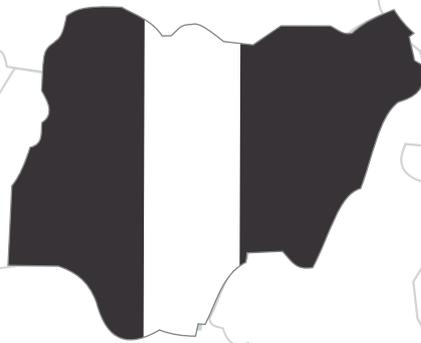




W.O. Alli, Ph.D.

# THE ROLE OF NIGERIA IN REGIONAL SECURITY POLICY





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NIGERIA  
IN REGIONAL SECURITY  
POLICY**

W.O. Alli, Ph.D.

### **About the study**

Nigeria possesses all attributes of a regional leader: population, natural resources, financial means, and military capabilities. Consequently, the nation has been instrumental in both regional conflict management and shaping the West African security architecture at large. At the same time, Nigeria continues to be faced by manifold internal challenges, which threaten to undermine her hegemonic prerogative.

The study at hand sheds light on such crucial aspects as the changing nature of security challenges in West Africa, on Nigeria's interests as well as instruments in regional security policy, on the perceptions of neighbouring countries, and on the internal difficulties related to formulating a coherent policy approach. It presents a valuable contribution to our understanding of the security dynamics in West Africa and beyond.

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## Table of contents

Preface.....	4
Introduction.....	5
<b>1. The Role of Nigeria in Regional Security Policy.....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1. Changing Dynamics of Regional Security Challenges.....	12
1.2. Sub-Regional Security Architecture.....	15
1.3. Nigeria: From Defence to Security Policy.....	20
<b>2. Nigeria’s Engagement in Regional Security.....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.1. Peace-Keeping/Peace Support Operations.....	25
2.2. Mediation.....	27
2.3. The Fight Against Cross Border Criminal Activities.....	29
2.4. Counter-Terrorism.....	30
2.5. Consolidation of Democracy.....	30
2.6. Strategic Training for Military Personnel.....	31
2.7. Economic Integration.....	32
<b>3. Challenges to Nigeria’s Leadership.....</b>	<b>35</b>
3.1. Perception of Neighbours.....	36
3.2. Nigeria and Extra-African Security Interests in West Africa.....	37
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>43</b>

## Preface

The emergence of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has raised many hopes and expectations. Its development is at the heart of integration processes throughout the continent and receives considerable international assistance. Much of the attention, however, is focused on the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities. What seems to be easily overlooked by observers of regional integration is the role of some key actors, whose engagement may serve as a mandatory condition for any integration project to materialise.

In West Africa, one such actor is the Federal Republic of Nigeria, whose commitment to regional integration in the field of peace and security has been essential in such a sense that it would not have been possible without, even less against it. The sheer size of Nigeria's population, hence market, the amount of natural resources as well as her considerable military capabilities bestow on her, as it were naturally, the role of a regional hegemon.

Then again, questions remain: How do her internal challenges affect Nigeria's ability to project influence in the region and beyond? Does the nation itself have a consistent understanding of her national interest, converging to coherent foreign and security policy doctrine? What are neighbouring countries' perceptions of and expectations towards this 'African Giant', and have these changed over time?

One of the most intriguing questions this study is addressing is the following: Might the development of regional norms and the more comprehensive understanding of security, both of which may be seen as a means to 'taming the giant', actually serve Nigeria's well-understood interests?

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) promotes political dialogue on regional security policy and architectures on the national, regional and global levels. It is in this context, that it has commissioned the present research,

which is part of a study series on the role of key drivers of regional security policy as a basis for political dialogue. Allow me to use this opportunity to congratulate both the author and the team of FES Abuja for making available this valuable contribution to our understanding of the dynamics of regional security in West Africa and beyond.

### **Felix Henkel**

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## Introduction

Nigeria's approach to sub-regional security has been largely influenced by the national role conceived for it in international relations by its leaders. This role conception has become the defining paradigm for foreign policy engagement. According to this paradigm, Nigeria is the "natural leader" of Africa with a "manifest destiny" and even with the responsibility to promote and protect the interests of Africa and black people everywhere in all ramifications. They also believe that the country's security is tied to that of other African states because of cultural and historical experiences, and because of transnational security issues which are defined by the way in which the security of a nation is affected by what happens in contiguous countries around its neighbourhood (Yoroms; 2010: 277). As Ate (2011:90) argues, Nigeria must treat this sub-region as a natural base from which to project its national interests and regional influence.

This perspective has propelled Nigeria to the centre stage of African affairs generally and in West African security matters in particular. In the past few decades, member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have had to contend with quite a number of security problems, the type of which were not envisaged when the treaty establishing the organisation was signed in 1975.

The Liberian crisis, the first phase of which lasted from 1990 to 1997 was a turning point in this regard. The bloody insurgency which quickly degenerated into a vicious civil war was also accompanied by mass killings of innocent people, gross violation of human rights, large scale internal displacement and huge flow of refugees across the region.

Under the leadership of Nigeria, at the First Session of the **ECOWAS Standing Committee**, summoned to discuss the Liberian crisis in Banjul from 7th to 8th August, 1990, the principle of non-intervention was waved aside, considering the tragic situation. In the face of total neglect and ambivalence on the part of the international community, and faced with devastating humanitarian

catastrophe, **ECOWAS** was compelled to intervene in Liberia (Abubakar; 2001:19). Nigeria's then military president, General I.B. Babangida, proposed intervention in the Liberian crisis. It was resolved that a **Cease-fire Monitoring Group** should be established to stem the tide of violence and pave the way for normalcy to return to the country. Thus, the **ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)** was put together, not only to bring the conflict under control and prevent its spread to other neighbouring States, but eventually to resolve it.

Since that initial period, **ECOWAS** has had to intervene again and again in other member states. It did so in Sierra Leone from 1997 to 2000, in Guinea Bissau in 1999, and in Côte d'Ivoire from 2002, and indeed, in the crises that engulfed the entire Mano River Basin (**Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone**), the military seizure of power in Niger, in 2010, and the military coup d'état in Mali and in Guinea (**Bissau**), in 2012 among several other security challenges have imposed a new dynamics on **ECOWAS**.

Member states contributed troops on an "able and willing" basis, as there was no central financing of **ECOMOG** operations. Each state financed the upkeep and operations of its troops and this did not augur well for the harmony and the command and control structures (Abubakar; 2001:20). The efforts of **ECOWAS** in responding to these challenges have come to represent an institutional example of a successful transformation from its initial exclusive preoccupation with international economic cooperation and integration to a new additional but complementary agenda of a creatively constructive engagement with the task of sub-regional security management (Akindele; 2003:279). Nigeria, the richest country in the sub-region has had to carry the huge burden of providing leadership and logistics for most of the **ECOMOG** operations.

It has become characteristic for the sub-regional organisation to try in each case to promote the principle of cooperation and sub-regional solidarity as key elements in the efforts to achieve peace and security even as criticisms mounted against **ECOMOG** operations.

In this paper, we have tried to evaluate the changing nature of security threats in the sub-region, the content of the regional security policy, the security architecture put in place, drivers and ownership of the security policy and the role of Nigeria, arguably, the sub-region's power house, in the evolution of regional security policy and its implementation; the specific nature of this role, and the impact of Nigeria's domestic security policy on regional security policy; and the nation's contribution in terms of men, material, diplomacy and leadership in the maintenance of sub-regional peace and security.

The study also considered the impact of the emerging security challenges on the original regional integration ambition of **ECOWAS**, and the role of extra-sub-regional powers in the management of an increasingly dynamic security situation in the area.

## CHAPTER I

### The Role of Nigeria in Regional Security Policy

According to Eze (2010; 7), security policy deals with the broad issues of the management of the multiple threats to the core and context-specific values in the international system. It is in this context that the national security policy of Nigeria provides the framework with which the calculation of instrumental responses (military, economic, social, health, etc.,) to these multiple threats must proceed.

Geo-strategic and endowment advantages give Nigeria a leadership-role in West African security policy. Nigeria is rich in solid mineral, oil and gas. Its land is suitable for agricultural production of a variety of food and cash crops. The nation earns huge revenue from oil export, which still an equally great potential for the export of gas, solid minerals and agricultural products. As shown in the Table above, Nigeria has the largest, best equipped and trained armed forces in the sub-region. Accordingly, one of the realities of the political landscape of West Africa is the clear unquestionable and transparent preponderance of Nigeria as the leading and hegemonic local actor in the sub-region (Akindele; 2003).

Nigeria has a national role conception, which has determined Nigeria's role and has thus recommended activist involvement in African issues generally. That activism led to great contribution by Nigeria towards national liberation and the anti-apartheid struggles particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, becoming a member of the 'Frontline States' in the process. The doctrine of a "Pax Nigeriana", the aspiration to lead Africa, first mooted in 1970 by Akinyemi, a realist scholar, who believed that Nigeria was meant to provide leadership for Africa and Africans in the world at large (Adebajo; 2003), manifests itself most eloquently in West Africa.

The 1975 Adedeji Report on the review of Nigerian foreign policy led the country to the adoption of a policy platform that seeks to make the safeguarding of the territorial integrity of all African states a national policy

objective and led in part to the idea of Africa as centre-piece of the nation's foreign policy. Indeed, the nation exhibited what Adebajo (2010) described as missionary zeal in assuming the role of a benevolent 'older brother' responsible for protecting younger siblings, immediate neighbours, fellow African and black people in the African diaspora.

As argued by Imobighe (1987), Nigerian's ambition to be the leader of Africa has driven the idea to concentrate on the defence of the physical territory from external aggression or intervention in the nation's affairs and invariably implies huge investment in developing appropriate military capability. The consequence is the aggressive investment and modernization to improve the nation's military power including composition, equipment, leadership and doctrine (Bassey,1993). According to Abbass (2012), Under-Secretary of African Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who was interviewed for this study, the capability of Nigeria concerning the military and economic spheres, define in a critical sense the role it plays in regional security policy. Another source of Nigeria's role is its high income from export of oil which allows it to fund its efforts to drive defence policy and provide leadership in security matters in West Africa, usually in the form of economic assistance to other members of ECOWAS. Nigeria has been using money as an instrument of its foreign policy since the Gowon era and the practice has become established and diversified since the Babangida era.

