

The Liberian conflict and the ECOWAS–UN partnership

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The internationalisation of the Liberian conflict is a result mainly of two factors. The first is the beleaguered attempt by Liberia's neighbours, acting under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to prevent the regional spread of the conflict through direct political and military intervention.¹ The second is the decision by the United Nations (UN), following the euphoric reception of *An Agenda for Peace* in 1992, to demonstrate global support for 'the efforts of the people of Liberia to establish peace in their country'.² Thus internationalised, the Liberian conflict set the stage for an experiment in international politics. For the first time ever, 'the United Nations would undertake a major peace-keeping operation with another organisation, in this case a subregional organisation...'.³ The Liberian case provides a useful empirical basis for evaluating the idea of task-sharing between the United Nations and regional arrangements—and by extension with the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) discussed later in this issue—in accordance with the spirit of Article 33 of the UN Charter. Accordingly, this article evaluates the effectiveness of the ECOWAS–UN partnership in responding adequately to the conflict in Liberia, by answering three critical questions: what led to the ECOWAS–UN partnership in Liberia? What was the nature of the partnership? What lessons may be drawn from this pioneering partnership?

ECOWAS failure and UN involvement

The United Nations was invited to join the search-for-peace effort in Liberia only *after* ECOWAS had failed to make any appreciable progress towards conflict resolution. According to David Wippman, attempts made in 1990 to place the Liberian crisis on the Security Council's agenda failed, 'in part because of opposition by Côte d'Ivoire, (and because the Council's members shared the US view that the problem should be solved by Africans'.⁴ What is the explanation for the organisation's change of position on this matter? The ECOWAS *volte-face* reflected its beleaguered efforts to contain the Liberian conflict through direct diplomatic and military intervention.

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The failure of diplomatic intervention

ECOWAS did not expect that its intervention in Liberia would be a long, drawn-out affair. Rather, it envisaged a short, surgical 'police action'. Indeed, the nature of the conflict itself suggested a seemingly simple solution. After all, the immediate cause of the problem was the guerrilla 'incursion' into Liberia's northern territory by a band of rebels, numbering about a couple of hundred 'Gio tribesmen'.⁵ In the view of the military rulers of Liberia's neighbours, most notably Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Guinea, the rebel incursions were an act of thuggery that should have been repelled quite easily by the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). Consequently, AFL's failure to contain these raids suggested a fundamental weakness in the ability of the central government in Monrovia, headed by President Samuel Doe, to govern effectively. One solution would be to shore up the Doe regime through the provision of arms and ammunition and, if need be, military advisers. Indeed, Nigeria and the United States did precisely that until it became obvious by the summer of 1990 that the 'incursions' were not uncoordinated acts by some 'tribesmen'. Rather, the Doe government was facing a well-planned military rebellion led by an opposition militia, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), which had recruited massively from the ranks of the discontented throughout Liberia.⁶ With rebel forces occupying two-thirds of Liberia's territory, the Doe government helpless and reduced to tenuous control of a few perimeters around the presidential mansion, and the civilian survivors of the conflict fleeing in large numbers to neighbouring countries, regional attention turned to the feasibility of establishing a politico-military presence in Liberia.

ECOWAS took on the Liberian challenge barely five months after the initial outbreak of armed conflict. At the outset the US was expected to intervene, as the patron of the Liberian state throughout much of its history. Washington was, however, preoccupied with changes in the international system caused by rapid political changes in the former Soviet bloc. Many observers expected that early reports emerging from West Africa in the middle of spring 1990 alleging that NPFL rebels were trained and equipped by Libya would trigger strong US reaction, culminating in the direct military intervention advocated by European ambassadors.⁷ In many ways Washington did react strongly, for the US soon began consultations with its African 'allies' with a view to orchestrating a regional response to the Libyan threat. However, the dynamics of the war changed quite sharply by the end of spring 1990 due to a series of massacres targeting foreign nationals in Liberia, by government and rebel forces alike.

Washington's response to this development was to deploy forces to evacuate US citizens and privileged foreigners residing in Liberia. Vocal Liberians, pan-Africanists and the African press saw this action as a clear indication of the growing trend towards the marginalisation of Africa by the West in general. In particular, the action was seen as proof of US insensitivity to the plight of Africans. If the world had abandoned Africa because the Cold War had ended, the prescription was clear: Africa must act in the spirit of pan-Africanism to save one of its own from self-destruction. Naturally, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was looked to for leadership. Not surprisingly, according to Chike

Akabogu, Africa's premier regional arrangement 'merely dusted up its Articles on non-interference in the internal affairs of member-nations'.⁸

However, for the new OAU leadership comprising President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda as chairman and former Tanzanian foreign minister, Salim Ahmed Salim, as secretary-general, the norm of non-intervention did not apply to the *sui generis* character of the Liberian conflict.⁹ Their tactic was to approach Nigeria, the dominant West African state, to lead a regional force into Liberia within the framework of ECOWAS. General Ibrahim Babangida, Nigeria's military ruler at the time, seized on the opportunity not only to exercise statesmanship but also to divert national and international attention away from mounting socio-economic problems and political abuses at home. As chairman of ECOWAS, he convened a meeting of ECOWAS heads of state and government in Banjul in May 1990 to discuss his blueprint for the establishment of an 'ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee [SMC] to settle disputes and conflict situations within the Community'.¹⁰ The summit accepted the proposal and constituted the membership of the SMC as follows: The Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo.¹¹ At its inaugural meeting in July, the committee discussed the Liberian conflict and agreed on a peace plan with the following features: establishment of an immediate cease-fire by the warring parties; establishment and deployment of ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to monitor the observance of the ceasefire by all sides to the conflict; agreement by the parties to the establishment of an Interim Administration in Monrovia, pending the election of a substantive government; and agreement by the parties to constitute a substantive government through nation-wide elections to be monitored by ECOMOG.¹²

According to official reports of the ministerial conference, there had been a substantial disagreement between members of the SMC, on the one hand, and the parties to the conflict, on the other, about key elements of the proposed peace plan. The issues in dispute were: the desirability and timing of a ceasefire; the desirability and composition of an interim government; and the usefulness of deploying a regional peacekeeping force.¹³ The inability to find common ground on these issues led eventually to the breakdown of talks between ECOWAS and Liberia's warring parties over methods to resolve the conflict peacefully. It was the way that ECOWAS reacted to its initial failure to negotiate a ceasefire between the warring factions that resulted in uncontrolled mayhem in Liberia. The problem began with the frustration of the ministers of the SMC with rebel leader Charles Taylor, whom they viewed contemptuously as the principal cause of their failure in Banjul. According to the SMC Ministerial report:

