very old equipment that was frequently in need of repair. Guinea, Mali, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania, for example, used primarily Chinese and Soviet equipment, and it proved difficult for them to secure spare parts and repair supplies.¹²⁵

Particularly during its first several years, ECOMOG experienced numerous command and control problems. From the beginning, the force had difficulty harmonizing tactics.¹²⁶ At one point, the Logistics Planning

¹¹⁹ Olonisakin, “African ‘Home-made’ Peacekeeping Initiatives,” pp. 363-64.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

¹²¹ Jennifer Morrison Taw and Andrew Grant-Thomas, “U.S. Support for Regional Complex Contingency Operations: Lessons from ECOMOG,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 22, p. 67.

¹²² Sesay, “Collective Security or Collective Disaster? Regional Peace-keeping in West Africa,” p. 217.

¹²³ Howe, “Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping,” p. 167.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 167-68.

¹²⁵ Taw and Grant-Thomas, “U.S. Support for Regional Complex Contingency Operations: Lessons from ECOMOG,” p. 67.

¹²⁶ Alao, “Peacekeeping in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Liberian Civil War,” p. 343.

Unit reportedly contained no logistics officers.¹²⁷ Training and doctrine posed problems as well. Most ECOMOG troop contributors had little doctrine to guide military activities, let alone peace operations.¹²⁸ Anglophone and francophone participants had distinct traditions, as did individual armies. The various contingents also had differing military capabilities.¹²⁹ Particularly at the beginning of the operation, communication between ECOMOG contributors and even within national units were difficult owing to incompatible equipment and a lack of radios.¹³⁰ According to Quainoo, the fact that countries taking part in ECOMOG spoke different languages was an obstacle.¹³¹

Lack of Accountability and Unclear Legal Status

ECOMOG was only nominally accountable to ECOWAS, which exercised little oversight and provided minimal political and economic guidance. This became increasingly true during the later part of the ECOMOG operation. ECOWAS member States failed to energetically support the ECOWAS Special Representative, Joshua Iroha of Nigeria, and he was withdrawn after roughly two years.¹³² Moreover, 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.¹³³ As Liberian Interim President Amos Sawyer observed in 1994:

One weakness of ECOMOG is that there is no political office side by side. ... The political dimension has been missing here. ... The Force Commander is saddled with an enormous responsibility. The ECOWAS

¹²⁷ Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," p. 169.

¹²⁸ See Taw and Grant-Thomas, "U.S. Support for Regional Complex Contingency Operations: Lessons from ECOMOG," p. 65.

¹²⁹ Olonisakin, "African 'Home-made' Peacekeeping Initiatives," pp. 362-63.

¹³⁰ Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," p. 168.

¹³¹ Interview with Quainoo, 17 March 1999, Accra.

¹³² Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," p. 164.

¹³³ Olonisakin, "African 'Home-made' Peacekeeping Initiatives," p. 361.

Executive Secretary has made infrequent visits to Liberia. He is hardly ever seen on the ground.¹³⁴

Moreover, the legal status of ECOMOG was unclear throughout the Liberian civil war. A status of forces agreement (SOFA) was finally signed between the ECOWAS Secretariat and the Government of Liberia on 5 June 1998¹³⁵—almost eight years after ECOMOG’s initial intervention. Roger Laloupo, the Director of Legal Affairs at the ECOWAS Secretariat, acknowledged that this document “was supposed to be signed a long time ago.”¹³⁶ The agreement sets out the privileges and immunities of ECOMOG and other pertinent regulations.

“Successful” Elections to End the War: Hold the Applause

A new force commander, an influx of Western military assistance and West African troops, as well as a growing war-weariness later all combined to enhance ECOMOG’s effectiveness. During Maj-Gen. Victor Malu’s tenure as ECOMOG Force Commander, the Liberian civil war was brought to a close. Malu is largely credited with transforming ECOMOG into a credible force. As the elections approached, some ECOWAS members that had initially refused to contribute personnel to ECOMOG did so. Contingents from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, and Niger were deployed to Liberia during the first half of 1997.¹³⁷ In addition, Western countries began to increase their support for ECOMOG operations. In February 1997, for example, the United States transported 1,200 West African troops and their equipment to Liberia.¹³⁸ Many of the warring

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ *Agreement Relating to the Status of ECOMOG in Liberia Between ECOWAS and the Republic of Liberia*, 5 June 1998, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

¹³⁶ Interview with Laloupo, 11 March 1999, Abuja.

¹³⁷ See UN Document S/1997/237, *Twenty-second Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia*, 19 March 1997, para. 15; and UN Document S/1997/478, para. 18.

¹³⁸ The US initially reported that it would airlift 1,200 troops from Mali. (“DoD to Airlift ECOMOG Peacekeepers to Liberia from Mali,” *United States Information* (continued...))

factions—or their supporters—grew increasingly tired of the fighting. Troop-contributing countries also began to face increasing domestic opposition to ECOMOG, due to its high costs¹³⁹ and high casualty rates, and threatened withdrawal.¹⁴⁰

Although ECOMOG did ultimately supervise the implementation of the final cease-fire and oversee the July 1997 legislative and presidential elections, these achievements do not counterbalance its previous track record. ECOMOG is largely credited with creating an environment in which substantially free and fair elections could be held. Charles Taylor won the presidential race handily, with over 75 per cent of the vote; the closest contender received only 9.5 per cent.¹⁴¹ When assessing ECOMOG's performance, however, the entire period of its involvement in Liberia must be reviewed, not only the later events. Quainoo acknowledges that ECOMOG is commendable as an expression of political will but stresses that it is not something to emulate, in terms of logistics, administration, force composition, or (lack of) mandate.¹⁴²

A small contingent of ECOMOG troops was still present in Liberia as of mid-1999. After the July 1997 elections, ECOWAS extended the tenure

¹³⁸ (...continued)

Agency, 12 February 1997, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.usia.gov/scripts>>>.) In the end, half of this force was deployed, and the US assisted in the airlift of a battalion from Ghana. "Regional Peacekeeping: ECOMOG and the Liberian Peace Process," *Report Prepared Jointly by the US Department of State and the US Department of Defense*, 1998, pp. 7-8, courtesy of Pacific Architects and Engineers.

¹³⁹ After seven years in Liberia, Nigeria had reportedly spent US\$ 3 billion. "Nigeria spent three billion dollars on peacekeeping in Liberia," *Agence France-Presse*, 2 August 1998.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, "Threats of ECOMOG Withdrawal," *West Africa*, 15-21 August 1994, p. 1422.

¹⁴¹ Adrienne Yandé Diop, "19th July enters into History," *The West Africa Bulletin*, No. 5, November 1997, p. 16. Taylor's party, the National Patriotic Party (NPP), also won 21 out of 26 seats in the Senate and 49 out of 64 seats in the House of Representatives. *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Interview with Quainoo, 17 March 1999, Accra.

of the subregional force in Liberia in order to consolidate the peace.¹⁴³ In response to Liberia's request for ECOMOG's continued presence, the ECOWAS Authority instructed the Liberian Government and the ECOWAS Secretariat to draft a mandate for the operation.¹⁴⁴ The ECOWAS Secretariat subsequently tasked the Government of Liberia with drafting a proposal for a new ECOMOG mandate centred around capacity-building. However, Liberia had yet to submit a text as of March 1999.¹⁴⁵ At the time, 54 Ghanaians and 112 Nigerians comprised ECOMOG's Liberian operation.¹⁴⁶

Relations between ECOMOG and Taylor's Government seem permanently strained, and it is unlikely that the force will remain in Liberia for much longer. Although the Liberian Government formally requested ECOMOG's continuing presence in the country, it did so unenthusiastically. Taylor has periodically called for the force's reduction of withdrawal. There has been confusion about the force's mandate as well. The already tense situation deteriorated further in the wake of the January 1999 rebel advance in neighbouring Sierra Leone. ECOMOG claimed that Taylor supported the rebel movement there, and Taylor accused ECOMOG of training men to overthrow him.

¹⁴³ ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, Decision A/DEC.9/8/97, *Extending the Tenure of the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group in Liberia*, "20th Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government," Abuja, 29 August 1997, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

¹⁴⁴ *Final Communiqué, Twenty-first Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, Abuja*, 31 October 1998, para. 20, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Adrienne Diop, Director, Public Information, ECOWAS Secretariat, 11 March 1999, Abuja.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Laloupo, 22 March 1999, Bamako.

ECOMOG IN SIERRA LEONE (1997 TO DATE)

Background to the ECOMOG Intervention

Beyond exacerbating the Liberian conflict, ECOMOG's involvement there contributed to the civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone. Charles Taylor assisted Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the main rebel force that began fighting the Sierra Leonean Government in early 1991.¹⁴⁷ With Taylor's backing, a small band of RUF rebels invaded eastern Sierra Leone from Liberia in March 1991 and launched a campaign to overthrow the All People's Congress Party of Sierra Leone (APC), which had ruled the country for 24 years. By supporting the RUF, Taylor was able both to undermine the Sierra Leonean Government's commitment to ECOMOG in Liberia and to distract the ECOMOG force.¹⁴⁸

The rebels did not succeed in gaining power until 1997, after six years of civil war and three military coups. President Joseph Momoh's response to the initial insurgency was both ineffective and unpopular with the Sierra Leone Army (SLA).¹⁴⁹ In May 1992, a group of junior SLA officers overthrew Momoh's Government, and 28-year-old Capt. Valentine Strasser assumed the presidency. Unable to quell the rebellion, Strasser turned to others for security assistance, including Nigeria as well as the Kamajors, a Sierra Leonean militia. Yet it is the private security company Executive Outcomes (EO) that is generally credited with substantially strengthening the

¹⁴⁷ Sankoh and Taylor reportedly met in the late 1980s. The two are rumoured to have struck a deal in 1989: Sankoh and the RUF would help Taylor to power in Liberia, after which Taylor would provide the RUF with a base to launch its own struggle. Ibrahim Abdullah, "Bush path to destruction: the origin and character of the Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 32, No. 2, 1998, pp. 220-21.

¹⁴⁸ Stephen P. Riley, "Liberia and Sierra Leone: Anarchy or Peace in West Africa," *Conflict Studies* No. 287, London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, February 1996, p. 7.

¹⁴⁹ By late 1991, the Momoh Government was in complete disarray. To counter the growing rebel threat, Momoh more than quadrupled the army's strength, but without an ability to finance the expansion. This further demoralized the SLA, and some of its members reportedly began to collude with the rebels. See William Reno, "Privatizing the War in Sierra Leone," *Current History*, May 1997, p. 228.