The adoption of the Concentric Circle Model for the nation's foreign policy in the mid-1980s tried to prioritize foreign policy objectives but still putting emphasis on West Africa (MFA;2011). However, under President Obasanjo, since 1999, Nigeria shifted from concentricism to globalism following the argument by **Lamido Sanusi, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1999-2003)** that Nigeria stands to benefit from globalism as thrust of its foreign policy. Another foreign minister, Ambassador Adeniji argued that the Concentric Circle Model should be constructive and beneficial, and be predicated on a tripod of complementary strategies: articulation of Nigeria's interests within a given concentric circle, articulation of

appropriate techniques for promoting and defining such interests within that concentric circle and evolving techniques that will make the Nigerian people the first beneficiaries of such a foreign policy (Akinterinwa; 2004:454).

Adebajo has described Nigeria's role in West Africa as hegemonic, which has been questioned again and again by other members of ECOWAS states including even those which have benefitted from its generosity (Adebajo, 2002), and that they only grudgingly accept its leadership (Adebajo; 2008: 3). There are also other problems with Nigeria's hegemonic position. Sesay, in a discussion with the author (2011) observed, that even though from time to time, Nigeria gives the image of an hegemonic power, in reality, it is a "statistical hegemon," Its influence, he argues, derives more from the statistics in its favour relative to other members of ECOWAS than any proactive strategic engagement of security policy. He observed further that Nigeria faces critical housekeeping challenges which cannot allow it to protect its obvious hegemonic advantages effectively. Nigeria cannot provide effective sub-regional leadership when it has not done so in the area of leadership at home. According to Nwoke (2004:138) the collective self-reliance which regional integration aims to attain will be ridiculed if the regional leader is suffering from external dependence. (Nwoke; 2004:138) In the same vein, Sanda (2011) argued that though Nigeria is a regional hegemon because of its endowments, lack of effective leadership at home does not allow it to be seen as a deliberate leader in West Africa.

The dilemma for Nigeria consists of the fact that West African states are not prepared to replace the colonial yoke with the Nigerian burden. Babangida, as pointed out by Fawole (2000), had declared that Nigeria was one country every other country in West Africa and Africa in general looks up to, to provide the necessary leadership. Thus, the francophone states in particular, and other states in the sub-region in general, view Nigeria with suspicion. They therefore enter into some other form of security arrangement for their self-pride and protection (Danjuma; 2003). Hence, the view expressed by

Adebajo (2003) that Nigeria's leadership position has become a kind of affliction and the fear and suspicion that Nigeria has some imperialist design on its neighbours seem to be another difficult challenge in Nigeria's West African policy (Akindele; 2003: 287).

However, considering all the problems facing West African states, there is a need to establish a security regime in the area if the sub-region and the component states are to develop. Importantly, a hegemon is required to propel the security regime and Nigeria fits into that description (Danjuma; 2003). But there are still other problems because Nigeria is yet to develop the capacity and legitimacy to influence the sub-region and fail sometimes to convince other states to follow its lead on vital political and security and economic issues. Of course, it is not as simple as that because there are other forces, for example regional bargainers, such as Sénégal, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and others, and even extra-sub-regional interests competing for influence in West Africa.

According to Zabadi (2011), even though the world treats Nigeria as a regional and sub-regional leader and listens to her opinion on African and even world issues, there is a contradiction, because Nigeria is an underperformer in domestic affairs, with poor representation in international fora and poorly coordinated positions on many issues. There is also clumsiness in the nation's intervention in security matters in West Africa because some of the officials are sometimes lackadaisical and casual about issues. Hence "Nigeria's goals are faltering." This is an echo of Adebayo Adedeji, (2004: 46) who noted that:

*"No country that is confronted with a long period of political instability, stagnation and regression, and is reputed to be one of the most corrupt societies in the world, has a moral basis to lead others. If it tries to, it will be resisted."*

Generally however, by whatever yardstick, sub-regional leadership is measured; Nigeria is a core state, defined as state whose economic size is sufficiently large to be capable of successfully forge ahead industrialisation and

economic development. Its population, natural resource endowments, market size and intensity make an economy of significant scale realizable and it is recognized by its neighbours as the economic, financial and diplomatic centre for the sub-region (Akindele; 2003: 282).

Nevertheless, Nigeria's role is determined by its interests which are strategic in nature. The interests are also linked to the fact that a sizable number of its citizens reside in other African states. Nigeria is protecting the lives of her nationals anywhere as part of her defence policy objectives since regional crises impact directly on Nigeria and on Nigerians. But there are also social and economic interests, which include the resources it has invested in maintaining peace (Adedeji;2007: 199). Ironically, in identifying Nigeria's security interest in Africa, the 2008 NIIA/MFA conference, in urged its Communiqué for a closer focus on the Gulf of Guinea, considered as a future key battle ground for extra-African interests. Even as the US, other NATO countries and the emerging Asian powers of China and India are scrambling for influence in the region, Nigeria should provide leadership for the development of a sustainable security framework for the area (Eze, Anigbo and Dokubo;2010).

Nigeria's security, according to Maduakwe, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, is therefore inexorably linked to a more secure Africa, a continent that is peaceful and prosperous, a continent that is respected and courted, not just for its previous contributions to world civilisation but to the advancement of mankind in the 21st Century and beyond (2010:6). Hence, Nigeria could find justification to not only contribute but also provide leadership for efforts, including the use of its military to control any instability in the sub-region, as a way of protecting her interests.

It thus became imperative for Nigeria to organise and develop an effective diplomatic and military backbone, taking into account the risks with which to support its national objectives (NNDP, 2006:3). As part of this commitment to sub-regional solidarity, Nigeria created the Ministry of Cooperation and Integration in Africa

(MCIA) in 1999 with a Department of Collective Defence and Security and Department of Regional Economic Integration. The MCIA was also made the focal point for ECOWAS thus showing the high level of the nation's commitment to West African integration. This has allowed even for more attention to ECOWAS matters than it used to be the case. However, in 2007, as part of the civil service reforms, President Obasanjo merged the MCIA with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Nigeria's geo-strategic location also plays a role in defining the nation's security focus. Situated in a region of comparatively much smaller and weaker states, in terms of size, human and material resources, Nigeria's security focus could be said to have been pre-determined. Hence, successive Nigerian leaders have come to accept that the nation has geo-strategic interests that has to do with the political instability within some of the neighbouring countries, for example Chad, Benin, Niger and Togo (Imobighe, 2003: 41), and increasingly in the Gulf of Guinea. This is why Nigeria has invested in Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) along with countries like Chad and Niger and has been pushing to involve even a reluctant Cameroon that is bordering the country to the East.

Like most members of the UN, Nigeria subscribes to the ideals of "collective security" at the global, continental and sub-regional levels. Accordingly, Nigeria believes that West African security can only be guaranteed by policies of cooperation, economic integration and adoption of consensus (Ajibewa; 2007: 18).

Justifying Nigeria's involvement in Peace Support Operations (PSO) and in regional security policy, Gambari (2010) observed that:

*"...in Africa, lack of sustainable development has been linked directly to the proliferation and intensity of conflict situations and war which in turn have hampered development efforts... threats to peace in a neighbouring country, if not carefully managed and resolved could lead to massive exodus of refugees, weapons proliferation and trans-*

*border crimes and general insecurity that could threaten other stable polities and compromise national economies."*

Thus, Nigeria could be appropriately considered a driver of security policy in West Africa. This is because of, as argued by Adedeji (2007: 198), the loosely structured defence system, for which only Nigeria has the size, experience and logistic resources to serve as the core of an ECOWAS rapid deployment force. The role in this regard is quite broad, including conflict resolution through peace-keeping and peace support operations and mediation of political crises in the sub-region.

Personal diplomatic efforts of Nigeria's military Heads of State, particularly from Generals Yakubu Gowon, Olusegun Obasanjo, Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha and Abubakar Abdusalam, have been quite significant. As civilian President (1999-2007), Obasanjo was an activist in these conflict resolution efforts. Presidents Umar Yar'Adua tried to remain visible on the African stage, following Nigeria's traditional role and at the same time, through, what his Foreign Minister, Ojo Maduekwe, called Citizen diplomacy, but with a more audacious rendition of the perspective, designed to bring the benefit of the nation's international exertions on peace and security to the average Nigerian citizen, guided by a diplomacy of consequence, which means reciprocity (Akinterinwa, 2010). President Goodluck Jonathan has also continued to shoulder this self-imposed responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in West Africa, but anchored on what his Foreign Minister Olugbenga Ashiru described as Economic Diplomacy. Therefore, Nigeria under President Jonathan is attempting a readjustment of foreign policy focus, and at the same time retaining elements of its traditional commitment to West African solidarity and security.

The general direction of Nigerian involvement is informed by broadly defined foreign policy objectives, built on a specific perception of its national role, as articulated and documented in the **National Defence Policy (2006)**, informed by conventional perspective about security threats, and by the capacity for rapid response and deployment (Bamali;2009: 96). On this basis, a national

defence architecture has been put in place, again informed by the philosophy and doctrine in line with conventional thinking developed largely by the military establishment.

Main features of Nigeria's West African policy both from the African Centre-piece perspective (Adedeji, 1975; Garba, 1988) and the Concentric Circle model (Gambari, 1989) and Beneficial Concentricism (Akinterinwa, 2006; Adeniji, 2006) are as follows:

- a) Anti-colonialism, anti-apartheid and anti-racism;
- b) Cooperation with immediate neighbours;
- c) Cooperation with other ECOWAS states;
- d) Promotion of peace and security in the sub-region and across the world.