It became clear [to] the Ministerial Meeting...that the NPFL was holding on firmly to its initial position of demanding the departure of President Doe before it could consider any of the other essential issues. Indeed, the Committee gained the distinct impression that the NPFL had opted for a military solution. In the light of this, the Ministerial Meeting decided...to request that another course of action be considered to bring the Liberian crisis to a speedy and peaceful end.¹⁴

To the surprise of many diplomatic observers, the ministerial conference proceeded with the formation of a Sub-Committee on Defense Matters 'to consider issues relating to the military arm of the proposed ECOWAS Monitoring Group

(ECOMOG) in Liberia'.¹⁵ After only two days of meeting in Freetown between 18 and 20 July 1990, the sub-committee emerged with a blueprint of an ECOWAS military intervention force. In presenting the blueprint to the chairman of the ECOWAS summit, General Ibrahim Babangida, and the ministers urged their heads of government 'to bring the Liberian crisis to a *speedy* and peaceful end'.¹⁶ This call was heeded two weeks later when the leaders of the SMC states, meeting in Banjul between 6 and 7 August, adopted *Decision A/DEC.1/8/90*, which contains the following elements of what would later be known as the ECOWAS Peace Plan for Liberia: immediate cessation of hostilities by all factions; the formation and immediate deployment of ECOMOG to Liberia; generalised disarmament of the warring parties by ECOMOG; an embargo on the importation and acquisition of arms by the warring parties in Liberia; the formation of an Interim Government of National Unity pending the conduct of general elections; and establishing an atmosphere for the conduct of general and presidential elections in Liberia.¹⁷

Viewed from the perspective of diplomacy the ECOWAS Peace Plan was a recipe for disaster in Liberia. Very little negotiation took place between members of the SMC and the factions in Liberia, particularly the NPFL whose leader, Charles Taylor, accused ECOWAS of essentially handing him down a set of instructions to roll back his forces from Monrovia. Defiant and agitated, Taylor insisted that the NPFL 'took up arms, got rid of Doe, and took more than 95 percent of the country' and so had earned the *right* to rule Liberia.¹⁸ Against this claim, ECOWAS accused Taylor of being 'arrogantly intransigent', and declared its intention to proceed with its Liberian initiative with or without the support of the factions.¹⁹ In the words of the president of Guinea, one of the proponents of the Peace Plan: 'We do not need the permission of any party involved in the conflict to implement the decisions reached in Banjul. So, with or without the agreement of any of the parties, ECOWAS troops will be in Liberia'.²⁰

Why was ECOWAS so impatient with the course of diplomacy in Liberia? Two factors account for the organisation's diplomatic debacle in Liberia. The first is the organisation's lack of experience in the diplomacy of multilateral security. If, as is often the case, foreign policy is a reflection of domestic politics, there is nothing about the domestic politics of the states of the SMC—all under various forms of authoritarian rule—to inspire confidence in the success of diplomacy.²¹ The second reason relates to calculations of self-interest by proponents of the ECOWAS peace plan. This was coldly expressed by Obed Asamoah, Ghana's foreign minister: 'the Liberian situation...assumed international dimensions because several thousand Ghanaians, Nigerians and other nationals [had] been holed up in Liberia and [were] suffering because of the fighting'. Furthermore, he argued, the heavy economic toll of the refugee and humanitarian situation on Liberia's neighbours made rapid intervention by ECOWAS an imperative that could not be accomplished by the grinding wheels of diplomacy. In echoing the Guinean president, Asamoah insisted that members of ECOWAS 'do not have to look at the interest of warring factions alone but also at the interests of the neighbouring countries. So many countries have been saddled with refugees. Are they to continue to carry this burden because one particular faction in Liberia wants to carry out its ambition?'²²

The ECOWAS diplomatic initiative in Liberia was bound to fail even before it had begun. While ECOWAS was convening a conference of Liberian exiles in The Gambia in the last week of August 1990 to elect an interim government, the factions in Liberia were vowing to oppose the peace plan. The eventual selection of Amos Sawyer, an exiled Marxist professor at the University of Liberia, to head the interim government in Monrovia, served only to crystallise opposition to the ECOWAS plan. In what was described as ‘a sudden new-found confidence’, even Samuel Doe, the embattled president of Liberia, accused the ECOWAS leadership of ‘meddling in Liberia’s internal affairs’, just as the NPFL contended that ‘the ECOWAS discussion of an interim government showed complete and total disregard for the constitution and sovereignty of Liberia’.²³ With ECOWAS bent on a single-minded effort to push through its Liberian initiative, the NPFL warned that ‘if there was any attempt at peacekeeping from any part of the world, [it] would not allow that force to enter’.²⁴ The stage was now set for a military showdown between ECOWAS and the Liberian factions.

The failure of military intervention

The speed with which ECOMOG was constituted and deployed suggests that the ECOWAS leadership did not give diplomacy a chance. At their meeting in August 1990 in Bamako, the heads of government of the SMC states endorsed the plan to establish ECOMOG as the principal instrument for implementing the Liberian Peace Plan. The legal instruments establishing the force stipulated that ECOMOG be composed of military contingents drawn from the member states of the SMC as well as from Guinea and Sierra Leone. It bestowed on the force commander the power ‘to conduct military operations for the purpose of monitoring the cease-fire, restoring law and order to create the necessary conditions for free and fair elections to be held in Liberia’. Unlike UN resolutions authorising the establishment of peacekeeping forces, the ECOWAS decision left the duration of the ECOMOG mission open-ended: ECOMOG operations ‘shall commence forthwith’ (that is, 7 August 1990) and ‘shall remain in Liberia, if necessary, until the successful holding of general elections and the installation of an elected government’.²⁵

One week after the mission was authorised, ECOMOG forces drawn from Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, The Gambia and Sierra Leone began to assemble at Queen Elizabeth Quay in Freetown, Sierra Leone, for onward deployment in Monrovia.²⁶ Under the initial command of Ghanaian General Arnold Quainoo, ECOMOG troops landed in Monrovia on 24 August 1990, to commence what they dubbed *Operation Liberty*.²⁷ In the absence of any prior ceasefire agreement with the warring factions, the West African forces came under fire as they came ashore in Monrovia. According to an eye-witness account:

On landing, nothing had changed at the diplomatic level to raise bright hopes for ECOMOG in the task ahead. And so, the force had to inch ahead against all the persistent odds. The fierce fighting we sensed on the high sea between the NPFL rebels of Charles Taylor and the INPFL [Independent National Patriotic Forces of Liberia] forces of Prince Johnson did not subside. Even as seamen struggled to

anchor the ships and off-load their contents, heavy gunfire cracked, interspersed with booms from mortar, lasting for an hour.²⁸

ECOMOG forces fought their way into Liberia. To accomplish even the most basic objective of establishing a foothold in Monrovia, ECOMOG had to take on local forces that then controlled the entry point around the Freeport area of Monrovia. As they consolidated and widened their defence perimeter beyond their immediate confines, ECOMOG forces pushed NPFL militia to the outskirts of Monrovia. This move produced three unpleasant consequences, which greatly imperilled the mission's chances of success. First, it unnecessarily escalated the conflict by pitting the 'peacekeepers' against one of the parties to the conflict. Second, it diminished the presence and power of one of the local factions, thereby distorting the correlation of forces in the local arena. More to the point, by quickly dislodging NPFL militia from the positions that they had long occupied in Monrovia, ECOMOG forces arbitrarily enhanced the presence of a rival militia, the INPFL. On 9 September, the INPFL took maximum advantage of their enhanced profile to abduct and kill President Samuel Doe on the premises of ECOMOG headquarters.²⁹ Third and more significantly, the view of ECOMOG as an impartial arbiter quickly eroded and was replaced by a widespread perception within and outside West Africa that ECOMOG had indeed become a factor in the Liberian conflict. This perception was further strengthened by a series of deadly encounters between ECOMOG forces and various Liberian factions from 1990 onwards.