Government's position vis-à-vis the rebels.¹⁵⁰ EO did not protect Strasser from his own men, however, and in January 1996 his Chief of Defence Staff, Brig-Gen. Julius Maada Bio, overthrew him. Elections were nevertheless held as scheduled in February 1996, and Bio stood down after Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was elected to the presidency. Although Kabbah may have had democratic legitimacy,¹⁵¹ he had little power. His position was further weakened after EO withdrew in January 1997 according to the terms of a November 1996 peace accord.¹⁵² On 25 May 1997, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) overthrew Kabbah. Sankoh ordered his RUF forces to support the AFRC and its leader, Maj. Johnny Paul Koroma. An alliance between the AFRC and the RUF was formed, and RUF members were appointed to senior positions in the new Government.¹⁵³

Nigeria intervened quickly in support of the Kabbah Government but proved unable to topple the junta. Sierra Leone had concluded a bilateral defence agreement with Nigeria in March 1997, which called on Abuja to provide training to Sierra Leone's army and presidential guard. Prior to the coup, some 900 Nigerian troops were present in Sierra Leone¹⁵⁴—a military

¹⁵⁰ "Chronology of Sierra Leone: How diamonds fuelled the conflict," *Africa Confidential*, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.africa-confidential.com/sandline.htm>>>. In February 1995, Strasser hired a small group of former British Army Gurkhas, the Gurkha Security Group, which proved ineffective and withdrew after its commander's death. Strasser then hired EO to train the SLA as well as local militias and self-defence units. EO was also tasked with securing the Government's access to Sierra Leone's diamond mines. Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Kabbah's democratic credentials were undercut somewhat by the fact that a majority of the population did not have the opportunity to cast a ballot. According to *The Economist*, less than 25 per cent of the population had voted, as no one in disputed or rebel-held areas could vote. "The darkest corner of Africa," *The Economist*, 9 January 1999, p. 37.

¹⁵² "Chronology of Sierra Leone: How diamonds fuelled the conflict."

¹⁵³ Sankoh, who had been under house arrest since March 1997, nevertheless was named as Koroma's deputy. As of mid-1999, Sankoh remained in protective custody.

¹⁵⁴ "Nigeria imperatrix," *The Economist*, 7 June 1997, p. 50; see also Paul Ejime, "West African Countries Taking Action on Sierra Leone," *Panafrican News Agency*, 27 May 1997, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.africanews.org>>>.

training team and a battalion attached to ECOMOG.¹⁵⁵ They responded in an effort to try to restore order and reinstate Kabbah, and Abuja rapidly moved to reinforce its positions.¹⁵⁶ Smaller contingents from Ghana and Guinea were also called upon to make the force look more multinational.¹⁵⁷ Yet the force's aerial and naval bombardments failed to oust the AFRC and the RUF from Freetown and control of the Government. Indeed, Nigerian troops suffered casualties and many were captured during the first few weeks, forestalling further military action until Abuja won their release.

Nigeria's mandate for intervening in Sierra Leone was questionable. No agreement explicitly authorized those Nigerian troops present in Freetown prior to the coup to respond militarily in support of the deposed Government.¹⁵⁸ President Kabbah also reportedly asked for Nigerian military assistance in the wake of the coup,¹⁵⁹ but the legality of such a request is suspect. Nigeria then tried to characterize its intervention as an

¹⁵⁵ At the time of the coup, a Nigerian ECOMOG battalion happened to be transiting through Lungi airport (the main hub for transportation and re-supply to and from Liberia). Interview with West African Government official, 1999.

¹⁵⁶ As of 6 June 1997, Nigerian troops in Sierra Leone were estimated to number 3,500-4,000. See IRIN-West Africa Sierra Leone - Special Internal Briefing No. 2, 9 June 1997, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.notes.reliefweb.int>>>.

¹⁵⁷ "Nigeria imperatrix," p. 50. Guinea dispatched several hundred troops to Sierra Leone in accordance with a long-standing bilateral defence agreement between Conakry and Freetown. (Interview with West African Government official, 1999.) A small number of Ghanaian technicians stationed at Lungi airport also joined the effort. Interview with Col. Oduro Apenteng, Director of International Peacekeeping Operations, Ghanaian Ministry of Defence, 18 March 1999, Accra.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. Nigeria claimed that its bilateral defence agreement with Sierra Leone authorized the intervention, yet there has been some disagreement over the terms and the applicability of the agreement. (For opposing views, see Yusuf Bangura, "Security in ECOWAS," *West Africa*, 30 June-6 July 1997, p. 1039; and Bundu, "The case against intervention," p. 1041.) There were subsequent claims that the agreement had not received the requisite Parliamentary approval. See Terence Terry, "Is history repeating itself?," *New African*, April 1998, p. 12.

¹⁵⁹ "ECOWAS intervenes to restore democracy," *Africa Today*, July/August 1997, p. 24.

ECOMOG initiative. However, ECOWAS had not authorized the military action.

When seeking to designate its intervention an “ECOMOG” action, Nigeria took advantage of the fact that ECOWAS still lacked a formal security framework. No institutionalized mechanism had been established during the course of the Liberian conflict. Thus, in response to the crisis in Sierra Leone, Nigeria simply pursued another ad hoc approach. Whereas in Liberia, Nigeria had sought some form of ECOWAS authorization prior to intervening, in Sierra Leone, Nigeria responded militarily first and sought ECOWAS approval only after it had intervened.

ECOWAS Approval and Subregional Dynamics

Formal ECOWAS authorization was not granted until three months after Nigeria intervened. On 26 June 1997, ECOWAS Foreign Ministers met in Conakry to review the situation in Sierra Leone. Although they identified “the use of force” as an appropriate means to restore Kabbah’s defence¹⁶⁰ and referred to “acts of atrocities against ... ECOMOG personnel,”¹⁶¹ they did not establish an ECOMOG force. The ministers created a Committee

¹⁶⁰ *Final Communiqué, Extraordinary Meeting of the ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the Situation in Sierra Leone, Conakry, 26 June 1997*, para. 9.iii, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, para. 10.

of Four,¹⁶² comprising Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Nigeria.¹⁶³ The Committee of Four held unsuccessful negotiations with the junta in July.¹⁶⁴ ECOWAS Chiefs of Staff and Foreign Ministers then held successive meetings in August 1997.¹⁶⁵ The Foreign Ministers "agreed to recommend the establishment of an ECOWAS cease-fire monitoring group in Sierra Leone to be known as ECOMOG II."¹⁶⁶ On 29 August, the ECOWAS Authority extended the scope of ECOMOG's activity to Sierra Leone, "to

¹⁶² The Committee of Four became the Committee of Five with the addition of Liberia in August 1997. (UN Document S/1997/695, Annex I, *Final Communiqué of the Summit of ECOWAS*, 8 September 1997, para. 26.) The Committee was again enlarged in December 1998, becoming the Committee of Six with the addition of Togo, as the current Chair of ECOWAS, in December 1998. (*Extraordinary Meeting of the Committee of Five on Sierra Leone*, Abidjan, 28 December 1998, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.) The Committee ceased to convene after Kabbah was restored in early 1998 but resumed its meetings in late 1998 following the rebel offensive. Interview with Halima Ahmed, Deputy Director, Legal Affairs, ECOWAS Secretariat, 2 September 1999, by telephone.

¹⁶³ *Final Communiqué, Extraordinary Meeting of the ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the Situation in Sierra Leone*, Conakry, 26 June 1997, para. 12. The establishment of the Committee was seen as a means of getting around the apparent divisions within ECOWAS over the appropriate course of action to pursue. (Paul Ejime, "Sierra Leone, Financial Crisis to Dominate ECOWAS Summit Agenda," *Panafrican News Agency*, 18 August 1997, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.africanews.org>>>.) Ghana, Guinea, and Nigeria were involved militarily in Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire had played an active diplomatic role in the conflict since 1996. See "How the West won in Sierra Leone," *New African*, April 1998, p. 14.

¹⁶⁴ *Concluding Statement, Meeting of the ECOWAS Committee of Four on Sierra Leone*, Abidjan, 18 July 1997, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja; see also, ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, Decision A/DEC.7/8/97, *Extending the Scope of Activity and Mandate of ECOMOG to Cover Sierra Leone*, "20th Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government," 29 August 1997, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

¹⁶⁵ See *Final Communiqué, Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of ECOWAS*, Abuja, 28 August 1997, para. 5, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 7.

assist in creating the conducive atmosphere that would ensure the early reinstatement of the legitimate Government of Sierra Leone.”¹⁶⁷

Notwithstanding their formal approval of the Nigerian-led ECOMOG intervention,¹⁶⁸ ECOWAS member States were troubled by its implications and were wary of Nigerian intentions. Countries such as Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana were reluctant to become involved in another expensive ECOMOG mission. Given that Burkina Faso and Liberia had allegedly assisted the RUF rebels, their support for ECOMOG was suspect.¹⁶⁹ Anglophone-francophone tensions had eased somewhat after the death of Ivorian President Hophouët-Boigny in 1993 but were still an issue.¹⁷⁰ Of greater concern initially, however, was the fear that Nigeria had hijacked ECOMOG and that the force had become an instrument of Nigerian domination. Several ECOWAS member States were wary of creating a deleterious precedent.

Moreover, the ECOWAS “approval” given did not authorize the full-scale military intervention that Nigeria had sought. Indeed, ECOWAS member States viewed their authorization as an effort to limit Nigeria’s activities. Some commentators saw the decision extending ECOMOG activities to Sierra Leone as a defeat for Nigeria. Rather than approving an all-out military offensive as Nigeria had hoped, the Authority imposed an embargo on all supplies of petroleum products, arms and military equipment to Sierra Leone and authorized “[t]he subregional forces” to use “all necessary means” to enforce it.¹⁷¹ The decision authorizing ECOMOG

¹⁶⁷ Decision A/DEC.7/8/97, Article 1; see also, UN Document S/1997/695, Annex I, para. 25.

¹⁶⁸ In addition to Abacha, the Heads of State from 11 ECOWAS countries attended the Abuja Summit. Cape Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Mauritania, and Senegal were not represented by their Heads of State.

¹⁶⁹ “ECOWAS: Embargo on Sierra Leone,” *Africa Research Bulletin*, 16 August-15 September 1997, p. 13137.

¹⁷⁰ See Funmi Olonisakin, “Sierra Leone and beyond: Nigeria and regional security,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, June 1998, p. 46.