The 1999 Constitution, in Section 19, projects a dynamic foreign policy for Nigeria, through the promotion of economic development, integration and unity, peace and security in Africa and the world. Accordingly, Nigeria's involvement in West African security affairs and any role it might have played in the past few decades have been the result of strongly held opinion by its successive leaderships, generally a role about the nation's responsibility for Africa, and which the public has come to accept, even though with reservation over the years. This was the basis for Babangida's famous declaration in a 1985 speech, as quoted by Ajulo (2009; 18) that "Africa's problems and their solution, should constitute the premise of Nigeria's foreign policy." This idea was also echoed by President Jonathan, who, while declaring open a National Conference on the Review of Nigerian Foreign Policy organized by the Presidential Advisory Council (PAC) in August, 2011, **President Jonathan (2011)** noted that:

*"In the era of globalization, at a time of grave challenges to national and international security such as we face from terrorism and transnational criminal networks, our commitment to regional and international peace and security must remain as strong as ever".*

In line with this, the Federal government vision 2020 prescribes an elaborate mandate for the Nigerian Foreign Service including ensuring that Nigeria's leading role in Africa and in the West African sub-region is sustained and safeguarded."

Ironically, the establishment of **ECOWAS** remains one of the greatest achievements of Nigerian diplomacy up till 1990 and has remained the embodiment of "**Pax Nigeriana**" (**Adebajo; 2008: 1**). Equally significant is the fact that Nigeria's critical role in the establishment of **ECOMOG** and in ensuring its effectiveness during many interventions has become a good example and paradigm for other sub-regional organisations and regional leaders.

In furtherance of its security management capabilities, Nigeria has finally developed what is considered a comprehensive national defence policy. The High powered Committee on national defence policy, headed by late General Joe Garba, Director General of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies was empanelled in 2000 by General T.Y. Danjuma, then Defence Minister. Though work on the Nigeria National Defence Policy (**NNDP**) started immediately, it was only finally adopted in 2006.

The **NNDP** enunciates general guidelines for the employment of the Armed Forces in particular and national resources in general to maintain the country's territorial integrity and protect it from external aggression. It aims at providing compact, flexible, and, above all, battle-winning armed forces. It provides direction for the development of defence organisation, together with other elements of power for the security of Nigeria (**NNDP; 2006: 2**). Importantly, an effective national defence policy is one in which all elements of national power are well integrated and managed to serve national security objectives in response to perceived threats. Thus, the **NNDP** is anchored on "six inter-related principles: prevention, protection, deterrence, rapid force mobilization, projection and cooperation with allies"

In this regard, by building military capability to avoid war, through diplomacy and deterrence, the nation will ensure

that the armed forces possess the capability to successfully defend Nigeria's territory and people relying on military fire power to deter potential adversaries (**FGN; 2006: 24**).

As stated in the document, the specific objectives of the **NNDP** are:

- a) protection of Nigeria's sovereignty, citizens, values, culture, interests, resources and territory against external threats;
- b) provision of defences as well as strategic advice and information to government;
- c) promotion of security consciousness among Nigerians;
- d) response to requests for aid to civil authority;
- e) participation in disaster operations both at home and abroad;
- f) assistance to government agencies and levels of government in achieving national goals;
- g) protection of Nigerians wherever they may reside;
- h) ensuring security and stability in the West African sub-region through collective security;
- i) participation in bilateral and multi-lateral operations; and
- j) contributing to international peace and security.

Items e, i, and j are clear indications about the nation's commitment to sub-regional security and peace, using the nation's defence capabilities and considering that most of the concerns are security and not defence related. But there is now only a military defence policy with an operational structure designed in line with its objectives.

The Nigerian Constitution, in the Third Schedule (G) provides for an advisory body on defence, the National Defence Council, made up of the President, Vice President and the Minister of Defence, the Chief of Defence Staff and the Service Chiefs and others with powers "to advise the President on matters relating to the defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of

Nigeria.” The same Third Schedule of the Constitution, Section (K) provides for a National Security Council, with powers “to advise the President on matters relating to public security including matters relating to any organisation or agencies established by law for ensuring the security of the Federation.”

However, there is no evidence these bodies have been involved in the management of the nation’s security policies on peacekeeping and other security related assignments.

The Security Advisory Board created by the Shagari Administration became the Joint Intelligence Board in 1986 under General Babangida and has since remain a key component of the nation’s security architecture involving all security agencies and ministries dealing with all internal and transnational security issues (Yoroms;2010: 277).

Also critically, an objective security policy should include both military and non-military components to be able to address the complex set of socio-economic and political problems posing security challenges. But the fragmentation of defence and security policy undermines effectiveness of security management (Sanda; 2011).

Notwithstanding what Nigeria may have put in place, there are institutional weaknesses within ECOWAS including inadequate resources and lack of administrative and military capability which militate against and indeed undermine Nigeria’s leadership role. While it appears that the military components are being progressively addressed, the non-military components have not been properly articulated in a manner that is responsive to the emerging security challenges at home and in the sub-region and application of socio-economic and political engineering to address defence and security matters since the use of militarism to address security matters is no longer appropriate for the kind of security challenges being faced domestically and in the sub-region as a whole.

Meanwhile, Nigeria’s role in sub-regional security is highly personalised, driven by the President rather than a well-

articulated strategic vision. This is a phenomenon which started under the Babangida military regime and its policy on the Liberian conflict. This tendency has continued under the democratically elected regime of President Obasanjo, who put his personal stamp on foreign policy as well as on defence and security policy. Presidents Yar’Adua and Jonathan have also largely defined the content of Nigeria’s security policy in the sub-region according to their image.

At the same time, as noted by Sanda, since Nigeria still has no single focused and comprehensive security policy, every security agency has its own security policy that drives its operations. With this comes a lack of effective coordination among the different security and government agencies and the ensuing inter-agency rivalry.

However, Nigeria’s leadership role in the sub-regional security policy could be seen through its peace-keeping and peace-support, peace-building and mediation activities; and through efforts aimed at curbing cross-border criminal activities, piracy; consolidation of democratic rule and support for economic development, and importantly, through the strategic security training it offers to the armed forces of many member states of ECOWAS.

### 1.1. CHANGING DYNAMICS OF REGIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

Since the Liberian conflict (1990–1997), West Africa has experienced several similar security challenges necessitating equally similar responses with the deployment of ECOMOG Forces. The Sierra Leonian conflict (1997–2000) grew out of the unpopular military coup d’état led by Major John P. Koroma, who overthrew the government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah one year after his election and chased him out of the country. The crisis in Sierra Leone was to become one of the most vicious civil wars in Africa, exemplified by the phenomenon of child-soldiers, being recruited to serve as combatants in the rebel army. ECOWAS member states, again had to organise and deploy the ECOMOG troops.

There was also the 1999 Guinea Bissau crisis and the Côte

d'Ivoire conflict and civil war from 2002 and still on-going in 2012. There was the political succession crisis in Togo in 2005/2006 and also the succession crisis in Guinea (Conakry) in 2006 and subsequent internal turmoil. In Niger, as already indicated, the politics of tenure elongation, another form of political succession crisis, also led to the intervention of the Military through a coup d'état, creating tension in the sub-region. As a consequence, the country was suspended from ECOWAS activities.

The seizure of power by the military in Mali and Guinea Bissau in March and April 2012, presented another complicated security challenge, with regards to Mali, where ethnic Tuareg Islamist militia have carved out the northern part of the country to create a new country for themselves.

However, while ECOWAS was invited by the government of Samuel Doe to help check the rebellion and insurgency against his government, in Sierra Leone, the organisation was invited to help restore order and the return to power,

of the democratically elected President, Tejan Kabbah overthrown by soldiers and arrest the rapidly deteriorating security situation. Nigeria, took the lead in both operations.

Security threats could be of two kinds – the conventional security threats, which are associated with a foreign element or government and is usually responded to according to conventional practice and doctrine following laid down pattern (Bassey;1993). The second typology of security threats have been defined as “new or emerging security threats” and are generally non-governmental, dynamic, random and driven by variety of causes and forces. These are of two types. In the first place are the political security threats. The political fall out of the democratisation process in the age of globalisation has brought a high degree of political uncertainty and instability, defining the overarching security situation in the sub-region in a special way.

Citizens and ethnic groups, long suppressed by decades of military and/or civilian dictatorships suddenly found

**Table 1:** Selected Economic Indicators of ECOWAS States

Country	Per Capita Income	Population Below Poverty Line	HDI Rankings
Benin	1364	39.0	167
Burkina Faso	1141	46.4	181
Cape Verde	3402	26.6	133
Côte d'Ivoire	1387	46.7	170
Gambia	1282	58.0	168
Ghana	1584	28.5	135
Guinea Bissau	994	64.7	176
Guinea	863	53.0	178
Liberia	265	63.8	182
Mali	1123	47.4	175
Niger	641	59.5	186
Nigeria	2069	54.7	156
Senegal	1708	50.8	155
Sierra Leone	737	66.4	180
Togo	798	61.7	162

**Source:** UNDP Human Development Report 2011. Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All, New York, UNDP. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics>.

their voices under the climate of globalization and democratisation and embarked on agitations seeking expanded political space and the achievement of self-determination.

In the second place are the threats caused by socio-economic issues. The dynamics of global economic changes, brought about by the growing power of market forces leading to the withdrawal of social provisioning, deregulation of national economies, privatization and withdrawal of subsidy, and as result high level of unemployment, poverty and migration which pose by themselves specific security problems. Generally, most member states of ECOWAS are socio-economically and politically distressed with all but two (Cape Verde and Ghana) being among the low income group of countries according to the UNDP Human Development Index for 2011. See Tables 1 and 2 for some economic and social indicators of member states of ECOWAS.

In the Communiqué issued at the end of a conference jointly organised by the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on Nigeria's Security Interests in Africa, May 2-3 2008, it was observed that the security threats in Africa are largely caused by the absence of development and poor governance. According to **General Danjuma (2003)**, the major causes of conflict in West Africa include inequitable access to power and resources (pre-Doe Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire), discrimination on the basis of religion and ethnic origin (Benin and Senegal), non-democratic and exclusive government (Togo, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire) and failure of institutions of government (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo).