With the death of President Doe in circumstances that seriously undermined the military credibility of ECOMOG, General Babangida and Flt Lt Jerry Rawlings of Ghana agreed in September to strengthen ECOMOG ground forces to the level of an effective fighting army. Their objective was not to deter the warring factions from launching further assaults on ECOMOG forces. Rather, it was to prepare ECOMOG for peace-enforcement actions designed to restore its prestige as a credible military force. To this end, ECOMOG strength was doubled from 3500 in August to 7000 soldiers by the end of September 1990. Furthermore, ECOMOG was completely reorganised to include all three components of a modern fighting force (army, navy and air force).

A crucial aspect of the reorganisation involved the replacement of Force Commander General Quainoo—who was widely perceived to be 'soft' on the warring militia—with a more aggressive commander, Nigerian General Joshua Dogonyaro.³⁰ The instruction that was handed down to the new force commander was to ensure the attrition of militia forces by strictly enforcing a complete arms embargo on the warring parties in Liberia. It was reasoned that such a measure would 'prevent arms and ammunition [from] continuing to come into [sic] the rebel forces, who were still not subscribing to a cease-fire'.³¹ In October, General Dogonyaro launched a campaign to drive out local militia forces from the vicinity of Monrovia into Liberia's heartland. By the time it was concluded in November, the ECOMOG assault, described as a 'limited offensive', had inflicted so much collateral damage on Monrovia as to warrant frantic calls by many individuals and organisations, including Western diplomats sympathetic to ECOMOG, for General Dogonyaro's replacement.³² In the aftermath of this operation, the NPFL withdrew into the safety of Gbarnga, a provincial town in the

middle of Liberia. In Monrovia, ECOMOG was able to confine the remnants of NPFL forces and their leader, Prince Johnson, to a small sector of the city. It was in the midst of the illusory peace and normalcy that prevailed in Liberia at the time that ECOMOG committed one of its most serious blunders.

Against the stern opposition of the local militias, ECOMOG took the unprecedented step of installing an alternative government in Monrovia—the controversial Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), led by Amos Sawyer. Lacking any basis of local support and widely ridiculed as a puppet of ECOWAS, IGNU became a uniting force for the leaders of disparate militia factions whose principal desire was to assume the presidency of Liberia.

By 1992 common opposition to IGNU and ECOMOG had driven many Liberians to join the NPFL, now based in Gbarnga. Emboldened by the growing mass support for his movement and the widening rift between ECOWAS states over the direction of the Liberian mission, Taylor launched ‘Operation Octopus’, which was a well-calculated military offensive designed to retake Monrovia.³³ To beat back the NPFL, the leadership of ECOWAS agreed to a substantial increase in the force strength of ECOMOG to 11 256 soldiers, up 60% from 1990. By the time the attack was repelled in January 1993, ECOMOG and the NPFL had become so weakened and exhausted that they both expressed a new willingness to embrace a diplomatic solution to the conflict, but this time under the auspices of the United Nations. After a series of meetings that took place in Geneva at the instance of the late President Felix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia’s warring parties, ECOWAS, the OAU and the United Nations agreed to a new peace plan that was unveiled in Cotonou, in the summer of 1993. The new peace plan called for the disarming of the warring factions and the replacement of Amos Sawyer’s IGNU with a collective Council of State—the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG). The deal also called for the demobilisation of the warring factions, as well as the election of a substantive government in a nation-wide poll. The real novelty of the Cotonou Agreement, however, lay in the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to oversee the implementation of the peace plan in conjunction with an expanded ECOMOG.

The nature of the ECOMOG-UNOMIL partnership

The United Nations was invited to step into the Liberian quagmire because of the politico-military stalemate encountered by ECOWAS. Although the ECOWAS-UN alliance was not born out of any mutual enthusiasm for the potential complementarities between the two organisations in the task of conflict resolution in Liberia, the UN worked hard to lay the foundation for possible organisational interdependence. The UN Secretary-General’s report of 9 September 1993, on which basis the Security Council established UNOMIL through Resolution 866, was quite emphatic about the teamwork that was expected from ECOMOG and UNOMIL:

Since the role foreseen for UNOMIL is to monitor and verify the implementation of the [Cotonou] Agreement, its concept of operation necessarily must be parallel to

that of ECOMOG...UNOMIL would thus...deploy observer teams in concert with ECOMOG deployment, including border crossings, airports and seaports...[In short], UNOMIL and ECOMOG would collaborate closely in their operations.³⁴

For these tasks, the UN Secretary-General recommended a mission comprising 303 military observers.³⁵ Included in this figure were 41 teams composed of six observers per team, 25 military observers based at the UNOMIL headquarters, and eight observers at each of the four regional headquarters. An unspecified number of administrative or support staff were recommended for deployment to assist the military observers.

In accepting the Secretary-General's recommendation on 22 December 1993, the Security Council widened the mandate of UNOMIL to include social reconstruction, a decision that may have been influenced by a precedent set in Somalia. According to Resolution 866, 'UNOMIL shall comprise military observers as well as medical, engineering, communications, transportation and electoral components...' Its eight-item mandate was no less extensive than that of the UN Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM). It included the verification of compliance with the peace agreement, judicial administration of violations, delivering humanitarian assistance, engineering local elections, rebuilding socioeconomic infrastructure, disarming and demobilising combatants and the like. However, notwithstanding the expansion of the tasks of the proposed mission, Resolution 866 maintained the maximum strength of 303 observers recommended for UNOMIL and accepted a cost ceiling of \$42.6 million for the seven-month duration of the mission.³⁶

The success of UNOMIL was inextricably linked to the success of the Cotonou Agreement. Like previous agreements before it, however, the Cotonou Agreement collapsed soon after it was signed with much fanfare. Attempts to establish a transitional government in Monrovia were frustrated by persistent bickering over the choice of membership. In the security arena, the disarmament programme which called for the surrendering of all weapons and ammunition by the warring factions to UNOMIL and ECOMOG forces failed miserably. Not only were no provisions made for the welfare and rehabilitation of the militia, many of whom were child-soldiers, but UNOMIL also failed to attract the level of personnel and material support necessary to undertake this assignment. Consequently, it resorted to relying on ECOMOG for initiative as well as logistical support. Not surprisingly, therefore, UNOMIL quickly lost the trust of local factions which had remained wary of ECOMOG; it also lost any attraction for states willing to contribute their forces to the mission. Indeed, by the spring of 1995, UNOMIL had shrunk from 303 observers drawn from 14 states to 77 observers (see Table 1). One year later, all troop-contributing African states, except Uganda, had withdrawn their forces from UNOMIL, thereby leaving the mission moribund. Why did this happen?