¹⁷¹ ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, Decision A/DEC.8/8/97, *On Sanctions Against the Illegal Regime in Sierra Leone*, “20th Session of the Authority (continued...)”

to operate in Sierra Leone was seen as a compromise between Nigeria and those States in the subregion opposed to armed intervention.

Skepticism of Nigerian motives was, in part, well-founded. Granted, altruistic impulses played a role in Abuja's decision to intervene in Sierra Leone. The RUF had committed numerous well-publicized atrocities. Nigeria played up the humanitarian rationale and stressed that it was endeavouring to restore democracy in a neighbouring country. Nigeria was also eager to prevent the chaos from spreading any further.¹⁷² Nigeria may have wanted to prove its worthiness for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council as well. In addition, Nigeria's military ruler, Sani Abacha, may have wanted to keep his troops far away from home, where their dissatisfaction may have created domestic security concerns. Financial gain was likely another factor prompting Abuja's intervention. When Kabbah had first come to power, Abacha had reportedly approached the Sierra Leonean authorities for mineral concessions.¹⁷³

The efforts of ECOWAS States to rein in Nigeria were unsuccessful. Nigeria determined its own military strategy and did not consult other ECOWAS members concerning its planned activities. By late 1997, Nigeria had apparently lost faith in the Six-Month Peace Plan for Sierra Leone that the AFRC had signed in October 1997 and opted to pursue a military solution instead.¹⁷⁴ In doing so, Nigeria brushed aside the preference of

¹⁷¹ (...continued)

of Heads of State and Government," 29 August 1997, Articles 2 and 6; see also, UN Document S/1997/695, Annex I, para 25. The tasks assigned to ECOMOG included: [1] monitoring and supervising cease-fire violations; [2] enforcing the sanctions regime; and [3] undertaking any other assignment that the Authority might give them. Decision A/DEC.7/8/97, Article 1.

¹⁷² As Former ECOMOG Chief of Staff and Nigerian Contingent Commander Brig-Gen. A-One Mohammed observed, "We had to put off this fire in order to prevent it from extending to our own houses." A-One Mohammed, "The ECOMOG Story: Our Mission and Success," *ECOWAS Now*, November-December 1998, p. 44.

¹⁷³ See Goodluck Ebelo, "Massacre: A Story of Cover-Up," *Tempo* (Lagos), Vol. 12, No. 3, 28 January 1999, p. 6.

¹⁷⁴ See Michela Wrong and Agencies, "Hundreds Flee as Freetown Comes Under 'Total Attack,'" *Financial Times*, 12 February 1998. The Peace Plan provided for
(continued...)

some other States in the subregion for continued diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis.¹⁷⁵ By late 1997, however, there was a growing appreciation among several ECOWAS members that the rebels were not negotiating in good faith. A Nigerian-led military response was therefore justified. Nigeria launched an offensive to recapture Freetown from the rebels and restore Kabbah's Government in February 1998.

Abuja was able to do its own bidding in part because the force remained Nigerian-stacked and Nigerian-led. Even after ECOMOG had received ECOWAS approval, Abuja continued to provide the bulk of the troops and to finance much of the operation's costs.¹⁷⁶ The initial Ghanaian contingent comprised only 20 personnel.¹⁷⁷ Aside from this small contribution, Ghana was reluctant to become involved militarily in the conflict. During the first year of operations, Guinea provided an infantry battalion, which served alternatively within Sierra Leone and inside its own territory along the border.

ECOMOG's Pyrrhic Victory

ECOMOG, with substantial external assistance, quickly ousted the rebels from Freetown. The British company Sandline International, which

¹⁷⁴ (...continued)

Kabbah's restoration to office on 22 April 1998. (ECOWAS Six Month Peace Plan For Sierra Leone, 23 October 1997-22 April 1998, Article 5, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.) After signing the Peace Plan, Koroma, who had expressed reservations about the nature of the proposed Government, insisted that Nigerian troops leave the country, demanded that Sankoh be released, and asserted that his troops, as the national army, need not disarm. Richard Cornwell, "Sierra Leone—RUF Diamonds?" *African Security Review*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 1998, pp. 77-78; see also, UN Document S/1997/958, *Second Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Sierra Leone*, 5 December 1997, paras. 5-6.

¹⁷⁵ "Thousands Are Trapped in Sierra Leone Fighting," *International Herald Tribune*, 12 February 1998, p. 2.

¹⁷⁶ As a Nigerian Government official pointedly observed, while other countries in the subregion have complained about Nigerian domination, they are not offering their troops or their money. Interview with Nigerian Government official, Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10 March 1999, Abuja.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Apenteng, 18 March 1999, Accra.

had been contracted in July 1997 to assist Kabbah, provided Nigeria with military equipment from small arms to helicopters as well as highly-skilled personnel.¹⁷⁸ Kabbah was re-installed within weeks of ECOMOG's February 1998 offensive, and the RUF and AFRC retreated into the bush.

However, ECOMOG proved unable to solidly defeat the rebels and secure the surrounding countryside. The rebels stepped up their campaign of terror, destroying entire villages and mutilating and murdering civilians in the thousands. Both the type of terrain and the rebels' better knowledge of it hampered ECOMOG's efforts to gain control of the hinterland. ECOMOG's superior firepower was not effective against the rebels' guerrilla tactics, to which the densely-forested region in the northeastern part of the country lends itself. Significantly, the rebels continued to control several diamond mines and use the proceeds to fund their activities.

In addition to the inherent difficulties a conventional force faces when fighting a guerrilla war on foreign territory, ECOMOG has experienced operational shortcomings of its own making. For example, the ECOMOG force has lacked the requisite equipment and logistical support to accomplish its objectives. A shortage of trucks and helicopters¹⁷⁹ as well as weapons and ammunition has restricted its activities and limited its effectiveness. Former ECOMOG Force Commander Timothy Shelpidi acknowledged that his force did not have sufficient numbers of helicopters. He claimed that ECOMOG could have defeated the rebels if it had possessed appropriate counter-insurgency military equipment, such as the MI-24 helicopter gunship.¹⁸⁰

Troop-contributing countries have added to their woes by failing to coordinate their actions. ECOMOG national contingents have not worked together at an operational level. According to the former Defence Adviser

¹⁷⁸ Ero, "The Future of ECOMOG in West Africa," in Cilliers and Mills (eds), *From Peacekeeping to Complex Emergencies: Peace Support Missions in Africa*, p. 64.

¹⁷⁹ Jane Morse, "US Calls for Immediate End to Violence in Sierra Leone," *US Information Agency*, 12 May 1998, available on the Internet at << <http://www.pdq2.usia.gov/scripts> >>.

¹⁸⁰ See IRIN-West Africa Update 380, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.notes.reliefweb.int>>>.

to the British High Commission in Sierra Leone, Col. Peter Norman, participating ECOMOG States have not accepted information from other countries with troops in the field and have generally insisted on operating autonomously. Norman asserts that this lack of coordination has been “the snag” for ECOMOG.¹⁸¹

Corruption, ill-discipline, and lack of *esprit de corps* have all figured heavily in ECOMOG’s problems. Significant numbers of the officer corps have reportedly been in Sierra Leone for personal profit. Because of the lucrative trade in diamonds and the possibility to engage in other business ventures, a Nigerian officer’s loyalty to Abuja’s military regime has been seen as more important than competence or conduct.¹⁸² ECOMOG forces have been accused of selling some of the logistical support that has been provided to them. Non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and foot soldiers have also become entrepreneurs, albeit on a smaller scale. According to a Western military source, ECOMOG soldiers have often been “too busy doing other things” to perform their assigned duties; patrolling is often lax and cursory. Many Nigerian soldiers have not been home for several years (having come directly from serving in Liberia) and have not been regularly paid. They have grown dispirited and poorly motivated. ECOMOG soldiers have also allegedly collaborated with the rebels, although there is no evidence that this is systematic.¹⁸³

Financial constraints have also posed severe limitations. ECOWAS spoke of establishing a trust fund,¹⁸⁴ but had not done so as of mid-1999. Nigeria, which according to Sierra Leone’s Finance Minister had spent US\$ 568.5 million in Sierra Leone—roughly one million per day—as of

¹⁸¹ Interview with Col. Peter Norman, former Defence Adviser, UK High Commission to Sierra Leone, current Defence Adviser, UK High Commission to Nigeria, 8 March 1999, Lagos.

¹⁸² Funmi Olonisakin, “Mercenaries Fill the Vacuum,” *The World Today*, Vol. 54, No. 6, June 1998, p. 148.

¹⁸³ Interview with Samuel, 13 March 1999, Lagos.

¹⁸⁴ UN Document S/1998/107, Annex, *Final Communiqué of the Eighth Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs for the ECOWAS Committee of Five on Sierra Leone*, 9 February 1998, para. 14.

January 1999,¹⁸⁵ said it could not continue to fund the mission at such levels. Indeed, in December 1998, the Nigerian Government had announced that it would be unable to pay civil servants the salaries agreed in a new pay structure.¹⁸⁶

ECOWAS member States initially proved largely unwilling, or unable, to come to Kabbah's and Nigeria's aid. In May 1998, Ghana announced that it was prepared to contribute troops to ECOMOG in Sierra Leone but only after certain concerns had been addressed.¹⁸⁷ In late 1998, Accra had only 200 soldiers participating in ECOMOG. The Guinean battalion withdrew for a time to provide security for its December 1998 presidential elections, but it was redeployed after the elections had taken place.¹⁸⁸ At the October 1998 Abuja Summit, the Authority called upon those that had pledged to commit troops—Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Mali, and Niger—to do so.¹⁸⁹ By the end of the year, however, none had.

ECOMOG's operations in Sierra Leone have been made more difficult by largely unforeseen factors beyond its control. The RUF has received significant levels of support. Despite the repeated and vociferous denials of Presidents Compaoré and Taylor, Ghana and Nigeria, in particular, have continued to accuse Burkina Faso and Liberia of arming and training the

¹⁸⁵ "Nigeria Spends \$1 m Daily on ECOMOG," *Xinhua*, 22 January 1999.

¹⁸⁶ IRIN-West Africa Update 369, 29 December 1998, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

¹⁸⁷ The Ghanaian Minister of Foreign Affairs indicated that ECOMOG's status, objectives, rules of engagement, strength, and required resources needed to be defined. ("Ghana Urges Clarification of ECOMOG's Mandate in Freetown," *Panafrican News Agency*, 4 May 1998, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.africanews.org>>>.) Meeting with the British High Commissioner to Ghana, Ian Mackley, Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings expressed reservations about committing Ghanaian troops. The UK offered US\$ 165,000 of logistical support to assist the possible deployment of Ghanaian troops, but Rawlings declined it. He explained that the sum was insufficient to cover the costs of keeping troops in the theatre. Interview with Amb. Ian Mackley, High Commissioner, UK High Commission to Ghana, 18 March 1999, Accra.