Just as security threats from external aggression were to give way to security threats from internal struggle for political power, threats stemming from socio-economic

**Table 2: Selected Social Indicators of Member States of ECOWAS**

Country	Population	Safety & Rule of Law	Nat. Security	Human Devt.	Overall Score	Rank
Benin	9.2	66	95	56	60	3
Burkina Faso	16.3	59	80	47	55	5
Cape Verde	0.5	87	100	83	79	1
Côte d'Ivoire	21.6	31	59	45	36	15
Gambia	1.8	46	84	64	52	7
Ghana	24.3	72	90	70	66	2
Guinea Bissau	1.6	40	85	40	37	14
Guinea	10.3	43	89	44	38	13
Liberia	4.1	47	64	47	45	10
Mali	15.4	62	80	50	54	6
Niger	15.9	50	70	40	44	11
Nigeria	158.3	46	81	41	44	12
Senegal	12.9	59	79	59	57	4
Sierra Leone	5.8	58	89	38	48	8
Togo	6.8	57	86	48	46	9

**Source:** The Mo Ibrahim Index, 2011.

Available at <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/en/media/get/20111003>.

and political contradictions increasingly occurred. The latter were more and more understood as challenges to human security. They are caused by the failure of governments in several critical areas, such as unemployment and poverty, inadequate infrastructure, abuse of human rights and widespread corruption.

This group of security threats now manifest as ethno-religious conflicts, political succession crises, military coups, insurgencies by militants, terrorism, environmental decay resulting from mineral exploitation, cross-border organised crimes, kidnaping, human trafficking, drug trafficking, armed robbery, piracy and all manner of criminal activities. Increasingly, the causes of conflict and threats to security have become so numerous that there is no **ECOWAS** member state that is unaffected, possibly in varying degrees. Speaking at the 26th Meeting of the Committee of Chief of Defence Staff in Freetown, the chairman of the Committee, Air Marshall Paul Dike, observed that threats to national and regional security in West Africa remained deeply rooted in political, social and economic factors (**Saturday Sun, December 26, 2009**).

Nigeria, a sub-regional power, is itself security-challenged domestically, with a long list of ethno-religious, communal, socio-economic and political conflicts, growing insurgency and terrorism since the return of civil democratic rule in 1999.

The responses to these emerging security challenges took almost a decade to manifest in concrete policies. However, **ECOWAS** has been able to put together a security policy framework and architecture which has helped in providing a focus in addressing the new security problems facing the sub-region including, as earlier stated, the Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security which was adopted in 1999.

## 1.2 SUB-REGIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

In the wake of the Somali crisis (1993) and the genocide in Rwanda (1994) and the reluctance of the powerful members of the United Nations Security Council's (**UNSC**) to approve new UN missions for Africa, the African regional and sub-regional organisations were forced to develop their own security mechanism (**Adebajo;2004: 3**). This step was also informed by the need for greater

**Table 3: Table 3: Military Personnel of Members of ECOWAS**

Country	Military Personnel
Benin	4750
Burkina Faso	11200
Cape Verde	1200
Côte d'Ivoire	35000
Gambia	2500
Ghana	7000
Guinea Bissau	4000
Guinea	45000
Liberia	2100
Mali	12500
Niger	12000
Nigeria	130000
Senegal	19000
Sierra Leone	13000
Togo	7000

**Source:** Compiled from Wikipedia Country Profiles

cooperation, political will and commitment among the fifteen, largely weak West African states with very ineffective national security capabilities.

The AU security architecture is informed by the new security threats and provides for collective approach to the security challenges of the continent, accepting the sovereign equality of all members and a prominent position for Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), South African Development Community (SADC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

The AU framework, which was set up in 2002, has a Peace and Security Council (PSC), a permanent body on peace and security with the responsibility for managing collective security and working in cooperation with RECs. The AU Commission also has a Peace and Security Directorate. There are provisions for an African Standby Force made up of multinational brigades drawn from the RECs – ECOBRIG for West Africa, SADCBRIG for Southern Africa, EASBRIG for East Africa and a North African brigade and a Central Africa Brigade. Another brigade, the 6th is being planned for the AU Headquarters with a capacity for between 15000 and 20000 troops.

Articles 16 of the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) protocol for example provides that regional mechanism shall be part of the security architecture of the Union, which has the primary responsibility to promote peace security and stability in Africa. There is also the Panel of the Wise, officially launched in 2007, the Early Warning System with its Situation Room and a Special Fund for security. In addition, ECOWAS has many experts, put together under the West African network for democratic governance, a regional network of institutions and experts working on security policy and advising the ECOWAS Commission.

There is also a West African Network for Peace providing strategic insight into the various security challenges facing the community.

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is another important measure in the efforts to promote security on the continent generally. It is designed to have several levels and was meant to help strengthen African capacity for crisis prevention, conflict transformation, and consolidation of peace. In 2010, new security threats such as organised crime, piracy and drug trafficking were added to the issues covered by the APSA framework. The international community has resources and capabilities which over the years have been of great help to African conflict management and the promotion of peace and security. The EU for example is using the Cotonou Agreement and an array of other instruments to support the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

Nigeria serves as headquarters to the ECOWAS brigade, which was mandated by APSA, whereas the Nigerian Army 130th battalion in Calabar, is the standby force for ECOWAS.

In March 2011, the EU High Representative presented a draft EU Strategy for security and development in the Sahel with the main objective of coordinating and linking security and development, a very important yet inadequately appreciated dimension in the emerging security challenges in Africa generally, considering that most of the conflicts and emerging security challenges have their origin in the poor socio-economic condition of the people and the poor democratic culture and lack of good governance.

In line with the emerging security challenges, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in December, 2010 launched a comprehensive programme to combat drug trafficking and organised crime in West Africa. The programme focuses on peace building, security sector reform, national and regional institution and capacity building as well as on strengthening action in the area of efforts to combat organised drug and human trafficking, terrorism, health, awareness raising, and research. The programme is also expected to help address the lack of adequate resources in the sub-region for counter-terrorism.

As already noted above, the AU framework has given very prominent responsibilities to the RECs, no doubt in recognition of the critical role which some of them, particularly ECOWAS, have been playing in managing and resolving conflict and protecting security through peace support operations and peace-building efforts.

The security challenges which ECOWAS faced in the 1990s and the criticisms which trailed ECOWAS' responses to conflicts have defined what has emerged as the new security architecture for the sub-region. However an acceptable framework for economic integration and political cooperation among members of the organisation has not yet been developed, divided as they are by size, economic resources and potential, colonial history and culture. Among the fifteen members of ECOWAS, eight are French speaking – Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo; five are English speaking – Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone; while two are Portuguese speaking – Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau.

In reaction to these criticisms of the body's responses to security problems and conflicts, according to General Abubakar (2001:20), the ECOWAS leaders decided to put in place an all-embracing legal framework that would address in a comprehensive manner, the issues of conflicts, their management and resolution, peacekeeping operations and the related issues of security, proliferation of small arms and cross-border crime. These efforts led to the adoption of the ECOWAS Protocol (A/P1/12/99) relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (CPMRPS), which was signed in Lomé, Togo, in December, 1999.

Another document that came out of all these efforts to address the shortcomings of the organisation was the Protocol A/SP1/12/01, Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001.

Article 3(d) of the CPMRPS declared that ECOWAS was committed to "strengthening cooperation in the areas of conflict prevention, early warning, peacekeeping

operations, the control of cross-border crime, international terrorism and proliferation of small arms and anti-personnel mines."

The protocol provides for three organs to implement security decisions:

- a) the Mediation and Security Council;
- b) the Defence and Security Council;
- c) the Council of Elders.

Local arrangements for collecting early warning information were also established.

The Supplementary protocol on Democracy and Good Governance also took the security architecture a step further in addressing existing challenges. In Section 1, Article 1, it established twelve core areas, to which all member states must subscribe, including the separation of powers between the executive, the legislative and judiciary; that accession to power must be made through free, fair and transparent elections; zero tolerance for unconstitutional change of power or maintenance of power by unconstitutional means; a political armed forces; secularism and neutrality of the state in all matters relating to religion; freedom of the press among others.

The security architecture is also derived from the idea of "convergence" which suggests that institutions of state should be streamlined, the need for electoral reforms, the imperative of anti-corruption, the value of strong political parties, and the subservience of the military to civil authority and respect for rule of law.

It has been argued that "Africa was in need of a new perspective or a well-articulated regional security perspective with emphasis on basic human needs to enable it effectively tackle the continent's various security problems" (NIIA/MFA Communiqué; 2008).

In 2008, ECOWAS took another step towards consolidating sub-regional security by adopting Regulation MSC/REG/1/01/08 on the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) which was aimed at

mainstreaming “conflict prevention into **ECOWAS**’ policies and programmes as an operational mechanism” transforming the region from an “**ECOWAS** of states into an **ECOWAS** of the People”, such that the tensions between sovereignty and supra-nationality, and between regime security and human security, shall be progressively resolved in favour of supra-nationality and human security respectively (**ECOWAS; 2008: 9**). The document also moved the **ECOWAS** from a conventional security doctrine to a non-conventional one, built on human security defined as “the creation of conditions to eliminate pervasive threats to people’s and individual rights, livelihoods, safety and life; the protection of human and democratic rights and promotion of human development to ensure freedom from fear and freedom from want.” (ibid.)

According to the provisions of the **ECPF**, there are three possible levels of intervention in a member country, where an unconstitutional change of power occurs:

- a) **ECOWAS** ambassadors level;
- b) Ministerial level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs; and
- c) The Head of State level, at which level critical decisions and resolutions are made.

There are also three types of sanctions on a member state:

- a) No **ECOWAS** meeting in such a member country;
- b) No official position for such a country; and
- c) Suspension of such a country from the organisation.

The above instruments allow **ECOWAS** to intervene in conflicts and other security challenges in any member country. Thus, the framework for conflict management have changed from the non-interference principle of the 1970s to the 1980s period to the new principle emphasizing non-indifference and collective responsibility for peace and security on the basis of adherence to constitutionalism, good governance and human rights.

**ECOWAS** also possesses the Peace Fund, made up of financial appropriations as stated in Art 21 of the protocol on Peace and Security Council (**PSC**) from regular budget, and voluntary contributions of member states, civil society and individuals from the international community and the fund raising activities of the President of the Commission.