From the beginning, UNOMIL was not designed to be independent. UNOMIL was inextricably tied both to ECOMOG as well as the Cotonou Agreement of 1993. In the words of the UN Secretary-General:

The role foreseen for the United Nations in the implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement is *predicated on the assumption that the ECOMOG force will be in*

TABLE 1
Composition of UNOMIL, April 1995

<i>Country</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Observers</i>
Bangladesh	7	8
China	–	5
Czech Republic	–	6
Egypt	–	7
Guinea-Bissau	–	5
India	–	6
Jordan	–	9
Kenya	2	9
Malaysia	–	8
Pakistan	–	8
Uruguay	–	6
Total	9	77

Source: The United Nations and the Situation in Liberia, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, April 1995, p 20.

a position to perform the wide-ranging tasks entrusted to it by the Liberian parties. The United Nations has received the necessary assurances in this regard from ECOMOG. None the less, I must stress that should the additional troops not be deployed or should some of ECOMOG's troops be withdrawn prematurely, the successful implementation of the Peace Agreement would be in jeopardy. Obviously, *without the necessary support and cooperation of ECOMOG, UNOMIL will not be able to successfully carry out its responsibilities in the peace process.* In such an event...I might be obliged to recommend the withdrawal of UNOMIL.³⁷

None of these conditions existed on the ground. The Cotonou Agreement failed shortly after it was initialled. Contrary to the letter and spirit of the Agreement, ECOMOG was unable to expand its forces partly because many of the African states were unable to fulfil their pledge to contribute troops for the mission. Worse still, ECOMOG was substantially downsized because of financial and domestic political uncertainties in Nigeria and continuing concerns in Ghana about the seriousness and good faith of the parties to the Liberian dispute. Indeed, by June 1994 Nigeria had reduced its contribution to 6000 from 11 000 the previous year. With the military temporarily out of power by this time in Nigeria, the civilian-led government of Ernest Shonekan was threatening a complete pull-out from ECOMOG in order to save the tenuous regime from the fiscal and political burden of the beleaguered operation. At the same time, Ghana was completing the phased reduction of its ECOMOG force by 50%, with a promise to end its participation by the end of 1994. By the end of 1993 ECOMOG 'fatigue' was already visible in the key regional states that were sponsoring the mission. This situation was further worsened by the inability of the United

Nations to deliver on its promise to render financial and logistical assistance to the states contributing to ECOMOG.³⁸ The material capacity and political will of ECOMOG states to undertake the tasks entrusted by the Cotonou Agreement eroded.

Despite the failure of the Cotonou Agreement, the Security Council continued to extend UNOMIL periodically, even though the mission's tangible utility had significantly diminished over the years. Although largely unwritten, the present task of UNOMIL is to attempt to provide transparency to the peace process mainly by its presence, even without further material commitments to the Liberian peace process.³⁹ In the two years since the collapse of the Cotonou Agreement, UNOMIL has used its 'good offices' to encourage efforts to reach new and promising agreements between the warring factions in Liberia. This yielded the Akosombo Agreement of 1994 which, despite President Jerry Rawlings' widely acclaimed personal efforts and initiative, failed to bring lasting peace in Liberia.⁴⁰ The collapse of the Akosombo Agreement was quickly followed by the ratification of yet another agreement in Abuja, Nigeria, in August 1995. This agreement is largely the product of political changes in Nigeria which brought about a fundamental attitudinal and policy shift in favour of Charles Taylor and the NPFL from a widely isolated military regime in Abuja.⁴¹ This new agreement contained the timetable for ending the Liberian conflict shown in Table 2.

For a while it seemed as though the Abuja Agreement would guarantee the lasting peace that had eluded previous conciliation efforts in Liberia. Within weeks of signing the agreement, the thorny problem of constituting the six-member council of state was finally resolved. The membership of the council included the leaders of the major factions: Charles Taylor from the NPFL, Alhaji Kromah from the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) and George Boley from the Liberian Peace Council (LPC).⁴² Other

TABLE 2
The major provisions and timetable of the Abuja Agreement

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Description of activities</i>
26 August 1995	Ceasefire takes effect throughout Liberia
2 September 1995	Six-member collective presidency, the Council of State, constituted
16 December 1995	Disarmament begins with the deployment of UNOMIL and ECOMOG forces in territories controlled by the factional militias
30 January 1996	Disarmament and demobilisation of combatants completed
Spring 1996	Repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons underway
20 August 1996	Presidential and general elections held throughout Liberia. The presidential election is not open to the chairman of the Council of State. However, other members of the Council wishing to run for elective offices may do so provided they resigned their membership three months before the date of elections

members of the council were Professor Wilton Sankawulo (Chairman), Chief Tamba Taylor and Oscar Quiah (members). However, soon after it was constituted, the collective presidency was plunged into crisis as a power struggle ensued between its members 'over appointments to positions in government'.⁴³ Worse still, factional in-fighting also broke out within ULIMO between Alhaji Kromah and Roosevelt Johnson, forcing the latter to form his own wing: (ULIMO-J). By the end of 1995, the tension had boiled over to encourage attacks on ECOMOG forces. On 28 December, elements of ULIMO-J ambushed Nigerian ECOMOG forces attempting to disarm the militias. This was followed by a heavy artillery bombardment of ECOMOG's base in the provincial town of Tubmanburg in diamond-rich Bomi County.⁴⁴ According to Max Sesay, the attack was caused by the collapse of an 'understanding between Nigerian soldiers and ULIMO-J over diamond mining areas' controlled by Johnson's forces.⁴⁵ Following this incident, tension increased and security deteriorated rapidly, leading to the indefinite suspension of the ongoing disarmament operation in the Liberian hinterland.