¹⁸⁸ See IRIN-West Africa Update 369, 29 December 1998, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

¹⁸⁹ *Twenty-first Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government*, para. 23.

rebels.¹⁹⁰ ECOMOG Force Commander Maj-Gen. Felix Mujakperuo threatened Burkina Faso and Liberia militarily, saying that ECOMOG “will no longer watch this mischief by supposed leaders ... in view of the danger it poses to us and the whole subregion ... We shall proceed to strike at all channels involved in this movement of heavy arms and ammunition to the rebels by land and sea and air.”¹⁹¹

The actions of President Kabbah have also undermined ECOMOG’s efforts. Rather than using the occasion of his reinstatement to reach out to the RUF and AFRC and seek political compromise, Kabbah instead sought retribution. Notwithstanding international criticism, he summarily executed 24 alleged coup leaders. Some believe that this action together with his initial failure to hold out the possibility of establishing a political dialogue have spurred the rebels to carry out further gross human rights violations. One commentator from the region likened each amputation to a telephone call to Kabbah and the international community demanding that the rebels’ grievances be addressed.¹⁹²

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. Initially, in October 1997, the Council imposed an embargo on the sale or supply of petroleum or petroleum products and arms as well as related *matériel* to Sierra Leone and authorized ECOWAS to ensure its implementation.¹⁹³ Pursuant to the Council’s request,¹⁹⁴ United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan did establish a Trust Fund for

¹⁹⁰ It has been claimed that Presidents Taylor and Compaoré envisage a grouping of military-style states including the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Niger, led by authoritarian leaders beholden to Monrovia and Ouagadougou. “West Africa According to Mr. Taylor,” *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 22 January 1999, p. 2.

¹⁹¹ “W. African Force Warns Liberia, Burkina on S. Leone,” *Reuters*, 8 April 1999.

¹⁹² Interview with an African military source, March 1999, West Africa.

¹⁹³ UN Document S/RES/1132 (1997), 8 October 1997. The Council terminated the prohibitions on the sale of supply of petroleum and petroleum products in March 1998. UN Document S/RES/1156 (1998), 16 March 1998.

¹⁹⁴ UN Document S/PRST/1998/5, 26 February 1998.

Sierra Leone in March 1998,¹⁹⁵ but contributions have been negligible. Annan also created a small United Nations liaison office in Sierra Leone,¹⁹⁶ but the Council authorized the deployment of no more than 10 military liaison and security personnel in April 1998 to staff it.¹⁹⁷ When the Council established the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) in June 1998, it limited the operation's size to only 70 military observers.¹⁹⁸

Seizing upon ECOMOG's shortcomings, appreciative of the international community's demonstrated lack of commitment to Kabbah, and buoyed by the significant external support they had received, the rebels gathered strength and made their way back to Freetown. The junta had reportedly begun its advance as early as September 1998. It appears that the rebels began to infiltrate the Freetown peninsula in September in small numbers. ECOMOG failed to distinguish them from civilian refugees. One informed source claims that rebels entered the peninsula in significant numbers of formed units in mid-December.¹⁹⁹ The Sierra Leonean Government's decision, which Nigeria supported, to enlist "former" RUF rebels and AFRC soldiers in the new Sierra Leone Army to serve alongside ECOMOG troops was, in retrospect, a poor one. Many of these recruits, who numbered in the thousands, remained loyal to the forces fighting Kabbah. They colluded with the RUF and AFRC and in a few strategic places turned on ECOMOG troops. ECOMOG's effectiveness was significantly compromised as a result.²⁰⁰

The January rebel offensive failed to capture the capital but succeeded in wreaking havoc. The rebels seized State House and burned the police headquarters as well as the Nigerian embassy. They also overran the prison

¹⁹⁵ UN Document S/1998/249, *Fourth Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Sierra Leone*, 18 March 1998, para. 13.

¹⁹⁶ See UN Document S/1998/103, *Third Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Sierra Leone*, 5 February 1998, para. 34.

¹⁹⁷ UN Document S/RES/1162 (1998), 17 April 1998.

¹⁹⁸ UN Document S/RES/1181 (1998), 13 June 1998.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with a Western military source, March 1999, West Africa.

²⁰⁰ Interview with a knowledgeable source, 1999.

and released detained RUF and AFRC members.²⁰¹ During the fighting, some 3,000 people were reportedly killed and more than 50,000 fled their homes. Bodies were decaying on the streets of Freetown, the hospital was overwhelmed with amputees, and thousands of people faced starvation.

Nigerian troops also suffered significant casualties during the January 1999 rebel offensive.²⁰² As of mid-1999, the Government had not released a definitive number of Nigerian fatalities that resulted from the siege, partly because doing so would acknowledge a staggering figure and partly because the actual figure may not be known.²⁰³ In January 1999, British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook indicated that some 700 Nigerians had been killed during the course of ECOMOG's involvement in Sierra Leone.²⁰⁴ A well-placed source familiar with the situation believed this figure to be exaggerated, but acknowledged that Nigeria by January 1999 had suffered in excess of 500 fatalities—some 10 per cent of which occurred during the January offensive.²⁰⁵ A Nigerian Government official allowed that his country lost, "God knows how many" troops in Sierra Leone.²⁰⁶ Nigeria reportedly has resorted to burying soldiers outside of their units in an effort to cover up the actual figures.²⁰⁷

²⁰¹ See IRIN-West Africa Weekly Roundup No. 82, 8 January 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²⁰² See, for example, "The Killing Fields," *Africa News Service*, 14 January 1999; IRIN-West Africa Update 337, 12 November 1998, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²⁰³ Nigeria's routine falsification of records also makes getting a handle on the numbers difficult. (Interview with a Western military source, March 1999, West Africa.) Some company commanders and sergeant majors apparently make up troop rosters in order to get rations. Then they skim off the top, selling the additional rations for profit. *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁰⁵ Interview with West African Government official, 1999.

²⁰⁶ Interview with Nigerian Government official, Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10 March 1999, Abuja.

²⁰⁷ Ebelo, "Massacre: A Story of Cover-Up," p. 6.

Salvaging the Situation?

Frustrated by the brutality of the war and the difficulties they had encountered, ECOMOG forces retaliated, staging a brutal counter-offensive. At the end of January, certain ECOMOG troops allegedly began to defend themselves in a “fortnight of retribution,”²⁰⁸ committing revenge killings. ECOMOG’s counter-offensive was code-named “Death Before Dishonor,” to raise the flagging morale of Nigeria’s troops.²⁰⁹ A confidential United Nations human rights report accused ECOMOG soldiers of summarily executing suspected rebels.²¹⁰ Some 100 soldiers were subsequently arrested for questioning in connection with reported excesses.²¹¹

In the wake of these damaging and damning incidents, Abuja announced it would withdraw its troops from Sierra Leone. The decisive military victory that Nigeria sought had become increasingly illusive. Although ECOMOG had never been popular with the Nigerian people, domestic opposition to the initiative peaked in early 1999. Nigerian President Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar indicated that the Nigerian forces would be recalled before the country’s May 1999 transfer to civilian rule. He reasoned that a civilian Government would not accept the operation’s high costs and expected casualties.²¹²

Western countries stepped up their support for ECOMOG considerably in response to Nigeria’s threats to withdraw. In January 1999, the UK pledged an additional US\$ 1.65 million,²¹³ followed by a US\$ 16.5

²⁰⁸ Interview with Norman, 8 March 1999, Lagos.

²⁰⁹ “Sierra Leone: Hundreds Flee Freetown as Fighting Flares,” *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 22 February 1999, p. 13388.

²¹⁰ “UN Report Says Peacekeepers Executed Civilians in Sierra Leone,” *Associated Press*, 12 February 1999.

²¹¹ Edith Lederer, “About 100 Peacekeepers Arrested in Sierra Leone,” *Associated Press*, 17 February 1999.

²¹² Olonisakin, “Mercenaries Fill the Vacuum,” p. 148.

²¹³ IRIN-West Africa Update 373, 5 January 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.notes.reliefweb.int>>>.

million matching grant in March.²¹⁴ As of mid-1999, US\$ 7 million of those sums had been used to provide logistical support for ECOMOG.²¹⁵ Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States are among the other Western countries to have increased their assistance. As in Liberia, the United Nations responded to the flare-up of hostilities by withdrawing its peacekeepers rather than by augmenting its presence. UNOMSIL was reduced to a mere nine military observers following the January rebel advance.²¹⁶ By early June 1999, UNOMSIL's strength was only 24.²¹⁷

African countries—aided by the influx of Western support—responded to Nigeria's announcement by providing more troops. After the January 1999 rebel offensive, Ghana sent 500 soldiers.²¹⁸ During the first week of February, Ghana reportedly contributed another 1,000 men.²¹⁹ A 488-man Malian battalion was deployed in February 1999. Mali, which had previously lacked the necessary funds to undertake the mission,²²⁰ received financial assistance from the Netherlands and the UK to enable it to participate.²²¹

Nigeria subsequently retracted its stated intention to withdraw unilaterally and hastily. Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria's newly-inaugurated

²¹⁴ Ehichioya Ezomon, Sola Dixon, and Moses Ayo Jolayemi, "Britain spends N4.5 billion on Sierra Leone, says Cook," *The Guardian* (Lagos), 11 March 1999, pp. 1-2.

²¹⁵ Interview with Gill Coglein, Deputy Head, Peacekeeping Section, United Nations Department, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 27 August 1999, by telephone.

²¹⁶ UN Document S/1999/237, Annex, *Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone*, 4 March 1999.

²¹⁷ UN Document S/1999/645, Annex, *Sixth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone*, 4 June 1999. According to the Secretary-General, UNOMSIL was to be augmented to 40 by the end of June. *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ "West Africa According to Mr. Taylor," p. 2.

²¹⁹ IRIN-West Africa Update 397, 8 February 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.notes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²²⁰ Interview with Saidou Assama Guindo, Directorate of Political Affairs, Malian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Malians Abroad, 24 March 1999, Bamako.