Thus, the **ECPF** provides a more comprehensive structure for peace and security cooperation in the sub-region. Significantly, **ECOWAS (2008: 21)** claims supranational powers derived from the AU and the UN, invoking the UN Responsibility to Protect (**R2P**), which has redefined the concept of sovereignty, such that, if a state is not willing or capable to protect its citizens in the case of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity, the international community becomes responsible and has the legitimacy to protect human security in three distinct ways as follows:

- a) The Responsibility to prevent - actions taken to address the direct and root causes of intra- and inter-state conflicts that put populations at risk.
- b) The Responsibility to react – actions taken in response to grave and compelling humanitarian disasters.
- c) The Responsibility to rebuild – actions taken to ensure recovery, reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation in the aftermath of violent conflicts, humanitarian or natural disasters. (**ECOWAS;2008:21**)

Towards this end, a 14-component benchmark activity was put in place as follows:

1. Early Warning;
2. Preventive Diplomacy;
3. Democracy and political Governance;
4. Human Rights and the Rule of Law;
5. Media;
6. Natural Resource Governance;
7. Cross-Border Initiatives;
8. Security Governance;

9. Practical Disarmament;
10. Women, Peace and Security;
11. Youth Empowerment;
12. ECOWAS Standby Force;
13. Humanitarian Assistance;
14. Peace Education (Culture of Peace)  
(**ECOWAS; 2008:21**)

Out of all these fourteen components, four have already been developed:

- a) An Early Warning Mechanism – **ECOWARN** – was created and has an Observation and Monitoring Centre (**OME**), mandated to collect early warning data;
- b) The Mediation and Security Council (**MSC**) as a key decision making organ on conflict management. In fact it was the **MSC** which developed the **ECPF**;
- c) The Committee of the Wise; and
- d) Regular meeting of the different security service chiefs - the Chiefs of Defence Staff, West African Police Chiefs' Committee, Committee of Chiefs of Immigration, and Committee of Chiefs of Customs.

At the 2011 meeting of Chiefs of Defence Staff in Bamako, Mali, it was decided to expand the areas of cooperation to include intelligence and improved border patrol and control.

With the introduction of the **ECPF**, **ECOWAS** has moved further ahead of the AU and other RECs on the continent in terms of developing effective security architecture. As observed by Sesay and Ikouni, (2010:55), **ECOWAS** possesses the most sophisticated conflict prevention management, peace-building and peace-keeping mechanism on the continent. It must also be noted that in 2009, **ECOWAS** adopted the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons to address another growing menace in the sub-region, namely that of arms proliferation.

The significance of the above is that on traditional/conventional and non-traditional/non-conventional conceptualization of security threats, the new frameworks, particularly the benchmarks contained in the **ECPF** have strengthened **ECOWAS** mechanism for

security cooperation in engaging sub-regional security challenges in a more democratic and open manner than hitherto. They allow **ECOWAS** to intervene militarily in inter-state and internal conflicts that are generating refugees and humanitarian tragedies and threats to sub-regional peace and security thus operationalising the supra-national orientation of the organisation. At the same time the politics of sub-regional security management require greater political will, commitment and diplomacy in improving security policy and its implementation.

These frameworks are increasingly being deployed effectively, even though, there were military coups in Guinea in December 2008, in Guinea Bissau in March 2009 and in Niger in February, 2010. For example Niger was suspended by the **ECOWAS** following the military Coup d'état in 2010, in which President Mamadou Tandja was overthrown for attempting a constitutional amendment to achieve tenure elongation with an extension of his tenure which was to end in 2009 to 2012. The Military then established the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy. The country was only readmitted in 2011 after the successful conduct of presidential elections.

In March 2012, the military struck in Mali, bringing to an end the notion of a stable democracy of more than two decades standing. Again in April, 2012, there was another coup in Guinea Bissau. Even though **ECOWAS** condemned the coups and threatened and even tried to impose sanctions on the two countries as prescribed by the **ECPF**, it has been very difficult.

In Mali, the Tuareg Islamists have seized the opportunity to cut off the northern part of the country to form the republic of Azawad. The military was also not ready to submit to **ECOWAS** threats of sanctions and had to be recognized and accommodated in mediation efforts to resolve the crisis. Efforts being made by **ECOWAS** to organise a 3000 man force to quell the Tuareg secession have so far failed to enjoy the needed backing of the **UNSC**. Meanwhile, **ECOWAS** Chairman, President Alassane Quattara, faces an uphill task getting the members to act decisively on the Mali case. For example,

while it is generally believed that Nigeria prefers and in fact has insisted on military intervention, the francophone states would prefer mediation. ECOWAS continues to talk tough threatening diplomatic isolation and possible military intervention.

In Guinea Bissau, the military has continued to intervene in politics at will ensuring that no elected president completes its term. Yet ECOWAS has not been able to curtail these regular interventions or help the elected presidents run open and responsive democratic governments. After the coup in April, ECOWAS demanded the safety of President Gomes Jnr., who was arrested by the coup plotters and the completion of the elections which was interrupted while, at the same time calling for dialogue and mediation with the hope that a transitional arrangement could be worked out with the military. No doubt, the crises in Guinea Bissau and Mali pose serious threats to ECOWAS frameworks for conflict prevention and the promotion of good governance in the sub-region. Dialogue with coup plotters, however, is not a good example of zero tolerance for unconstitutional change of government.

In all these, military capability plays a critical role with the result that peace keeping and peace building efforts are increasingly being securitized. Consequently a country like Nigeria, with a huge military, had come to play more visible leadership role in sub-regional security policy.

### 1.3 NIGERIA: FROM DEFENCE TO SECURITY POLICY

Security policy of any state derives from its geo-strategic environment and the kind of security threats perceived to be confronting the state. It is the primary responsibility of any state to ensure the safety of life and property of its citizens. This provides the basis for outlining principles of national defence and security policy.

Defence, according to Imobighe (1987) is the sum total of the deployment of a nation's resources to guarantee its territorial integrity and sovereign independence. Security, on the other hand, is defined as freedom from danger or threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself,

promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well-being of its people itself (Imobighe;1990). He also defined national security as "human security which should be the bedrock of national security as it is the security of ordinary men and women in society (Imobighe; 1998).

Defence policy used to be the source of traditional response to threats to security, historically conceptualised, as external threats to the physical integrity of the state. And as Zabadi (2007:107) noted, this concern over security of the state has remained one of the defining characteristics of the relations between states and has informed the ECOWAS framework for dealing with security threats in the era of the cold war, particularly in the 1970s and the 1980s as indicated by the collective security arrangements put in place by the organisation, essentially to deter external aggression.

At the national level, there is a clear dichotomy between foreign and defence policy and "the two related areas have to a large extent remained poles apart" according to Bassey (2005: 266) who also noted that:

*"This failure of the Nigerian defence planners to coordinate foreign and defence policy has meant that instead of an overall integrated course of action, a number of independent and often contradictory lines of action were often pursued. The consequence of this dearth of overall political direction and coordination of defence and foreign policy has been in a state of flux as attempts are made to meet changing situational challenges arising from regional as well as domestic circumstances."*

This defence-determined security thinking in ECOWAS in the 1970s grew out of a belief that major threats to member states could only come from the external environment. Part of the response to this notion was the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of members entrenched in the OAU charter. That conceptualization of security threat as external aggression, led to the adoption by ECOWAS members of

the Protocol on Non-Aggression, also known as Agreement on Non-Aggression and Assistance in Defence (ANAD) in 1978 and soon after in 1981, the Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence (MAD). These protocols, built on the OAU principle of Non-interference, were designed and interpreted in terms meant to protect sitting regimes from external and even internal threats. It was a mutual survival plan for African ruling classes.

However, progressively, the above are no longer adequate for the security challenges of this era. There is need for a clear understanding of the central role of non-military agents in national security and defence. Accordingly, socio-economic development, rule of law, justice, respect for human rights and good governance are the new critical building blocks of national defence and security. Security is thus also the presence of sufficient deterrence against all forms of threats caused by inequality, exploitation and underdevelopment in society (Okwori; 1998:20). Security is best understood within the context of the prevailing threat situation and threat is a function of values, interests and perception which are dynamic, subjective and politically determined (Danjuma;2003), while security policy is the relation between military power and national purpose (Bassey;2005: 260) or the deployment of military power to serve national objective.

To meet this objective, security has to be conceptualised in a more all-encompassing manner, making defence policy an inadequate response to the post-cold war era security threats which have spawned new thinking about the concept of security and threats to security. This is particularly so because quantitative and qualitative expansion of Nigeria's defence capabilities is sustained by the incorporation of West Africa and the continent at large into Nigeria's vision of systemic security (Bassey; 2005: 271). These concepts, as noted in Nigeria's National Defence Policy (FGN; 2006: 6) are now viewed in a holistic, collective and people-centred way. Hence, security is no longer viewed in defence terms, which is about protecting the physical boundaries of a state, but providing comprehensive socio-economic, political and cultural security for the people.

One of the new dimension of security is the adoption of multilateral "common security" appropriate to tackling security issues to which Nigeria is committed. Accordingly, the Nigerian government declared that it will continue to be an active player in this regard, including participation in peace keeping operations (FGN,2006:7), and has continued to commit its troops to efforts to resolve security problems in Africa in collaboration with the UN, the AU and the ECOWAS and other continental and sub-regional groupings (FGN, 2006:9).

Bassey (2011) argued that "defence policy is an instrument of foreign policy and is concerned with the protection and promotion of the state's interest in the international environment in which it exists". It is a dynamic process and the result of the interaction of two forces:

*"One is international politics or the balance of power, wars and alliances, the subtle and the brutal uses of force and diplomacy to influence the behaviour of other states. The principal currency of this is actual and potential military strength. The other force is domestic politics, the world of interest groups, political parties, social classes with their conflicting interests and goals. The currency here is the resources of society in men, money and material"*

Traditionally, to a large extent, the pursuit of these interests would invariably include the acquisition of military capability and the enhancement of such national military capability in line with identified defence policy requirements.