In February 1996 fresh clashes broke out between rival factions over competing claims to territories previously handed over to ECOMOG-UNOMIL as part of the disarmament process. Ben Asante, a leading correspondent for *West Africa*, attributes the outbreak of renewed fighting to the 'circumstantial incompetence' of ECOMOG-UNOMIL peacekeepers in Liberia.⁴⁶ The return to street fighting in Monrovia in April 1996 led to yet another round of refugee flow and the subsequent evacuation of foreign nationals by US forces. The renewed violence was triggered by the decision of the Council of State to dismiss and subsequently arrest Roosevelt Johnson for his alleged responsibility for the violence that erupted in December 1995. The spring disturbances were later quelled by reluctant ECOMOG forces after much persuasion by Western diplomats.⁴⁷ Following the end of the hostilities, a summer meeting was called by ECOWAS in Accra to prevent the complete collapse of the Abuja Agreement. On 17 August the leaders of Liberia's factions agreed to 'a revised version of the Abuja Accord' and appointed Ruth Perry to replace Sankawulo as the chair of the Council of State.⁴⁸ The key elements of the revised Abuja Accord were: implementation of disarmament and demobilisation by 31 January 1997; dissolution of all factional militia by the end of February 1997; general elections by 31 May 1997; and formation of a national government by 15 June 1997.

From all indications, the revised accord is working as planned. The disarmament and demobilisation phase has proceeded without any major hitches. What is even more striking is that the new accord is being progressively implemented in spite of the United Nations, not because of it. The parties have evolved a *modus operandi* based primarily on the personal chemistry that exists between Charles Taylor and General Sani Abacha, Nigeria's military ruler. This was demonstrated by the recent wedding of Charles Taylor, which was attended by the major factional leaders and hosted by Nigeria's foreign minister. Taylor, who has since emerged as General Abacha's favourite, is highly favoured to win Liberia's presidential elections in the summer of 1997. Should this happen, one must ask why such an outcome was prevented by seven years of multilateral intervention. What lessons, then, may be learned from this unusual exercise in multilateral partnership and task-sharing?

The lessons of a failed partnership

From the beginning, the United Nations viewed its security partnership with ECOWAS as an experiment. For ECOWAS, the Liberia project was the first of its kind in two significant ways. First, it was the first time that the organisation would shift its focus away from its primary objective of enhancing regional trade relations towards the uncharted waters of security integration. The legal steps for cooperation on military matters had been taken with the adoption of the Defense Protocol of 1978. Amid fears of Nigerian domination, however, ECOWAS did not confront a security dilemma until the outbreak of the Liberian conflict in 1989. Second, and more significantly, there was no history of task-sharing between ECOWAS and the United Nations. In fact, like many African states since the failure of the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) in the 1960s, ECOWAS member-states avoided UN involvement in their affairs.

That the UN–ECOWAS partnership took place at all, given the circumstances of widespread fears of domination and mistrust, is indicative of progress in African diplomacy, in particular, and inter-institutional cooperation, in general. What lessons may be learned from this experiment in institutional task-sharing between the United Nations and regional arrangements? The West African experience points to three crucial lessons: the complexity of the geopolitical environment; the nature of the command or authority structure; and the character of international support.

The fear of domination and the necessity to steer clear of messy regional geopolitics

ECOWAS violated the cornerstone of every successful peacekeeping mission—strict adherence to the principle of impartiality. Not only must peacekeepers be impartial in their dealings with all parties to a dispute, they must be perceived as such. In Liberia, ECOWAS displayed a complete disregard for this most fundamental tenet. From the beginning the ECOWAS mission suffered from justifiable concerns about the organisation's objectivity in the light of the credentials of its sponsors, especially Nigeria and Ghana. In this regard, in West Africa and much of Africa, diplomacy has really been about the politics of personality.⁴⁹ In the case of Liberia, a complex web of personal ties and 'friendship' involving the principal actors in the conflict—Samuel Doe, Charles Taylor, Ibrahim Babangida, Blaise Compaoré and Jerry Rawlings, among others—posed enormous challenges to the presumption of impartiality by ECOWAS.

The conflict in Liberia was the consequence of an organised effort to topple the corrupt despotism of Master-Sergeant Doe. Exiled from Liberia, Charles Taylor and other leaders of the rebellion had sought residence in various capitals in West Africa and, as a consequence, were very well known to various government officials. In one particular instance in the 1980s, the personal ties that had developed between Charles Taylor—then resident in Ghana—and President Rawlings threatened diplomatic relations between Accra and Monrovia, with President Doe accusing Rawlings of 'supporting "dissidents" seeking to overthrow his regime'. However, according to Byron Tarr, the once cosy

relationship went sour, with Rawlings incarcerating Taylor in Accra. In 1987 Taylor relocated to Burkina Faso where he was warmly welcomed by Captain Blaise Compaoré, a sworn adversary of Doe.⁵⁰ But Doe was not without his own friends in the sub-region. He and Nigeria's General Ibrahim Babangida did little to disguise the depth of their mutual affection. In Liberia, Doe named a major highway and a school at the University of Liberia after Ibrahim Babangida. The latter, using state resources, returned the favour by showering Doe with largesse. Given these personal networks, individual biases were carried into the domain of state policy once armed conflict broke out in Liberia. Taylor was backed unconditionally by his long-time friend, Blaise Compaoré, the leader of Burkina Faso. Doe, on the other hand, sought and obtained the support of President Babangida. For his part, Flt Lt Jerry Rawlings of Ghana had no particular reasons to support either Doe or Taylor. Like his Nigerian counterpart, however, Rawlings did not want to see Taylor assume the presidency of Liberia, although he was far less enthusiastic than General Babangida about taking action to prevent the emergence of Charles Taylor as the president of Liberia.⁵¹ Given these circumstances, ECOWAS merely became an institutional expression of these biases as soon as it took on the Liberian mission.⁵²

Closely related to the problem of ECOWAS's impartiality in Liberia is the enigmatic role of Nigeria, West Africa's presumed 'hegemon'.⁵³ The ECOWAS case in Liberia underlines the argument made in the theoretical literature that hegemony is 'Janus-faced', with positive as well as negative sides.⁵⁴ Many students of West African politics agree that Nigeria, which was central to the formation of ECOWAS, has been the political, military and financial force behind the organisation's mission in Liberia.⁵⁵ Between 1990 and 1996, successive Nigerian governments have spent in excess of \$3 billion on the Liberian mission. Throughout the different phases of the Liberian mission, the Nigerian troop contribution to ECOMOG consistently accounted for between 70% and 80% of the total strength of the force. With such a level of commitment, few observers believe that ECOMOG could have been initiated without Nigeria.