²²¹ UN Document S/1999/20, *Special Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone*, 7 January 1999, para. 9.

civilian president, reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to the mission in Sierra Leone. Indeed, withdrawing the Nigerian forces would not be an easy decision. Regional security concerns would not disappear. Moreover, there would be a reckoning of Nigerian casualties as the Government would have to account for the Nigerians who failed to return home. In addition, the Government would have to host thousands of enlisted men—and perhaps more importantly, hundreds of officers—some of whom might be bitter from the experience and pose potential security threats.

Abuja has also taken steps to address and rectify shortcomings. Having come under increasing criticism following the events of early 1999, the ECOMOG command was restructured in March. ECOMOG Force Commander Shelpidi was replaced by Mujakperuo. Brig-Gen. Amu Ahmadu, the ECOMOG Task Force Commander in Sierra Leone was also replaced, as was ECOMOG Chief of Staff and Nigerian Contingent Commander Brig-Gen. Gabriel Kpambe.²²² Maxwell Khobe, the Nigerian Chief of Staff of the Sierra Leonean Army, blamed the rebel advances on a “command structure problem.”²²³ Confused lines of communication among senior officers²²⁴ may have also played a role in the reorganization.

While ECOMOG did manage to regain control of Freetown, five months later, in June 1999, the question of how long the war will continue loomed large. It is clear that a military solution is untenable. Whereas diplomacy was not pursued energetically at first, President Kabbah and Sankoh have made what appears to be progress. The 18 May 1999 cease-fire seems to be generally holding. As the negotiations proceeded in Togo, however, Mujakperuo was still seeking to defeat the rebels on the battlefield and had requested an additional 5,000 troops.²²⁵

²²² Madu Onourah, “Mujakperuo Replaces Shelpidi as ECOMOG Chief,” *The Guardian* (Lagos), 12 March 1999, pp. 1-2.

²²³ IRIN-West Africa Update 395, 4 February 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²²⁴ “Sierra Leone: No Surrender, No Deal,” *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 22 January 1999.

²²⁵ IRIN-West Africa Update 441, 13 April 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

ECOMOG IN GUINEA-BISSAU (1998-1999)

Background to the ECOMOG Intervention

The dismissal of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ansumane Mane precipitated an uprising by army officers on 7 June 1998. Earlier that year, in January, Guinea-Bissau's president, João Bernardo Vieira,²²⁶ had suspended Mane following allegations that Mane had been involved in supplying arms to the Casamance separatists in neighbouring Senegal. Mane maintained his innocence, and a parliamentary inquiry into the incident was begun. Before the results of the inquiry were announced, Vieira replaced Mane with Brig-Gen. Humberto Gomes in June 1998. Vieira's plans to arrest Mane failed, however, and the army staged a coup d'état in retaliation. Mane claimed that he had no long-term political ambitions and announced that he intended to set the stage for democratic elections.

Immediately following the coup, Guinea and Senegal intervened militarily in support of Guinea-Bissau's President. Both countries explained their actions as in line with bilateral defence accords they had previously concluded with the Bissau Government. The Casamance issue apparently prompted Senegal's intervention. Guinean President Lansana Conté and President Vieira are close friends. Conakry's concerns about an influx of refugees from Guinea-Bissau was also a factor in its decision.²²⁷

As with the ECOMOG force in Sierra Leone, there was initially some confusion as to when and how the force present in Guinea-Bissau actually became an "ECOMOG" operation. Vieira wrote to Abubakar, the then

²²⁶ Vieira had seized power in 1980, and he was elected to the presidency in 1994. Vieira's popularity waned after Guinea-Bissau entered the *Communauté financière africaine* (CFA) Franc Zone in May 1997 and buying power was drastically reduced.

²²⁷ See Jean-Dominique Geslin, "Une crise sous haute surveillance," *Jeune Afrique*, No. 1953, 16-22 June 1998, pp. 8-9. Guinea reportedly sent 400 troops, and Senegal sent more than 1,300. See "Uprising in Guinea-Bissau," *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol. 35, No. 6, 1-30 June 1998, p. 13133.

ECOWAS Chairman, requesting that ECOMOG deploy in Guinea-Bissau.²²⁸ Meeting to consider this request on 3 July, ²²⁹ ECOWAS Foreign and Defence Ministers condemned the rebellion and reaffirmed their support for Vieira's democratically-elected Government. ²³⁰ They also "recommended that the sphere of activities and mandate of ECOMOG should be broadened to include Guinea-Bissau" and "expressed their support for Guinea and Senegal's rapid intervention." ²³¹ To implement their recommendations, the Ministers set up a Committee of Seven. ²³² At their first meeting on 4 August, the Foreign Ministers of the Committee of Seven "reaffirmed their support for Guinea and Senegal." ²³³

Thus, at the outset, it appeared that Guinean and Senegalese troops were to form the backbone of the ECOMOG force. This raised the concern that any country willing and able—not only Nigeria—could hijack ECOMOG for its own purposes. There is also some confusion as to the weight of ministerial recommendations. According to Laloupo, however, an ECOMOG force can be constituted "after the Ministers have met;" there

²²⁸ UN Document S/1998/638, Annex, *Communiqué on the Situation in Guinea-Bissau, issued in Abidjan on 3 July 1998 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence of ECOWAS*, 13 July 1998, para. 3; see also Cherif Ouazani, "Vieira à Abubakar: bombardez l'aéroport," *Jeune Afrique*, No. 1956, 7-13 July 1998, pp. 36-37.

²²⁹ This meeting was preceded by a fact-finding mission by the ECOWAS Secretariat to the Gambia, Guinea, and Senegal as well as an ECOWAS Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting. UN Document S/1998/638, para. 4.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, paras. 8 and 10.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, paras. 13 and 16.

²³² The Committee comprised: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, and Senegal. (*Ibid.*, para. 14.) In October 1998, at the twenty-first session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, the Committee was enlarged to a Committee of Nine, to include Cape Verde and Togo.

²³³ *Final Communiqué of the First Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Seven on Guinea-Bissau*, 4 August 1998, para. 15, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

is no need to await approval by the Authority of Heads of State and Government.²³⁴

During the course of subsequent meetings, it became increasingly clear that the Guinean and Senegalese troops would not be welcome in the eventual peacekeeping force. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) that the parties signed on 26 July, following consultations with the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (known by its Portuguese acronym, CPLP, for *Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa*), referred to the “deployment of a military observer or an interpositional force, preferably from Portuguese-speaking countries.”²³⁵ Under the joint aegis of ECOWAS and CPLP, a cease-fire agreement was subsequently concluded on 26 August. Although the agreement spoke of the deployment of “observation and interposition forces,” it failed to define them.²³⁶ Similarly, the Final Communiqué of the joint ECOWAS/CPLP meeting indicated that “the composition and all other aspects relative to the deployment of the interposition forces” would be subsequently determined.²³⁷ The Second Joint Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the ECOWAS Committee of Seven and CPLP established the modalities for implementing the cease-fire, as it related to the deployment of an ECOWAS/CPLP observer mission.²³⁸ In the November 1998 Abuja Accord, Vieira and Mane agreed to “the total withdrawal from Guinea-Bissau of all foreign troops.”²³⁹ The agreement also stipulated that “[t]his withdrawal shall be done simultaneously with the

²³⁴ Interview with Laloupo, 11 March 1999, Abuja.

²³⁵ UN Document S/1998/698, Annex, *Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau and the self-proclaimed military junta*, 28 July 1998, para. 1(d).

²³⁶ UN Document S/1998/825, Annex I, *Cease-fire agreement in Guinea-Bissau*, 1 September 1998, Article 1(d).

²³⁷ UN Document S/1998/825, Annex II, *Final Communiqué of the joint ECOWAS/CPLP consultative meeting on the situation in Guinea-Bissau*, 1 September 1998, para. 18.

²³⁸ UN Document S/1998/884, Annex, *Final Communiqué of the Second Joint Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the ECOWAS Committee of Seven on Guinea-Bissau and the CPLP, Abidjan*, 22 September 1998, para. 12.

²³⁹ UN Document S/1998/1028, Annex, *Agreement between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the self-proclaimed military junta*, 3 November 1998, para. 2.

deployment of an ECOWAS Military Observer Group interposition force, which will take over from the withdrawn force.”²⁴⁰

The departure of the Guinean and Senegalese forces from Guinea-Bissau was not immediate. Although troops reportedly began leaving the country in January 1999,²⁴¹ their withdrawal was phased. The continuing presence of Senegalese troops (coupled with the delay in ECOMOG's deployment) prompted the junta to renew calls for an alternative CPLP force in January 1999.²⁴² The Prime Minister-designate appointed to head the transitional Government of national unity also reportedly claimed that the continued presence of Guinean and Senegalese troops endangered the fragile peace. He further threatened that his Government would not take office before the foreign troops had departed.²⁴³ Renewed fighting in early February further prolonged their stay. Indeed, the complete withdrawal of Guinean and Senegalese troops was only accomplished at the end of March 1999.²⁴⁴

Difficulties in Fielding the ECOMOG Force

The belated withdrawal of Guinean and Senegalese troops was in part due to delays surrounding the deployment of the ECOMOG replacement force. Togo dispatched an advance detachment of some 110 military personnel in December 1998,²⁴⁵ but no other country was able to deploy

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ See IRIN-West Africa Update 381, 15 January 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>; see also, "Senegal Withdraws Troops from Bissau," *Panafrican News Agency*, 14 January 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.africanews.org>>>.

²⁴² See IRIN-West Africa Weekly Roundup No. 2, 15 January 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²⁴³ See IRIN-West Africa Update 383, 19 January 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²⁴⁴ UN Document S/1999/432, Annex, *Report on the situation in Guinea-Bissau prepared by the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS*, 16 April 1999, para. 8.

²⁴⁵ Interview with Abou Yacoubou, Plenipotentiary Minister, Political and Judicial Affairs Directorate, Togolese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 16 March (continued...)

until early February 1999. By 12 February, a 600-strong battalion, comprised of equal numbers of troops from Benin, the Gambia, Niger, and Togo was also in place in Guinea-Bissau.

The 712-strong ECOMOG force that ultimately deployed was much smaller than initially envisaged. In November 1998, the ECOMOG Force Commander had carried out a needs assessment to determine an appropriate size for the eventual force. He recommended a three-phased deployment: [1] an advance team of roughly 100 troops; [2] a force of 2,000 to replace the Senegalese and Guinean troops; and [3] a force of 5,000 during the election period. The ECOWAS Secretariat then asked ECOWAS member States to contribute troops on the basis of these requirements. The number of troops pledged was substantially lower than the desired figures. Togo and Niger offered 500 each, Benin 300, and the Gambia 150. Thus, when the ECOWAS Secretariat negotiated the Agreement Defining the Operations, Composition, and Status of ECOMOG on the Territory of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, the "requirements" were reduced to reflect the pledges that had been received: [1] an advance team of 112 Togolese troops; [2] a force of 600 to replace the Senegalese and Guinean troops; and [3] a force of up to 1,450 during the election period.²⁴⁶ ECOWAS subsequently indicated that an additional battalion of

²⁴⁵ (...continued)

1999, Lomé.