However, in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, and the unleashing of new forces and dynamics and therefore new threats to security of states which are largely from within, it became apparent that the whole concept of defence as security needed to be reviewed in line with the emerging trends in security threats. This was inevitable because the goals of defence policy, which was to deter threats to national security from the external environment and tied to military capability, could no longer meet the security challenges of the new era, which were increasingly from within states. It is not a

replacement of the need for more investment in Early Warning mechanisms, empowering the Panel of the Wise and supporting peaceful resolution of conflicts and improvement of policies, programmes, organs and institutions that support development in Africa (Klingsbeal; 2005:438).

But for Nigeria, the character of these emerging security threats, as explained in the Nigerian National Defence Policy (NNDP) now include:

- a) extensive, porous land border of about 4900 km and 853 km of coastline;
- b) local conflicts, civil strife and unrests in neighbouring countries; and
- c) establishment of military bases in Africa by foreign powers and possible strikes or attacks on the country's main resource base, vital and strategic facilities and installations (FGN, 2006:13).

These new security challenges call for a re-conceptualization of defence and foreign policy. The long held perspective of Africa as centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy was redefined in 1984 in response to changes in the dynamics of world, regional and sub-regional politics. A concentric circle model perspective and compass for Nigerian foreign policy was declared. On the basis of this model, Nigerian interests were grouped into circles representing, one, national integrity of the state; two, representing the immediate neighbours of Nigeria; and three, the third circle covering West Africa and Africa and the last circle covering international organisations and the world at large. Thus ECOWAS was next in importance to the core innermost circle of the concentric circle model (Akinterinwa; 2007).

It was this expansive reformulation of Nigeria's foreign policy that has elicited fundamental conclusion about the nature and direction of Nigeria's defence, and by implication security policy posture as follows:

- a) internal stabilization and the development of

- b) the critical underpinning of national military power; the local military – industrial complex; preventing a deterioration in the geographic and military status – quo in the West African sub-region through peace support operations;
- c) the liquidation of settler regimes in South Africa as they threaten the existence of Nigeria as an entity through their sponsorship of secessionist forces in African countries (Bassey; 2011:7)

According to Ajulo (2009: 6), Babangida reversed the anti-ECOWAS orientation of his two predecessors, President Shagari and General Buhari, by being more involved in ECOWAS affairs. He radically transformed and repositioned Nigeria in the integration project of West Africa and significantly also in the security sphere, peacekeeping and conflict resolution. His foreign policy was guided by strategic factors, economic considerations, political realities and a special concern for the African condition (Oyoubaire and Olagunju; 1992: 61). This has remained the posture of all post-Babangida regimes in the country (Ajulo; 2009: 6).

The intervention of ECOWAS in Liberia, in the way and manner it did and the leadership role of Nigeria in it led to a paradigm shift and the creation of the ECOMOG as an instrument for conflict resolution in the sub-region. It became a new kind of instrument in driving security policy in the sub-region in a new security environment devoid of the cold war and dominated by globalization and a whole new set of security challenges including civil disturbances, insurgencies, cross-border organised crimes, drug and human trafficking, arms smuggling and proliferation of SALW, kidnapping widespread poor performance of the economics of most states, unemployment, poverty, debilitating scourges of HIV/AIDS and Malaria, caused largely by lack of good governance, justice and fairness and lack of respect for human rights and other abuses, thus requiring new initiatives in managing them.

Security policy, involves a broad range of plans and their

implementation in response to perceived security threats. Hence, the traditional conventional notion of national security as the physical safety and territorial integrity of states was no longer sufficient. Therefore, there was a need for a non-conventional security doctrine which is much broader.

However, though **ECOWAS** had and still has no comprehensive security policy in place to face these challenges, as confirmed to the author in interviews by **ECOWAS** officials, Nigerian military leaders and experts, over the years it has developed several frameworks to deal with them. Commandant of the National Defence College, Admiral Lokoson, argued that even though there was no formal and clear security policy in West Africa that could be cited as a guide to action, there are several protocols which play a role, and every security decision has been a result of careful consideration of the problems and a desire to promote collective security and active peace in the sub-region.

Sesay, in a discussion with the author, was in agreement with this view that **ECOWAS** has no comprehensive security policy, but he argued further that even if there was a security policy, members would not be in a position to implement it because of several problems including leadership, focus, funding and logistics. It then means that though **ECOWAS** owns security policy, its implementation depends on others, who provide logistics and other necessary needs. This is why the role of Nigeria, ever ready to provide the needed support, is very significant.

A critical component of the West African security policy management is, in the absence of an effective political system and security policy, the deployment and use of the military to deal with these new threats. What **Imobighe (2010: 27)**, called the militaristic perspective of security.

It has been argued that there exists an arc of instability, stretching from the Western hemisphere, through Africa and the Middle East to Asia, where some African countries are being alleged to harbour terrorist organisations allied to Al Qaeda and are chronically

unstable and thus provide a fertile ground for terrorist recruitment. This, in the view of Imobighe, who spoke with the author on the subject, this is a major setback for the region. He noted that the increasing use of militarism to address internal security matters, both within Nigeria and across West Africa is a basic weakness of existing frameworks for managing the nation's and the sub-region's security. At the same time, the dependence on the military to solve security problems also further raises the value and role of those countries like Nigeria with a capacity to provide the men and the logistics for such operation. According to **General Role, (2012)**, who spoke to the author, the growing deployment by Nigeria, of Defence Attachés across West Africa in Ghana, Benin, Liberia, Mali and Chad support the view that Nigeria is playing an increasingly crucial role in the security policy of the sub-region.

Significantly, the success and effectiveness of **ECOWAS** in security policy making and implementation depends largely of the commitment and political will of its members as well as the resources and leadership provided by Nigeria.



## CHAPTER II

### NIGERIA'S ENGAGEMENT IN REGIONAL SECURITY

#### 2.1 PEACE-KEEPING/PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Nigeria is one of the major troop-contributing nations to UN peacekeeping operations around the world and is globally recognized for its readiness and commitment, which began even months before the nation gained independence, when participating in UN peacekeeping operations in Congo, "Operations des Nations Unies au Congo" (ONUC) in 1960. Since then, Nigeria has deployed troops for Peace Support Operations (PSOs) on bilateral, AU, ECOWAS and UN levels, and has participated in these PSOs around the world including in Lebanon, Chad, Angola, Namibia, Cambodia, Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan (Darfur) and of course in Liberia and Sierra Leone and others. Additionally, Nigeria has also participated in Observer Missions. According to Gambari (2010), Peace-keeping or Peace-Support Operations have become a veritable instrument of foreign policy for Nigeria, an accent of the imperative to deter acts that threaten her security, peace and development.

Nigeria's commitment to peacekeeping could also be seen as an extension of its support for the national liberation struggle on the continent, particularly in the anti-apartheid dimension of the campaign, after the collapse of Portuguese colonial empire in Africa and the coming to power of General Murtala Mohammed and General Olusegun Obasanjo in 1975. This was done largely through diplomatic efforts and material support for the various national liberation movements across the continent and its effectiveness in supporting the anti-apartheid struggle, which led to its being considered a member of the "Frontline States."

Since then, Nigeria has participated in a large number of peace keeping and peace support operations, leading in most cases to peace building efforts. The most dramatic of all these efforts are however the leadership role Nigeria played in the ECOMOG operations in Liberia and

subsequently in Sierra Leone. General Babangida, whose regime was confronted with the Liberian conflict, had argued that:

"The ECOWAS region completes what has been termed the three concentric circles governing Nigerian foreign and defence policies --- There is therefore no gain saying the fact that when certain events occur in this region depending upon their intensity and magnitude which are bound to affect Nigeria's politico – military and socio-economic environment, we should not stand-by as a hapless and helpless spectators."

"We believe that if the events are such that have the potentials to threaten the stability, peace and security of the sub-region, Nigeria in collaboration with others, in this sub-region, is duty bound to react or respond in an appropriate manner, necessary to either avert the disaster or to take adequate measures to ensure peace, tranquillity and harmony (Bassey, 2011; 7)."

With ECOMOG's efforts under Nigeria's leadership, the Liberian conflict was eventually resolved and in August 2, 1997, Charles Taylor was sworn in as President.

In many respects, the Sierra Leone conflict was an overflow of the Liberian civil war (George; 2012: 400). President Ahmed Tejjan Kabbah, invited ECOWAS to help restore him to power after the military overthrew his government. The ECOMOG mandate in Liberia was expanded and notwithstanding the difficulties and cost, Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea contributed troops. It should be noted that ECOWAS, as stated by George, actually wanted dialogue and negotiation with Major John Koromah, who led the junta. But with the failure of that approach, sanctions and some embargos were imposed at the June/July ECOWAS meetings in Abidjan, eventually troops were deployed, the military removed, and Kabbah was re-instated to office in 1998. At that time, General Sani Abacha was the Nigerian military ruler and ECOWAS Chairman (1996-98). Thus, Nigeria's immense contribution in men, money and material made it possible for ECOWAS to achieve its objectives in the two countries. After ECOMOG's success in Sierra Leone, the UN established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

(UNAMSIL) in October 1999 as a peace-enforcement operation.

Nigeria has borne the greatest burden in terms of peacekeeping in West Africa. By 1999, it was estimated that Nigeria had committed over 13 billion US dollars to peacekeeping operations in West Africa (Bamali; 2009: 100). Over the years, there has been a national outcry over the way and manner the leaderships have waded into trouble spots in the sub-region without any tangible benefit. Because of this, in 1998, Nigeria decided not to contribute troops for the ECOMOG mission in Guinea Bissau (Galadima; 2011: 322). It was however not surprising that the operation collapsed without Nigeria's participation.

After his inauguration in 1999, President Obasanjo wanted to scale down Nigerian's commitment and burden in sub-regional military engagements. In his speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 1999, Obasanjo noted that:

"For too long, the burden of preserving international peace and security in West Africa has been left almost entirely to a few states in the sub-region. Nigeria's continued burden in Sierra Leone is unacceptably draining Nigeria financially. For our economy to take off, this bleeding has to stop".