But, as significant as its contribution has been to the initiation and maintenance of the mission, Nigeria has also contributed immensely to the problems that the ECOWAS mission in Liberia has encountered over the years. The rigid position adopted by the Nigerian government against Charles Taylor cost the Liberian mission the support of many ECOWAS states, especially the francophone members. Moderate states, such as Senegal and Togo, could not understand why General Babangida had so much interest in *who* became Liberia's president as a result of the ECOWAS mediation efforts.⁵⁶ According to one Senegalese official, 'Taylor's integrity is in serious doubt, but so is the integrity of Nigerian leaders. Besides, if the process we [ie ECOWAS] are negotiating produces Taylor as Liberia's leader, why should we not respect that verdict?'⁵⁷ On several occasions between 1990 and 1994, even Ghana, Nigeria's strongest ally in ECOWAS, expressed similar misgivings and threatened to pull out of ECOMOG because of General Babangida's personalisation of the Liberian problem around Charles Taylor. How, then, did the UN respond to this acrimonious environment?

As we have seen, the world organisation firmly immersed itself in the dirt of West Africa's politics of hegemony by aligning itself so closely to Nigeria and

ECOMOG. If it has been difficult to distinguish between the UN and ECOMOG in Liberia, it is because very little effort was made by UNOMIL to formulate an independent initiative. The United Nations accepted the much-disputed ECOWAS Peace Plan as the principal plank on which to pursue reconciliation in Liberia.⁵⁸ When that agreement failed, the UN jumped quickly to endorse the Cotonou, Akosombo and Abuja Agreements that were similarly 'destined' to failure. In all this, the UN was playing catch-up, thereby raising questions about the world organisation's initiative and leadership in the vital area of international peace and security. The obvious lesson from Liberia, therefore, is that, if the UN must accept the invitation of regional organisations to intervene in regional conflicts following the exhaustion of local initiatives and options, the world body should invest its resources into crafting an alternative peace initiative rather than merely becoming a rubber stamp for failed plans.

The dysfunctional nature of parallel command structures

Whatever its intended uses, the existence of parallel authority structures hampers the effectiveness of field operations by blurring the hierarchy of command. In Liberia, UNOMIL and ECOMOG maintained parallel command structures. This is especially surprising because the UN had been invited because of the particular deficiencies of the regional command structure. The weakness of UN deployments in the field frequently challenged the relative autonomy of the UN's chain of command, thus leaving the ECOWAS command structure as the only real source of authority to which Liberia's warring factions frequently referred. Consequently, the subordination of regional command structures to global authority was neither attempted nor achieved by UNOMIL. For this particular reason, UNOMIL was essentially redundant in Liberia as a participant in the process of conflict resolution. The structural parallelism that characterised the command and control apparatus of ECOWAS and the UN in Liberia may be attributed to UNOMIL's weak financial base from the beginning of the mission or mere administrative oversight at the UN Secretariat. Whatever the reason, however, the parallelism for the most part strengthened the position and significance of Nigeria and ECOWAS and it served only to promote the idea and perception that the United Nations was either incapable of peace-enforcement actions or unwilling to undertake such tasks in Liberia.⁵⁹ It also provided crucial evidence to support the predictive logic of hegemony theory present in other cases in this issue (especially Georgia), namely that the UN will tend to defer to regional powers when it is engaged in a partnership with regional organisations, especially in the security issue-area.⁶⁰

The desirability of political conditionalities for supporting regional security initiatives

The ECOWAS experience in Liberia demonstrates the need for better judgement by the United Nations in approving or delegating security tasks to regional organisations. The issue is not whether security tasks should be devolved to regional arrangements. Rather, it is what kinds of security tasks should be devolved to

what kinds of regional institutions, and what conditions need be met by them. In such cases as Liberia, where the causes of conflict are to be located in the abuses of despotic regimes, the United Nations is *obliged* to ensure that those states and organisations that are authorised to mediate such conflicts are themselves free from the menace of despotism. As Ofuately-Kodjoe has argued:

...the notion that a group of states headed by military dictatorships have the right to intervene in another state in order to establish a democratic regime is grotesque. And the notion that these states can in fact achieve that objective by the application of outside force may be only an exercise in wishful thinking.⁶¹

In West Africa, Nigeria's military rulers used Liberia as a dress rehearsal for their elaborate scheme to consolidate despotic rule in their own country.⁶²

In conclusion, those looking for a model of UN burden-sharing with regional arrangements should be directed away from ECOWAS and Liberia. At its best, the UN involvement in Liberia may be characterised as indifferent and purposeless. With the majority of its forces 'stranded' in their home countries because of logistical lapses, UNOMIL relied too heavily on ECOMOG forces even for the most basic tasks. This was the direct consequence of the gross inadequacy of funding for the mission. In 1994 when the Security Council authorised the mission, the secretariat estimated the cost of the operation at \$36.4 million for the initial duration of seven months. However, according to Max Sesay, 'by the end of that year the assessed contributions paid by member-states...amounted to only \$5.7 million'.⁶³ It is hardly surprising, therefore, that many Liberians were unaware of a UN presence in their country. The dismal performance of UNOMIL should dramatise to the leadership of the United Nations the high cost of half-hearted measures relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. The UN should re-evaluate the wisdom of authorising missions simply to create the impression that something significant is being done in a desperate environment.

Notes

¹ Established in 1975, ECOWAS is the principal regional economic grouping in West Africa. Its membership of 16 states—francophone, anglophone and lusophone—makes it the largest and by far the most complex sub-regional organisation in Africa. Its members are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. See S K B Asante, *The Political Economy of Regionalism in Africa: A Decade of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986; and C E Adibe, 'ECOWAS in comparative perspective', in Timothy M Shaw & Julius E Okolo (eds), *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in ECOWAS*, London: Macmillan, 1994, ch 11.

² UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on Liberia*, UN Security Council document S/26422, 9 September 1993, p 11.

³ *Ibid*, p 4.

⁴ David Wippman, 'Enforcing the peace: ECOWAS and the Liberian civil war', in Lori F Damrosch (ed), *Enforcing Restraint: Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1993, p 165. See also W Ofuately-Kodjoe, 'Regional organizations and the resolution of internal conflict: the ECOWAS intervention in Liberia', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol 1, No 3, 1994, pp 261–302.