²⁴⁶ Interview with Laloupo, 11 March 1999, Abuja; see also UN Document S/1999/445, *Agreement Defining the Operations, Composition and Status of ECOMOG on the Territory of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau* dated 22 March 1999, 20 April 1999, Article V. After the revised figures were made public, the ECOWAS Secretariat denied reports that a troop level of 5,000 had initially been solicited and stated that a 1,450-strong force would suffice. See IRIN-West Africa Update 384, 20 January 1999, and IRIN-West Africa Update 385, 21 January 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.notes.reliefweb.int>>>.

850 was expected to be deployed.²⁴⁷ Beyond the initial commitments, Mali offered to provide a 125-strong contingent.²⁴⁸

Without substantial French assistance, ECOWAS would have been hard-pressed to field even this smaller ECOMOG force on its own. Attempting to explain the time lapse prior to the force's arrival, ECOMOG Force Commander Shelpidi²⁴⁹ lamented in November 1998, "We are not like the US who can deploy troops in 24 hours."²⁵⁰ In December 1998, ECOWAS Executive Secretary Lansana Kouyaté stated that until sufficient financial assistance and logistical support were secured, it would be impossible to predict when the ECOMOG force could be deployed.²⁵¹ France then offered to help deploy the battalion and backstop the operation. The troops were transported to Bissau aboard a French naval

²⁴⁷ UN Document S/1999/432, Annex, paras. 5 and 39; see also IRIN-West Africa Update 423, 16 March 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²⁴⁸ Document S/1999/294, *Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1216 (1998) Relative to the Situation in Guinea-Bissau*, 17 March 1999, para. 11. At a fund-raising conference held at UN Headquarters on 20 April, a number of Western countries pledged financial and logistical support to ECOMOG. See Humanitarian Situation Report Guinea-Bissau: 14-30 April 1999, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 1 May 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²⁴⁹ Although Togolese Col. Gnakoudé Berena served as "ECOMOG Task Force Commander" in Guinea-Bissau, he remained under the command of "ECOMOG Force Commanders" Shelpidi and his successor Mujakperuo.

²⁵⁰ IRIN-West Africa Update 340, 17 November 1998, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>. Yet others accused ECOWAS of dragging its feet with regard to troop deployment. The president of Guinea-Bissau's parliament, for example, reportedly claimed that "practically nothing" had been done to dispatch the troops. IRIN-West Africa Update 352, 3 December 1998, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²⁵¹ IRIN-West Africa Update 361, 16 December 1998, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

vessel, and France supplied a number of military trucks. ²⁵² France also provided *per diem* to participating troops. ²⁵³

Despite the considerable French assistance, logistical problems nevertheless hampered the effectiveness of the force. As United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan observed, “[o]wing to the lack of adequate communication equipment, troops operating in other parts of the country generally return on the same day to Bissau to reduce the risk of being cut off from contact with the force headquarters.” ²⁵⁴ He also noted that “[t]o enhance its patrol and reconnaissance activities in Bissau and elsewhere in the country, ECOMOG has indicated a need, in particular, for four-wheel drive vehicles, International Maritime Satellite Organization (INMARSAT) and mobile radio communication equipment.” ²⁵⁵ In fact, when hostilities flared up on 6 May 1999, ECOMOG experienced a communication breakdown, and it was impossible to establish contact with the ECOMOG High Command. ²⁵⁶

The small size of the operation also compromised its ability to carry out its duties. As the ECOWAS Executive Secretary indicated in his *Report on the Situation in Guinea-Bissau*, “[t]he limited troop strength and scant resources of the ECOMOG force currently operating in Guinea-Bissau are in fact delaying or reducing some of its activities. According to ECOMOG, insufficient numbers prevented it from deploying along the Guinea-Bissau/Senegal border, as called for in the November 1998 Abuja

²⁵² See “ECOMOG troops disembark in Guinea-Bissau,” *Agence France-Presse*, 4 February 1999, available on the Internet at <<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int/>>; see also, “African Troops Land to Police Bissau Truce,” *Reuters*, 6 February 1999.

²⁵³ UN Document S/1999/432, Annex, para. 4.

²⁵⁴ UN Document S/1999/294, para. 13.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Situation Report: Fighting Breaks Out in Bissau, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 8 May 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int/>>>.

Accord.²⁵⁷ When the junta ousted President Vieira on 7 May 1999, ECOMOG soldiers were in no position to prevent the renewed fighting.²⁵⁸

Coup d'État Threatens Coup d'Éclat

The May 1999 coup d'état in Guinea-Bissau was a significant setback for ECOWAS. On 10 May, Benin announced that it would withdraw its contingent.²⁵⁹ On 25 May, ECOWAS Foreign Ministers determined that the entire ECOMOG operation should be withdrawn, citing financial difficulties as well as developments on the ground.²⁶⁰ Subject to the availability of the French naval vessel designated to ferry the troops back to their respective countries, the force was expected to begin pulling out during the first week of June.²⁶¹ The early withdrawal of ECOMOG is not entirely attributable to the failings the force or of ECOWAS more generally. Although the force that ultimately deployed was smaller than originally foreseen, the parties' lack of resolve to implement and respect the cease-fire agreement should not be blamed on ECOMOG or ECOWAS. Nevertheless, the peacekeeping mission was supposed to actively assist the parties in implementing a *political* solution and not simply passively observe one of the parties imposing a *military* solution.

²⁵⁷ UN Document S/1999/294, para. 15. The failure of ECOMOG to deploy along the northern border was also reportedly due to the fact that the military junta had not authorized this action. See Humanitarian Situation Report Guinea-Bissau: 27 March-13 April 1999, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 14 April 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²⁵⁸ "Guinea-Bissau president and troops surrender to rebels: report," *Agence France-Presse*, 7 May 1999, available on the Internet at <<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>.

²⁵⁹ IRIN-West Africa Update 461, 11 May 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²⁶⁰ UN Document S/1999/613, Annex *Final Communiqué of the Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs Held at Lomé*, 27 May 1999, para. 30. It is not yet clear how this development will affect the deployment of the UN Post-Conflict Peace Building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS). Guinea-Bissau Humanitarian Situation Report, 18-31 May 1999, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 31 May 1999, available on the Internet at <<<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>>.

²⁶¹ "West African ECOMOG Troops to Leave G. Bissau Tuesday," *Agence France-Presse*, 29 May 1999, available on the Internet at <<http://wwwnotes.reliefweb.int>>.

In spite of its difficulties, the ECOMOG force in Guinea-Bissau signalled a welcome and significant departure from previous initiatives. The charge that ECOMOG is simply a Nigerian tool is no longer persuasive. Nigeria, the bulwark of previous ECOMOG operations, was absent from this mission. The force was comprised of one anglophone and three francophone countries. Two ECOWAS member States—Guinea and Senegal—were expressly forbidden from participating in the force because the military junta objected to their presence. This was the first time in ECOMOG's history that a party's demands regarding force composition were heeded.

ECOMOG also operated in accordance with a clearly-defined mandate.²⁶² A comprehensive agreement, dated 22 March 1999 and signed between ECOWAS and representatives from the two parties to the conflict, put in place a legal framework for ECOMOG's presence on the ground.²⁶³ The text defined ECOMOG's mandate as monitoring the cease-fire and thereby facilitating the holding of elections. It also described ECOMOG's mission.²⁶⁴ In addition, the document specified the privileges and immunities that devolved to ECOMOG as an entity, to contingents participating in the force, and to individuals and included other regulations

²⁶² Margaret Vogt asserts that ECOMOG's mandate, however well defined, was not sufficiently robust. The force relied too much on the good faith of the belligerents. Interview with Margaret A. Vogt, former Senior Associate, International Peace Academy, current Special Assistant to the Assistant-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, UN Department of Political Affairs, 22 June 1999, New York.

²⁶³ UN Document S/1999/445.

²⁶⁴ Tasks included: [1] supervising observance of the cease-fire; [2] promoting a climate of trust between the parties to the conflict; [3] acting as conciliator between the parties; [4] helping the Government to mobilize demining assistance; [5] collaborating with the Government to enforce the ban on illicit arms, munitions, and other war materials; [6] providing security along the border with Senegal; [7] acting as a buffer between the parties until the establishment of a Joint Commission charged with demilitarizing Bissau, collecting arms, removing battle lines and checkpoints; [8] assuring access for humanitarian organizations; [9] providing security; and [10] helping organize elections and ensuring the safety of observers, materials, and polling areas. *Ibid.*, Article IV.

concerning the various rights and responsibilities of ECOMOG and ECOMOG personnel.²⁶⁵

In a noteworthy departure from past practices, ECOWAS also began submitting periodic reports to the United Nations Security Council concerning its activities in Guinea-Bissau. Security Council Resolution 1216 requested ECOWAS to provide reports to the Council “at least every month,” beginning one month after the deployment of troops.²⁶⁶ Although its first report was a few months late, ECOWAS eventually provided a comprehensive description of the situation on the ground, covering ECOMOG’s deployment, the implementation of the Abuja Accord, political issues, military issues, social and humanitarian issues, current or potential problems, and other observations.²⁶⁷

Because ECOWAS withdrew before the United Nations peace-building operation was deployed, the cooperative relationship foreseen never materialized. In February 1998, the United Nations Secretary-General indicated his intention to establish a United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS).²⁶⁸ The small unit was to comprise a director, several political affairs and human rights officers, an electoral officer, a military adviser, and support staff. As originally envisaged, its mandate covered four areas: [1] creating an environment conducive to consolidating peace and organizing democratic elections; [2] working, with the Government, ECOWAS, and others, to facilitate the implementation of the Abuja Agreement; [3] seeking the parties’ commitment to adopt a voluntary programme of arms collection, disposal, and destruction; and [4] harmonizing United Nations activities in the country.²⁶⁹ The coup calls into question the relevance of the mandate. It is

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Articles VI-XIV.

²⁶⁶ UN Document, S/RES/1216 (1998), 21 December 1998, para. 7.

²⁶⁷ UN Document S/1999/432, Annex.