Nigeria spent on the ECOMOG operation about one million US dollars daily (George; 2012: 425). However, rather than withdraw all of the 12,000 troops from Sierra Leone under the pressure from the UN, Nigeria decided to leave some 3500 troops to serve under UNOMSIL, Operation Sandstorm and in "Operation Save Freetown" to pacify the Sierra Leonian capital city. The Nigerian Contingent (NIGCON) to the UN mission at November, 1999, included 8 staff officers, 4 military observers and was to become the largest troop from all the troop contributing countries. However, this scaling down was just a temporary adjustment as the pressure on Nigeria to remain became stronger and because of the president who was to become more active in sub-regional security management. General Abubakar, former military Head of

State, noted that Nigeria can claim a fair share of the glory for peace that is enjoyed in Sierra Leone today. (2009:95).

Nigeria again participated from 2003 in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). In this operation, according to General Bamali, Nigeria was left to lift its own troop and those of Gambia and Guinea for the ECOMOG operation in Monrovia (Bamali; 2009).

The Côte d'Ivoire crisis was a particularly unpleasant experience for West African leaders because the country was regarded as one of the most stable in the sub-region. The crisis was to present a different kind of security challenge to ECOWAS. The keenly contested elections in October 2000 followed an intense power struggle between Laurent Gbagbo and his allies on the one hand and Alassane Quattara and his supporters on the other hand in the light of an intense debate over "Ivorite" or "Ivorianness" about who is truly an Ivorian. Following gun duel in Abidjan and elsewhere in the country in 2002, Obasanjo despatched Nigerian Alfa fighter planes to foil a military coup d'état only to be maneuvered to withdraw soon thereafter. A rebellion led by disgruntled soldiers under the name of Movement Patriotique du Côte d'Ivoire, soon made the situation worse, breaking the country into two parts. Nigeria was to provide buffer troops to separate the two warring groups, now identified as the Northern and Southern forces. This early intervention helped to dictate the direction of ECOWAS policy on the very complicated crisis.

At the request of President Gbagbo, ECOWAS deployed a peacekeeping force to monitor a ceasefire agreement between the warring forces. Nigeria was to contribute troops for the ECOWAS ceasefire monitoring assignment in the Country in 2002. Throughout 2003, Obasanjo undertook several missions across West Africa to ensure a unified approach to the Ivorian crisis.

In early February 2004, the UNSC Resolution 1527 approved the efforts of ECOWAS and France to "promote a peaceful settlement of the conflict" and also empowered the ECOWAS mission in Côte d'Ivoire to stabilise the nation. Later in the same month, UNSC

Resolution established the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) into which ECOWAS troops were later integrated.

Meanwhile, Nigeria contributed military observers to the Côte d'Ivoire operations just as Ambassador Ralph Uwechue of Nigeria was appointed as Special Representative of the ECOWAS Executive Secretary in Côte d'Ivoire to monitor and coordinate ECOWAS efforts in the country.

The complexity of the Ivorian crisis, according to Sanda (2003), "taught the Nigerian government to learn to take the backstage, and adopt instead a multilateral diplomatic approach." This is because hitherto, Nigeria used to wade into these sub-regional internal political crises with a lot of enthusiasm.

Nigeria has been able to provide logistics and funding at very crucial moments in the organisation's history of conflict management, resolution, peace-keeping and peace building (Akindele; 2003). Over 70 per cent of ECOMOG troops and 80 per cent of funds were provided by Nigeria (Abubakar; 2009:195). Lt. General Martin Agwai (2009; 132) observes that the major accolades which the Nigerian Army won in the cause of participation in some of the PSOs have helped to project Nigeria's image as an emerging power in Africa and an important factor in international politics, while General Malu (2009: 174) states that without Nigeria's involvement and leadership, it was doubtful that the peace could have been achieved.

## 2.2 MEDIATION

Nigeria has impacted regional security policy through mediation which has been an old instrument of Nigerian diplomacy since independence. In the immediate post-independence-period, the security challenges were essentially inter-state and revolved around border disputes. Nigeria was usually drafted by the OAU to mediate such disputes in the past, including the ones between Togo and Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda and several others

Nigeria pursued mainly an interventionist personal diplomatic role in conflict mediation and took the lead in security matters in West Africa within the framework of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council. From General Babangida to President Jonathan, Nigerian leaders have played very direct role in the mediation efforts of the nation in regional conflict and crises. This has been amply demonstrated by Nigeria's intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Nigeria played a critical role with other countries, in the Lomé Peace Accord signed between President Kabbah and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group led by Fodeh Sankoh.

President Obasanjo exemplified this personal diplomatic effort and involvement in mediation, peace-making and conflict resolution. He played critical roles in all these mediation efforts. His shuttle diplomacy across West Africa led to the resolution of several conflicts and political crises sometimes late at night. In fact it was President Obasanjo's personal involvement in the last minute of the final negotiations which culminated in the successful negotiation of the Lomé Peace Agreement which was signed in July 1999 (George; 2012: 416).

In 2003, he also brokered a settlement between rebel soldiers and President Taylor which facilitated the establishment of the Government of National Unity in Liberia and provision of asylum for Taylor in Nigeria (Sanda, 2004;276). That settlement included an arrangement for Taylor to be granted asylum in Nigeria, thus facilitating the process for the establishment of a government of national unity in Liberia.

As AU Chairman in 2004, Obasanjo ensured that the Ivorian crisis received adequate attention from the ECOWAS and the AU. His efforts led to the Mini - AU - Summit in Otta on November 4, 2004 and another AU Emergency Summit in Abuja.

His involvement in the efforts to resolve the Ivorian crisis continued in 2005. President Obasanjo attended several critical meetings on the crisis including the AU and ECOWAS summits, the AU Peace and Security Council meeting in Gabon in January 10, 2005, the ECOWAS Extra-ordinary summit in September, 2005, while several

diplomatic missions were sent to Côte d'Ivoire on November and December, 2005. Other diplomatic missions were dispatched to the AU and the UN to mobilize the international community and present the African position.

The Guinea Bissau crisis became a major challenge for ECOWAS and represented one of the burdens of the sub-region considering the involvement of South American drug barons that have turned the very poor country into a haven for drug trans-shipment to Europe and elsewhere. The weakness of the state and the autocratic rule of President Kumba Yala, who became President in 2000 and the nation's restive military, against the background of an active drug trafficking business were recipes for a political disaster, which exploded into the open in 2003. Again President Obasanjo was a member of a team, led by then ECOWAS Chairman and President of Ghana, Kuffour, and included President Abdullahi Wade of Senegal.

In 2005, Togo became one of the major security scares in West Africa as a result of a political succession crisis following the death of President Gyassimbe Eyadema after 38 years in office. Faure Gyassimbe was appointed by the military in February to succeed his father against the opposition by other politicians. Violence erupted after Faure polled over 60 per cent of the votes in a subsequent election. Obasanjo was to deploy Nigeria's now well established and effective diplomatic muscle to douse the tension with personal visits and consultation. He invited Faure Gyassimbe and the main opposition leader Emmanuel Akitani to Abuja where a peace accord was agreed upon in 2006. Nigeria also provided much needed support and contributed to the ECOWAS efforts to resolve the political crisis in the Republic of Guinea, encouraging the tripartite efforts of the Republic of Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

Nigerian mediation was again deployed to Guinea when President Conteh, who had ruled Guinea since 1984, faced mutiny and riotous demonstrations in 2007 with Obasanjo sending General Babangida to mediate. Again when Captain Mousa Dadis Camara seized power just a

few hours after the death of Conteh at the end of 2008, thus aborting a constitutional process and throwing the country into a huge political crisis which degenerated by 2009 into an attack on demonstrators, President Yar'Adua sent General Babangida to mediate the crisis (The Nation, December 25 ;2009:40).

Babangida, whose approach could be considered an appeasement of the soldiers, was to be contradicted by Maduekwe, the foreign minister, who roundly condemned the coup. Nigerian intervention in the bauxite rich country was to be later considered ineffective, careless and uncoordinated (Akinlotan;2009: 56).

In March 1st and 2nd, 2009, President Joao Bernado Nino Viera of Guinea Bissau was assassinated together with the Chief of Defence Staff, General Tagne Na Weie by renegade soldiers. President Yar'Adua, then ECOWAS Chairman, dispatched on March 3, an ECOWAS Ministerial delegation with representatives of Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, and Senegal to Guinea Bissau (Kawu;2009).

Following the crisis generated by the decision of President Abdullahi Wade to contest for a Third Term in the 2012 presidential election in Senegal, former President Obasanjo was drafted by both the AU and ECOWAS to mediate between Wade and the different opposition because there was a great fear that just like Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal a country that was generally considered relatively politically stable, with no history of political violence like in some other African countries, could explode into violence. Obasanjo's mediation was useful in helping douse the tension which was building up as the country moved towards the presidential elections.

President Goodluck Jonathan, who also became ECOWAS Chairman, has also tried to follow the well beaten path of playing the big brother's role in sub-regional affairs generally and in its security policy in particular. Nigeria's voice was loud and clear in support of democratic rule. Its intervention in the crisis which engulfed Côte d'Ivoire following the Presidential

elections of 2011, with Nigerian troops as part of the UN observer team, gained wide acceptance. The Abuja ECOWAS Summit on Côte d'Ivoire confirmed the constitutionality of the UN approved election results and the victory of Ouattara in the presidential elections, backing the use of force as resolved by the UN Security Council. President Jonathan adopted a principled approach in the crisis and continued to insist on constitutionalism and democracy in resolving all the other lingering and emerging political crises in Niger, Mali and Guinea Bissau.

Generally, Nigeria's leadership has been very crucial in the conflict management and security policy of ECOWAS. Senegal and Guinea tried to intervene in Guinea Bissau but ended up complicating an already complex situation. Non-participation of Nigeria in the operation led to its premature termination. Obviously, Nigerian military and its financial and logistical muscle in sub-regional peacekeeping is indispensable. This is why there is such a great demand for Nigerian troops because of their effective performance (Adedeji; 2007: 200).