⁵ *Africa Research Bulletin*, 15 February 1990, p 9557. The implicit perjorative nature of this anthropological description was the result of tensions that long characterised relations among Liberia's socioeconomic groups—Gios, Mandingos, Manos, Krahn, Americo-Liberians. See J Gus Liebenow, *Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969; Monday Akpan, 'Black imperialism: Americo-

- Liberian rule over the African peoples of Liberia, 1841–1964', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol 7, No 2, 1973, pp 217–236; and Wippman, 'Enforcing the peace', pp 160–165.
- ⁶ See Gani Yoroms, 'Regional security, collective defence and the problem of peace initiatives in West Africa: the case of ECOMOG in the Liberian conflict', paper presented at the 17th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Society of International Affairs, Centre for Democratic Studies, Abuja, Nigeria, 9–11 December 1991; Ofuatye-Kodjoe, 'Regional organizations and the resolution of internal conflict', pp 268–281; and Jinmi Adisa, 'Nigeria in ECOMOG: political undercurrents and the burden of community spirit', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol 5, No 1, 1994, pp 83–110.
- ⁷ See *Newswatch* (Lagos), 14 May 1990; and Osisioma Nwolise, 'The internationalisation of the Liberian crisis and its effects on West Africa', in Margaret Vogt (ed), *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt at Regional Peacekeeping*, Lagos: Gabumo Publishing, 1992, p 60.
- ⁸ See Chike Akabogu, 'ECOWAS takes the initiative', in Vogt, *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG*, p 73.
- ⁹ See Salim Ahmed Salim's interview in *West Africa* (London), 13–19 August 1990; and excerpts of Yoweri Museveni's interview with the BBC in *Contact: The Official Journal of the Economic Community of West African States*, Vol 2, No 3, 1990, p 8. One year later, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe further challenged the sacrosanctity of the OAU's non-intervention clause. He argued that 'the "domestic affairs" of a country must mean affairs within a peaceful environment, but where that peaceful environment is completely gone and the people are no longer in a position to exercise their own sovereign authority...surely the time would have come for an intervention to occur'. Quoted in Ben Ephson, 'Right to intervene', *West Africa* (London), 4–10 February 1991, p 141.
- ¹⁰ *Contact*, Vol 2, No 3, November 1990, p 6. The Nigerian proposal was not without precedent in African diplomacy. When conflict broke out in 1980 between Libyan-backed rebel forces and troops loyal to Goukouni Weddeye in Chad, Western diplomats successfully urged Nigeria to take on a 'leadership' role in constituting and deploying an African peacekeeping force in Chad. Nigeria did, and African peacekeepers were deployed in Chad between 1981–82. Without the promised inflow of technical, logistical and financial support, the mission floundered as Libyan-backed rebels overran the positions of OAU peacekeepers and swept through Njadmene to form a new government. For details, see Amadu Sesay, 'The limits of peace-keeping by a regional organization: the OAU peace-keeping force in Chad', *Conflict Quarterly*, Winter 1992, pp 7–26; and William J Foltz & Henry Bienen (eds), *Arms and the African: Military Influences on Africa's International Relations*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.
- ¹¹ During its active years, between 1990–94, the SMC added Guinea and Sierra Leone—two of Liberia's immediate neighbours—as *de facto* members.
- ¹² ECOWAS, *Final Report of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee Ministerial Meeting, Freetown, 5–20 July 1990*, ECW/SMC/FM/90/3/Rev.1, 1990, pp 4–5.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, pp 6–8.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, p 11.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*, p 10.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid*, p 11 (emphasis added).
- ¹⁷ ECOWAS, *Decision A/DEC.1/8/90*, Lagos: The Economic Community of West African States, 1990. See also *People's Daily Graphic* (Accra), 3 August 1990, pp 2–3.
- ¹⁸ *Africa News*, 9–13 December 1991, p 8.
- ¹⁹ Ibrahim Babangida, 'The imperative features of the Nigerian foreign policy and the crisis in Liberia', *Contact*, Vol 2, No 3, 1990, p 14.
- ²⁰ Quoted in *Africa Research Bulletin*, 15 September 1990, p 9802.
- ²¹ In this regard, see especially G Idang, *Nigeria: Internal Policy and Foreign Policy*, Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1974; Stellan Lindqvist, *Linkages Between Domestic and Foreign Policy: The Record of Ghana, 1957–1966*, Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur Lund, 1974; and Ofuatye-Kodjoe, 'Regional organizations and the resolution of internal conflict', pp 261–302.
- ²² Dr Obed Asamoah, quoted in the *People's Daily Graphic* (Accra), 23 August 1990, p 1. See also A Essuman-Johnson, 'The Liberian refugee problem and Ghana's response to it', *LECIA Bulletin*, Vol 2, No 1, 1992, pp 34–40.
- ²³ *The Guardian* (Lagos), 21 August 1990, p 1.
- ²⁴ *People's Daily Graphic* (Accra), 21 July 1990, p 2.
- ²⁵ ECOWAS, *Decision A/DEC.1/8/90*, Article II, p 4.
- ²⁶ On August 23 Togo, the fifth member of the SMC, announced that it would not contribute troops to ECOMOG because of the absence of a ceasefire agreement between ECOWAS and Liberia's warring factions. For details, see *Africa Research Bulletin*, 15 September 1990, p 9801.
- ²⁷ For a detailed account of the military operation, see Nkem Agetua, *Operation Liberty: The Story of Major General Joshua Dogonyaro*, Lagos: Hona Communications, 1992; and Segun Aderiye, 'ECOMOG landing', in Vogt, *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG*, pp 95–122.
- ²⁸ Segun Aderiye, 'ECOMOG landing', p 106.
- ²⁹ *The Guardian* (Lagos), 14 September 1990, p 1, and 20 September 1990, p 1; *Sunday Concord* (Lagos), 23