²⁶⁸ UN Document S/1999/232, *Letter dated 26 February 1999 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council*, 26 February 1999.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.* The Security Council subsequently expressed its support for the Secretary-General’s decision to establish UNOGBIS. UN Document S/RES/1233 (1999), 6 April 1999, para. 7; see also UN Document S/1999/233, *Letter dated 3 March 1999 from*
(continued...)

therefore impossible to know if any lessons have been learned from the difficulties encountered between the United Nations and ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT, AND RESOLUTION, PEACEKEEPING AND SECURITY

Path Towards the Mechanism

ECOMOG's experiences in Liberia and Sierra Leone prompted discussions among ECOWAS member States to develop an institutionalized mechanism for crisis prevention, management, and resolution. Such a mechanism would address many long-standing shortcomings concerning ECOMOG's mode of deployment, force composition, operational command and control, and the lack of involvement of ECOWAS member States and the ECOWAS Secretariat in the management of its operations. In the nine years since the ECOMOG intervention in Liberia began, various steps towards the establishment of a new framework have been achieved.

As early as 1993, with the adoption of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty, the intention to elaborate a new security framework was apparent. Attesting to the expanded focus of ECOWAS, the Revised Treaty includes an article entitled Regional Security, which provides that ECOWAS member States "undertake to cooperate with the Community in establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of intra- and inter-State conflicts."²⁷⁰ The relevant provision also refers to the need to "establish a regional peace and security observation system and peace-keeping forces where appropriate."²⁷¹ The article does not expand upon the structure of the

²⁶⁹ (...continued)

the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General, 3 March 1999.

²⁷⁰ Article 58.2, Revised ECOWAS Treaty, p. 687.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Article 58.2(f), p. 688.

envisaged framework, however, stating instead that those details should be elaborated in additional protocols.²⁷²

Yet the issue was not addressed at the level of the ECOWAS Authority until more than four years later. In the interim, a number of initiatives concerning the creation of peace and security mechanisms were taken outside of the ECOWAS framework. Although ECOWAS member States spearheaded some of these initiatives, ECOWAS itself was neither directly implicated nor involved.²⁷³ In December 1997, the decision was finally taken to move forward with the creation of a permanent peace and security mechanism within ECOWAS.

The process was jump-started at the Fourth Extraordinary Summit of the ECOWAS Authority, convened at Togo's behest in December 1997. At this meeting, ECOWAS Heads of State agreed in principle to set up a formal mechanism to prevent, manage, and resolve conflict as well as to supervise peacekeeping in the subregion. The Authority also resolved to implement the Regional Security provision of the 1993 Revised Treaty as well as existing protocols.²⁷⁴

Since the December 1997 Summit, the form of the mechanism has begun to take shape. In March 1998, ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Affairs, and Security met in Yamoussoukro to establish

²⁷² Ibid., Article 58.3, p. 688.

²⁷³ At the June 1994 OAU Heads of State and Government Summit in Tunis, Togolese President Gnassingbé Eyadéma proposed the creation of an African peacekeeping force. At the 18th France-Africa Summit in Biarritz in November 1994, President Eyadéma was tasked with creating a blueprint for this force. A study was then circulated at the 19th Franco-African Summit in Ouagadougou in December 1996, setting out the modalities of this proposed initiative. See "Communication du Président de la République Togolaise Son Excellence Gnassingbé Eyadéma au 20ème Sommet France-Afrique," 26-28 November 1998, pp. 20-26, courtesy of Togolese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lomé. In April 1997, another subregional body, ANAD, began to investigate the modalities for a subregional peacekeeping force in West Africa.

²⁷⁴ *Final Communiqué of the Fourth Extraordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government*, 17 December 1997, Lomé, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

guidelines for its structure.²⁷⁵ Debate centred around whether ECOMOG should be transformed into a permanent force or whether another peace force should be constituted. The ministers eventually decided that ECOMOG would serve as the basis for the future peacekeeping structure.²⁷⁶ ECOWAS Chiefs of Defence Staff then met in May 1998 to further discuss subregional security.²⁷⁷ In July 1998, a group of independent "resource persons"²⁷⁸ prepared a draft framework for the mechanism at the ECOWAS Secretariat's request, and a group of "governmental experts"²⁷⁹ then met to study the draft. On 23 July, ECOWAS Ministers of Defence, Internal Affairs, and Security endorsed the proposed framework, as did ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 26 October.²⁸⁰ On 31 October, the Authority also endorsed the draft mechanism and tasked the Executive Secretariat with elaborating appropriate protocols and instruments for the effective application of the Mechanism.²⁸¹ Although the ECOWAS

²⁷⁵ Vogt termed this meeting "the fiasco in Yamoussoukro," because a number of different initiatives from different camps were presented and the ECOWAS Secretariat had not come up with a template. Interview with Vogt, 22 June 1999, New York.

²⁷⁶ See "West African ministers agree on peacekeeping force," *BBC News*, 13 March 1998, available on the Internet at <<news.bbc.co.uk>>; see also "News in Brief - Thursday, 12 March 1998," *Panafrican News Agency*, 12 March 1998, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.africanews.org>>>. Ultimately, the only dissenting voices were those of Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. Interview with Vogt, 22 June 1999, New York.

²⁷⁷ Roger Laloupo, "Conflict prevention, management and resolution: ECOWAS takes initiative," *The West African Bulletin*, No. 6, October 1998, p. 9.

²⁷⁸ Vogt, then with the International Peace Academy, led this six-person group. Interview with Laloupo, 11 March 1999, Abuja.

²⁷⁹ Each ECOWAS member State was represented by three experts from the foreign affairs, defence, and security divisions of their respective Governments. *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ See ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, Decision A/DEC/11/10/98, Relating to the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, 31 October 1998, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

Secretariat had hoped to prepare these protocols before the next ordinary Summit, it will be unable to do so.²⁸²

Structure of the Proposed Mechanism

The principal decision-making body of the proposed mechanism is a Mediation and Security Council. The Council will consist of nine member States, elected for a two-year period. Membership on the Council will be extended automatically to the serving ECOWAS Chair as well as to its immediate predecessor. All of the Council's decisions will require a two-thirds majority. The Council will convene "as often as necessary," either at the ECOWAS Secretariat or in any of its members.²⁸³ ECOWAS will establish a separate Secretariat to service the Council.²⁸⁴ As envisaged, the Council will have five primary functions: [1] authorizing political as well as military interventions; [2] determining mandates and terms of reference for such interventions; [3] reviewing such mandates and terms of reference periodically; [4] appointing actors such as the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary and the Force Commander, upon the Executive Secretary's recommendation; and [5] informing the United Nations and OAU of its decisions.²⁸⁵

In carrying out its functions, the Mediation and Security Council will operate at three levels. A Committee of Ambassadors accredited to both Nigeria (as the seat of the ECOWAS Secretariat) and ECOWAS will meet once a month as a matter of course, but more frequently as the need arises. Their reports on regional peace and security issues will be forwarded to all Council members as well as to any affected States. A Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Affairs, and Security, will meet quarterly, or more frequently as the need arises, to discuss the general political and security situation in the subregion. Their reports will be forwarded to the Council's third level, the

²⁸² Interview with Laloupo, 11 March 1999, Abuja.

²⁸³ "Draft ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security," Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Defence, Internal Affairs and Security, Banjul, 23-24 July 1998, p. 4, para. 17, courtesy of ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6, para. 20.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5, para. 18.

Heads of State. The nine Heads of State will meet at least twice a year and will make the final decisions on any measures to be taken. ²⁸⁶

A Defence and Security Commission will serve as a technical advisory body to the Mediation and Security Council. The Commission will be comprised of Chiefs of Staff, Police Chiefs, Experts from Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and representatives from Immigration and Customs Services, Border Guards, and Narcotic Agencies. The Commission will instruct the Mediation and Security Council on the formulation of mandates and terms of reference for various missions and on the appointment of force commanders. As a part of its duties, the Commission will keep track of the administrative and logistical requirements for peacekeeping operations. ²⁸⁷

An ad hoc Council of Elders is also to play an important role in arbitration, conciliation, and mediation. The Council will be made up of eminent persons from the subregion, the African continent, and beyond. The Executive Secretary and the current ECOWAS Chair will identify competent individuals to serve in this capacity, and their names will be entered into a database, which will be reviewed annually. Whenever the need arises, the Executive Secretary will appoint a Council, subject to the approval of the parties to the dispute. The mandate and composition of the Council will vary, based upon the nature of its particular mission. ²⁸⁸

Under the proposed mechanism, the Executive Secretary will have an enhanced role in conflict prevention and management. The Executive Secretary will be responsible for administrative, operational, and political aspects of ECOWAS field missions. The Executive Secretary will also recommend individuals to serve as Special Representatives, as Force Commanders, and as eminent persons on the Council of Elders. On his or her own initiative, the Executive Secretary can also deploy fact-finding and mediation missions. The Executive Secretary will also organize and participate in meetings of the Mediation and Security Council. Finally, the Executive Secretary will submit reports to the Mediation and Security

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6, para. 19.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6, paras. 21-23.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7, paras. 24-27.

Council and to ECOWAS member States on the activities of the mechanism.²⁸⁹

To manage and oversee ECOWAS field activities, a new branch—the Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Political Affairs, Defence, and Security—will be established within the ECOWAS Secretariat.²⁹⁰ This Office will consist of a Department of Operations, Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Affairs (DOPHA), a Department of Political Affairs and Security (DPAS), and an Observation Monitoring Center (OMC). The DOPHA will formulate and implement policy in all ECOWAS military, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations, focusing on such issues as planning, administering, and monitoring operations, as well as training. The DPAS will deal with political activities relating to conflict prevention, management, and resolution. It will formulate and implement policy on cross-border crime, light weapons flows, drug controls, and peace restoration measures.²⁹¹

To enhance its capacity for both “early warning” and “early action,” ECOWAS is establishing a Subregional Security and Peace Observation System.²⁹² This network will analyse factors that potentially affect regional peace and security, disseminating information on a day-to-day basis. Economic, environmental, political, security, and social indicators will be assessed. The ultimate aim of the Security and Peace Observation System is to enhance the ability of ECOWAS to prevent situations from degenerating into violent crises. To facilitate data collection and processing, ECOWAS will develop an Observation and Monitoring System, consisting of a network of member States, grouped into zones.²⁹³ The subregion will be divided into four Observation Monitoring Zones, possibly

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8, para. 28.

²⁹⁰ As mentioned above, the Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Political Affairs, mentioned in the 1993 Revised Treaty, was never established.

²⁹¹ “Draft ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security,” pp. 8-9, para. 31.