- September 1990, p 7; *The Punch* (Ibadan), 18 October 1990, p 7; *People's Daily Graphic* (Accra), 11 May 1991, p 2.
- ³⁰ For insight into the differing personalities of the two soldiers, see Agetua, *Operation Liberty*, ch 5–8; and Jinmi Adisa, 'ECOMOG force commanders', in Vogt, *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG*, pp 237–270. This created a diplomatic row between Nigeria and Ghana which was quickly resolved to maintain the ECOMOG coalition.
- ³¹ Margaret Vogt, 'The problems and challenges of peace-making: from peace-keeping to peace enforcement', in Vogt, *The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG*, p 155.
- ³² *Ibid.*, pp 155–157; and Jinmi Adisa, 'ECOMOG force commanders', pp 237–270.
- ³³ *West Africa* (London), 23–29 August 1993, p 1484.
- ³⁴ *Report of the Secretary-General on Liberia*, Security Council document S/26422, 9 September 1993, p 4.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p 5, para 18.
- ³⁶ *Report of the Secretary-General on Liberia: Addendum*, UN Security Council document S/26422/Add.1, 17 September 1993, p 2.
- ³⁷ *Report of the Secretary-General on Liberia*, UN Security Council document S/26422, 9 September 1993, para 39, p 10 (emphasis added).
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p 6, paras 23–24. See also UN Security Council document S/26200. As an exception, Senegal benefited substantially from US financial and logistical support. In 1991 US support for Senegal's participation in ECOMOG included \$42 million in debt-forgiveness; \$15 million worth of military equipment; and a \$1 million direct cash allocation. This made Senegal the largest recipient of US aid directly related to the ECOWAS operation in Liberia. The other recipients of US aid were Côte d'Ivoire, \$1 million; Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone, \$0.5 million each; and The Gambia, \$0.25 million. For details, see Robert Mortimer, 'Senegal's rôle in ECOMOG: the francophone dimension in the Liberian crisis', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 34, No 2, 1996, p 297.
- ³⁹ See Clement E Adibe, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Liberia*, Geneva: United Nations, 1996, p 43; John Mackinlay & Abiodun Alao, *Liberia 1994: ECOMOG and UNOMIL Response to a Complex Emergency*, Occasional Paper #1, New York: United Nations University, 1995.
- ⁴⁰ See UN Security Council document S/1994/1174, 16 October 1994; and S/1995/7, 5 January 1995.
- ⁴¹ *West Africa* (London), 25–31 December 1995, and 1–7 January 1996, p 1993.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 25–31 December 1995; and 1–7 January 1996, p 1993.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 18–24 March 1996, pp 422–423.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 22–28 January 1996, pp 97–99.
- ⁴⁵ Max Ahmadu Sesay, 'Politics and society in post-war Liberia', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 34, No 3, 1996, p 402. The economic basis of the frequent fractionalisation of Liberia's warring groups is an important element in the continuation of the conflict. According to one report, Liberia's diamond exports between 1990–94 amounted to \$300 million; timber earned \$53 million; and \$27 million accrued from the export of rubber. These revenues went directly to the leader of whichever faction controlled the regions that generated the resources. For details, see James Butty, 'Bankrolling conflict', *West Africa* (London), 8–14 July 1996, p 1067.
- ⁴⁶ *West Africa* (London), 22–28 January 1996, p 98.
- ⁴⁷ According to Sesay's account, this was made possible by Nigeria's reversal of its earlier instruction to 'ECOMOG to remain neutral and to treat the matter as an internal affair' ('Politics and society in post-war Liberia', p 404). The original instruction came in the wake of international, particularly US condemnation of General Abacha's regime in the aftermath of the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other human rights activists in November 1995. By instructing ECOMOG forces to withhold action in Liberia in April 1996, General Abacha was saying that: 'It is important for the United States to recognise the relevance of Nigeria...at least in the West African subregion' (*Washington Times*, 30 January 1997).
- ⁴⁸ Sesay, 'Politics and society in post-war Liberia', p 405.
- ⁴⁹ For a theoretical discussion of the impact of personality on foreign policy, see Margaret G Hermann, 'The effects of personal characteristics of political leaders on foreign policy', in Maurice East *et al* (eds), *Why Nations Act: Theoretical Perspectives for Comparative Foreign Policy Studies*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1978, pp 49–68; and Olajide Aluko (ed), *The Foreign Policies of African States*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977.
- ⁵⁰ S Byron Tarr, 'The ECOMOG initiative in Liberia: a Liberian perspective', *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, Vol 21, Nos 1–2, 1993, pp 79–80.
- ⁵¹ For a long time, this was one of the major sources of tension between Nigeria and Ghana. For Nigeria, regime insecurity (which Rawlings has now overcome) was the crucial factor. Within the country's ruling military circles, Charles Taylor's revolt and his successful recruitment of a significant number of 'disgruntled' nationals of other ECOWAS states, including Nigeria, was viewed as a forerunner of 'the coming anarchy': a 'carefully orchestrated' plan to 'destabilise' the entire West African subregion. In Lagos, suspicions were rife that Taylor's recruits included some military personnel who had been declared 'wanted persons' in Nigeria because of their alleged role in an unsuccessful coup attempt to topple the government

- of General Ibrahim Babangida in 1990. For this reason in particular, confirmed reports reaching Lagos of Libyan support in terms of training and equipment quickly struck a raw nerve in government and security circles, and helped to elevate the Liberian crisis as a national security issue *par excellence* for Nigeria.
- ⁵² This development is not surprising to critics of regional organisations who have pointed to the danger of partisanship that may arise should regional organisations intervene in local conflicts in which they are familiar with the actors and issues. See S Neil MacFarlane & Thomas G Weiss, 'Regional organizations and regional security', *Security Studies*, Vol 2, No 1, 1992, pp 6–37.
- ⁵³ See Ademola Adeleke, 'The politics and diplomacy of peacekeeping in West Africa: the ECOWAS operation in Liberia', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 33, No 4, 1995, pp 569–593.
- ⁵⁴ Cf Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965; Robert Keohane, 'The theory of hegemonic stability and changes in international economic regimes, 1967–1977', in Ole Holsti *et al* (eds), *Change in the International System*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980; David Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986; and Duncan Snidal, 'The limits of hegemonic stability theory', *International Organization*, Vol 39, No 4, 1985, pp 579–614.
- ⁵⁵ See, among others, Gani J Yoroms, 'ECOMOG and West African regional security: a Nigerian perspective', *Issue*, Vol 21, Nos 1–2, 1993, pp 84–91; Emmanuel Kwezi Aning, *Managing Regional Security in West Africa: ECOWAS, ECOMOG and Liberia*, Copenhagen: Centre for Development Research, Working Paper No 94.2, February, 1994; and E John Inegbedion, 'ECOMOG in comparative perspective', in Shaw & Okolo, *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in ECOWAS*, ch 12.
- ⁵⁶ For the francophone dimension of the ECOMOG mission, see Mortimer, 'Senegal's rôle in ECOMOG', pp 293–306.
- ⁵⁷ Author's interview, Geneva, 3 May 1995. The issue of Taylor's integrity arose because his background as a fugitive from US justice has been widely reported by the West African media. Taylor's reputation in West Africa has also suffered significantly from his public perception as a corrupt, power-hungry iconoclast who indulges in cold-blooded murder.
- ⁵⁸ See 'Statements by the President of the Security Council', 23 January 1991 (Security Council document S/22133, 23 January 1991; and S/23886, 7 May 1992), which endorsed the ECOWAS Peace Plan. See also Security Council Resolution 788 of 19 November 1992, which globalised the contentious ECOWAS embargo on the delivery of arms and ammunition to Liberia's warring factions. For a useful critique of UN 'endorsement', see Anthony Ofodile, 'Recent development: the legality of ECOWAS intervention in Liberia', *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol 32, No 2, 1994, pp 413–416.
- ⁵⁹ See James E Cooper, 'The fate of the United States and Liberia is interwoven: now is the time for healing', *The Liberian Diaspora*, Vol 3, No 11, 1993, pp 16–18.
- ⁶⁰ See Robert O Keohane & Lisa L Martin, 'The promise of institutionalist theory', *International Security*, Vol 20, Summer 1995, pp 39–51.
- ⁶¹ Ofuatey-Kodjoe, 'Regional organizations and the resolution of internal conflict', p 295.
- ⁶² See Ofodile, 'Recent development', pp 396–402.
- ⁶³ Sesay, 'Politics and society in post-war Liberia', p 407. See also Stephen Riley, 'Intervention in Liberia: too little, too partisan', *The World Today*, Vol 49, No 3, 1993, pp 42–43.