²⁹² The Observation System was put forward and supported by francophone States. Interview with Vogt, 22 June 1999, New York.

²⁹³ “Draft ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security,” pp. 9-11, paras. 32-35.

headquartered in Banjul, Ouagadougou, Monrovia, and Cotonou.²⁹⁴ The field offices will submit reports to the Observation and Monitoring Center at the ECOWAS Secretariat, which in turn will analyse and collate the information.²⁹⁵

To remedy many of the structural and operational problems of past ECOMOG forces, ECOWAS is setting up a permanent peacekeeping force. This new structure will provide ECOWAS with the capacity to serve as the command and control centre and to provide institutional support in future peace operations. The military arm of the peacekeeping structure will be a composite brigade-sized standby force, called ECOMOG.²⁹⁶ This force will be comprised of national contingents from each ECOWAS member State that are earmarked, trained, equipped and organized for deployment on short notice.²⁹⁷ For each mission, the strength, standard operating procedures, and rules of engagement will vary according to that force's mandate. Under the new mechanism, ECOMOG's deployment will be systematic. The Observation Monitoring System will issue a report to the Executive Secretary, who in turn will inform the Mediation and Security Council. The Mediation and Security will then decide upon appropriate form of intervention, issue a mandate, define terms of reference, and appoint the principal officers.²⁹⁸ The ECOMOG Force Commander²⁹⁹ will

²⁹⁴ Zone 1 will consist of Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, and Senegal. Zone 2 will consist of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Niger. Zone 3 will consist of Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Zone 4 will consist of Benin, Nigeria, and Togo. *Ibid.*, p. 12, paras. 36-37.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13, paras. 38-42.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14, paras. 43-45. In addition to peacekeeping operations, ECOMOG may undertake smaller observation and monitoring missions, humanitarian missions, preventive deployment actions, peace-building operations, and policing activities. *Ibid.*, p. 16, para. 52.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16, paras. 47-48 and 51. Periodic joint training exercises will be organized. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15, para. 48.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15, para. 50.

²⁹⁹ The Force Commander's functions will include: ensuring the administrative, logistical, and operational effectiveness of the mission; giving operational instructions to contingent and unit commanders; and providing security for humanitarian organizations operating in the mission area. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18, para. 60.

report to the Executive Secretary, either directly or through the Special Representative of Executive Secretary,³⁰⁰ if one is appointed.

The new mechanism also seeks to redress the funding problems that have plagued past ECOMOG peace operations. Recognizing that the current system of assessed contributions to the annual ECOWAS budget is not working, ECOWAS is in the process of instituting a community levy to fund the Secretariat's activities. Under the new system, ECOWAS member States will be taxed 0.5 per cent on their imports from outside the subregion. A percentage of this levy will be earmarked for funding the mechanism.³⁰¹ Beyond this, funds within the Executive Secretariat's annual budget will be earmarked for peace and security activities. A Special Peace Fund will also be established for voluntary contributions. Under the new system, troop-contributing countries should not have to bear the full financial burden of their military involvement; rather ECOWAS intends to take financial responsibility after the first three months of a given operation. ECOWAS also intends to fund the acquisition of logistics.³⁰²

ECOWAS PEACEKEEPING PROSPECTS : THE MECHANISM AND BEYOND

The advent of the mechanism represents an important turning point for ECOWAS. The organization has decided to abandon its ad hoc peacekeeping approach in favour of a formal peace and security structure.

³⁰⁰ The functions of the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary will include: serving as Chief of Mission, responsible for the political direction of the mission; spearheading peacemaking activities; providing political guidance to the Force Commander; briefing ECOWAS member States on mission operations; coordinating activities with other international organizations operating in the mission area; and keeping the Executive Secretary apprised of any and all developments. *Ibid.*, p. 17, para. 59.

³⁰¹ Laloupo predicts that the levy will be in place before the end of 1999. Interview with Laloupo, 11 March 1999, Abuja.

³⁰² "Draft ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security," pp. 18-19, paras. 61-65; and interview with Laloupo, 11 March 1999, Abuja.

Yet it remains to be seen whether it will be able to exclude those aspects of ECOMOG that have made it a liability, while preserving those aspects of ECOMOG that have made it a success.

A lack of adequate financial resources threatens to undermine the organization's grandiose future plans before they can be implemented. ECOWAS's annual budget is US\$ 10 million, and it is currently owed more than US\$ 40 million in arrears. The Secretariat's formal move from Lagos to Abuja in 1998 was delayed for seven years in part because it lacked the necessary funds.³⁰³ The organization cannot presently pay its staff,³⁰⁴ let alone finance new peace and security initiatives. Notwithstanding all of the suggested means of acquiring funds under the new mechanism, it is doubtful whether ECOWAS will be able to secure adequate resources for the proposed initiatives. The Community levy was first "instituted" in the 1993 ECOWAS Revised Treaty.³⁰⁵ More than six years later, it still has not entered into force. Thus, earmarking a percentage of the levy for the mechanism's activities is a long-range plan, at best. Moreover, unless the Secretariat's annual budget is increased substantially, funds earmarked from it for the mechanism's activities will not be terribly significant. Although international support for ECOMOG initiatives has grown, ECOWAS should not rely too heavily upon voluntary contributions. Executive Secretary Kouyaté has cautioned, "If we depend 100 per cent on donors, all the good ideas mentioned may never be realized."³⁰⁶ These financial uncertainties (and the exorbitant costs of past ECOMOG missions) also cast doubts upon the Secretariat's stated intention of assuming financial responsibility for ECOMOG peacekeeping operations after three months.

³⁰³ Interview with Ahmed, 11 March 1999, Abuja. The headquarters was constructed and fully furnished by 1991. Ibid.

³⁰⁴ In September 1998, the Nigerian Government loaned the ECOWAS Secretariat the money it needed to pay its staff. Paul Ejime, "ECOWAS Staff Want More Pay," *Panafrican News Agency*, 21 October 1998, available on the Internet at <<<http://www.africanews.org>>>.

³⁰⁵ ECOWAS 1993 Revised Treaty, Article 72.

³⁰⁶ Lansana Kouyaté, "ECOWAS Summit: Abuja, October 30-31, Progress Report," *ECOWAS Survey*, p. 3.

A related concern is the ability of the ECOWAS Secretariat to assume the responsibilities envisaged for it in the realm of peace and security. Although the Secretariat's staff is dedicated and efficient, there are real limits as to what they can accomplish given their small numbers, the ever-increasing demands placed upon them, and the scant resources at their disposal. The Secretariat has not grown commensurately with the expanding role of ECOWAS, either numerically or conceptually. As a result, the two-person Legal Affairs Division has become saddled with much of the organization's peace and security work.³⁰⁷ The Information Division has also assumed a number of related responsibilities. The proposed restructuring seeks to reorder the Secretariat's organizational morass, with the creation of the Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Political Affairs, Defence, and Security. This should also ease the workload of other divisions. Yet it will take some time before this Office is established and fully-staffed—much less functioning efficiently.

Moreover, some aspects of the proposed mechanism appear far-fetched in view of present and foreseeable realities. The Subregional Security and Peace Observation System, for example, seems well beyond the organization's current capabilities. It is difficult to see how the Secretariat plans to create, finance, and staff four Observation Monitoring Zone field offices. Vogt concedes that the Observation System is "ambitious," but stresses that it is a "tremendous political coup" that member States have agreed to allow field offices on their territory.³⁰⁸ Similarly, plans for a standing peacekeeping force—regardless of the size—appear unrealistic.

There is also the possibility that institutionalizing ECOMOG could prove its demise. Potential participants might find it less attractive to contribute to an ECOMOG force if some of their autonomy were taken away. A country might opt not to deploy at all if its participation in a given operation were subject to too many controls. It is conceivable that in redressing criticisms of prior ECOMOG deployments, those elements that

³⁰⁷ Interview with Ahmed, 11 March 1999, Abuja.

³⁰⁸ Interview with Vogt, 22 June 1999, New York. Vogt also stresses that the "end goal" need not be the starting point; ECOWAS could begin by appointing a desk officer for each zone within the Secretariat. *Ibid.*

actually made ECOMOG work will be removed. As Kayode Samuel, former Special Assistant to the Nigerian Head of State, observed, “Some of the ECOMOG officers I met in Sierra Leone were of the view that the success of ECOMOG is in large part due to the fact that there was a ‘preponderant power’ driving the process, i.e., Nigeria. Interestingly, this is a position shared by non-Nigerian ECOMOG officers.”³⁰⁹

ECOWAS member States have distinguished themselves by their willingness to assume primary responsibility for promoting peace and security in the subregion. It is encouraging that ECOWAS countries have begun to stage multinational field training exercises and prioritize peacekeeping training. Eight ECOWAS States took part in Exercise *Guidimakha*, which Senegal hosted in February 1998.³¹⁰ Two months later, nine ECOWAS members attended Exercise *Cohésion Komienga* in Togo.³¹¹ Beyond this, a number of ECOWAS States now offer peacekeeping courses at their national staff colleges and have opened participation to other countries from the subregion. Moreover, in three instances, they have deployed sizeable military forces. ECOMOG intervened when no other organization would, and it has stayed the course. As former ECOMOG Force Commander Victor Malu observed concerning Liberia, “Regional peacekeeping I think is much more effective than the United Nations peacekeeping, in terms of the casualties that have occurred within the seven years of operations here. If the United Nations had got one-tenth of that, they would have abandoned this place over how many years back.”³¹²

Yet this willingness has sometimes undermined peace and security. ECOMOG has *inflicted* casualties as well as *incurred* them—at levels that

³⁰⁹ Written correspondence with Samuel, 20 April 1999.

³¹⁰ Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal were represented at battalion strength, while Cape Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau provided platoons. *Guidimakha 98*, Paris: EMA-EMIA, Sirpa/ Bureau édition, May 1998, courtesy of French Ministry of Defence.

³¹¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, and Togo were the ECOWAS members that participated. *Exercise Cohésion Komienga 98*, Lomé: IMP EDITOGO, 1998, courtesy of Beninois Ministry of Defence.

³¹² “Interview with Maj-Gen. Victor Malu,” *BBC Newsday Radio Broadcast*, 1 February 1998, courtesy of BBC.

call into question the wisdom of its actions. Its neutrality has often been called into question, which has limited its effectiveness. Sometimes a lack of resources has forced contributing countries to develop creative financing schemes or prevented them from paying their soldiers. Such policies have engendered corruption and ill-discipline among participating officers and troops. The Mechanism should address these shortcomings as a matter of priority.