However, the emerging security problems are largely caused by internal socio-economic and political problems. While the AU still plays a critical role in finding solutions to these problems, it has come to rely on RECs and regional powers like Nigeria. As a matter of fact contending political forces in many countries in the sub-region and beyond do seek Nigeria's mediation in resolving their problems.

The ouster of President Ali Toumani Touré by the military in Mali in 2012 also created another political crisis in West Africa to which Nigerian mediation and leadership have been sought by ECOWAS and AU. Nigeria has responded in its usual manner, condemning the coup and promising support for ECOWAS' position on the crisis, while at the same time seeking a multilateral approach.

Under President Jonathan, Nigeria has led ECOWAS to put an end to the threatened mayhem in Côte d'Ivoire when Laurent Gbagbo refused to hand over power after the 2010 Presidential elections. Jonathan is also a Co-Mediator in the Mali crisis.

Mediation is a major instrument of Nigeria's diplomacy in sub-regional security policy. The country's capacity for effective mediation is widely recognized and cultivated and has remained a key factor in the diplomatic arsenal of ECOWAS. It must be noted that though all Nigerian Heads of State have contributed one way or the other to mediation, General Abubakar and President Obasanjo stood out. Obasanjo has consistently deployed his well acknowledged political and diplomatic wisdom, together with what George (2012:416) called his moral authority, perseverance, patience and gentle persuasion, firmness and flexibility at the right times when each attribute was needed.

### 2.3 THE FIGHT AGAINST CROSS BORDER CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

Trans-border crimes and the involvement of aliens in criminal activities in Nigeria are reflections and repercussions of the spill over of the years of civil wars, drought and economic decline in the sub-region (Alli; 2011: 146). As noted by Yoroms (2007: 282), Nigeria is itself a major centre of Transnational Organised Crime (TOC) as a source, a transit and a destination for human and drug trafficking. Hence the critical role of the country in fighting the scourge of TOC and why the country is among those that have ratified the Transnational Organised Crime Convention.

There was the ECOSAP in which Nigeria is an assisting countries in the Sahel to help the police combat the smuggling of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), drug smuggling and human trafficking against the ungoverned and lawless character of those areas. Widespread availability and accessibility of SALW has been identified as a factor that intensifies the devastation and lethality of conflicts in the sub-region. Arm trafficking is a major security problem with many criminal gangs, ethnic militias, revolutionary, rebel and terrorist groups all in possession of huge arsenals. Hence Nigeria is said to be the biggest source of SALW in West Africa followed by the Mano River Union states of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Guinea Bissau.

In Nigeria's Northern borders with Niger and Chad, armed bandits enter Nigeria at will to terrorise innocent citizens

in towns and villages on the Nigerian side of the border. To check these cross-border acts of banditry, the governments of the affected countries were compelled to establish a Multi-National Joint task Force (MNJTF) to patrol areas prone to those attacks (Agwai; 2007: 142).

Over the past decade, the Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the National Agency for the prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) have all been involved in trans-border operations that extend all over West Africa.

Nigeria also plays a prominent role in regional security policy through the regular meetings of the heads of the different security agencies of ECOWAS member states, including that of all Chiefs of Defence Staff, Chiefs of Police, Chiefs of Immigration, and Chiefs of Customs. These regular meetings have brought member states much closer together and they have been able to harmonize policies on a variety of issues including intelligence sharing and elaborate on operational cooperation in combating cross-border crimes towards achieving sub-regional peace and security. At its 29th Meeting of the Committee of Defence Chiefs, held on October 4, 2011, in Abuja, the body tried to design measures to check flows of weapons from the Libyan crisis into Niger, Mali and other parts of West Africa. It also deliberated on the right response to the growing general insecurity in the region.

#### 2.4 COUNTER-TERRORISM

Until recently, terrorism appeared to be a distant concern for Nigeria. However, it has become the new frontier in security challenges, facing Nigeria and other West African states and is increasingly dominating security discourses in the sub-region as terrorist groups, particularly the Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) continue to spread its influence in the poorly governed parts of the Sahara. In Nigeria, home-grown terrorist group such as the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lida'awati wal Jihad, popularly known as Boko Haram are active. As a result, the US and its allies have become more involved in the anti-terrorism efforts as West Africa becomes a new frontline in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). This has led

to the creation of the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), focusing on just four countries (Mali, Mauritania, Chad and Niger) in 2002, later transformed in 2005 into the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) covering several other countries including Nigeria.

Western powers, believing that Nigeria has a crucial role to play, have continued to put pressure on it to put in more efforts and provide leadership in combating terrorism in West Africa. Nigeria is now mobilising ECOWAS states to check terrorism and cross-border banditry and other crimes and is deploying its military presence accordingly. For example in 2011, Libya just opened a special office for its military cooperation with Mali in Bamako (Lohmann, 2011: 7), while, after the kidnapping of its citizens in Northern Niger in September 2010, France has stationed some troops from its special forces in Mopti, Mali as well as in Niger and Burkina Faso (Lohmann; 2011: 12).

In line with measures being taken by other stakeholders, and as a measure of Nigeria's security interest in the sub-region, it maintains military attaches in Benin, Chad, Ghana, Liberia, and Mali.

#### 2.5 CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

The major conflicts which have occurred in West Africa in the last two decades or so in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, were caused by the rule of impunity, marginalisation, abuse of human rights, widespread corruption and a host of other anti-democratic behaviour of the political leaderships all tending towards personalised autocratic rule which became a trigger for violence and ethnic favouritism that alienated and threatened certain groups in the process (Adebajo; 2004: 40).

Nigeria recognized that the key to sub-regional peace was the full flowering of democracy in West Africa. The link between democracy and security has been well established. To achieve this goal of a democratic West Africa, the nation, still struggling with its own democracy project has had to lend a hand to other ECOWAS states, providing electoral assistance and other requirements of democratic consolidation to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo,

Niger and others. This may explain why Nigeria under the military dictatorship of Abacha, could invest so much in restoring democratic rule to Sierra Leone. Nigeria has been responding to the crises of democracy in West Africa the way it does, because Nigerian leaders saw the noble role the country was playing in ending conflict and war in the sub-region as a way of re-asserting its influence and showing its indispensability which it hoped might persuade the international community to end Nigeria's isolation. According to **Osaghae (2010: 59)**, the strategy worked fairly well in order to show the international community, initially reluctant to get involved in the complex West African conflicts that, no matter how bad the situation was in Nigeria, its role in West Africa and Africa could not be ignored.

In 1998, Nigerian troops removed the Major John Koroma led junta to return the democratically elected regime of Ahmed Tejjan Kabbah to power in Sierra Leone. It was Nigeria which proposed the motion on the **ECOWAS** Protocol on Unconstitutional Change of Government which was adopted in 2000 and eventually led to the resolution by **ECOWAS** to reject any unconstitutional change of government, which became a key part of the Protocol on Good Governance and more elaborately developed in the **ECPF** of 2008.

In 2001, Nigeria donated one million dollars and a contingent of police officers to help restore order in Sierra Leone, while another five hundred thousand dollars was donated in support of the January/ May 2002 general elections after the Lomé Accord of July 7, 1999.

As part of the efforts to support Charles Taylor's asylum and before the arrival of the UN troops in Monrovia in August 2003, Nigeria had deployed its troops in the country. Again, in the process of establishing the Interim Government in Liberia, between September 2003 and January 2004, Obasanjo sent former Military leader Abdusalam Abubakar to mediate the tension in the country as Special Mediator. In 2005, as preparations for elections triggered another round of crises among political parties, Obasanjo invited aggrieved party leaders to Abuja for dialogue. During the presidential election run-off, President Obasanjo again sent General Abdusalam Abubakar as Special mediator to douse the

tension among political leaders. Under international pressure, Obasanjo had to revoke Charles Taylor's asylum in Nigeria and had him apprehended when he tried to escape the country.

President Umar Yar'Adua became **ECOWAS** Chairman in 2008. Nigeria again became a member of the **AU PSC**, a position that was to afford the country more visible role in **AU** security policy. It has been suggested that the almost permanent presence of Nigeria in the **PSC** and other such security related regional and sub-regional security bodies, reflected a certain hierarchy among African states (**Sturman and Hayatou, 2010: 67**).

The economic crisis and near bankruptcy of Guinea Bissau in May 2004 also attracted Obasanjo's attention as he embarked on shuttle diplomacy to help the country avert total economic collapse, providing \$500,000 in October as special assistance for the preparations for elections and a further \$1 million to help pay the salaries of government workers. Another sum of \$8.5 million was given to the government for 2006/2007.

In general, Nigeria has continued to provide short term assistance to countries in distress and as a measure to strengthen democratic rule, reduce conflict thereby promoting security, peace and development.

## 2.6 STRATEGIC TRAINING FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL

Probably one of the most enduring symbols of Nigeria's leadership and commitment to sub-regional cooperation on security matters is the provision of strategic security training for members of the armed forces of member states of **ECOWAS** at Nigeria's elite military academies, including the Armed Forces Command and Staff School (**AFCSS**), Jaji and the National Defence College (**NDC**), Abuja.

Over the years, Nigeria has admitted a number of officers from virtually all **ECOWAS** states into its military academies on the basis of bilateral agreements. Many of these officers now occupy command- positions in their countries.

**Table 4:** Table 4: Participation of ECOWAS Member States in National Defence College, Abuja Courses 1-20

Course No.	Countries	Total
1	Nil	0
2	Nil	0
3	Sierra Leone	0
4	Ghana, Sierra Leone	1
5	Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone	2
6	Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo	3
7	Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, Senegal	7
8	Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, Senegal	5
9	Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Sierra Leone, Togo	6
10	Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Togo	5
11	Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone	5
12	Benin, Ghana(2), Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo	6
13	Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Sierra Leone	5
14	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone	5
15	Benin(2), Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone	7
16	Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Togo	7
17	Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone	6
18	Ghana, Niger, Sierra Leone, Togo	4
19	Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone	6
20	Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone	6
<b>Total:</b>		<b>83</b>

**Source:** Compiled from Records Supplied by the National Defence College, Abuja.

Over the years, Nigeria has trained a total of 83 high level manpower for the military of members of ECOWAS as follows: Benin(12), Burkina Faso(8), Côte d'Ivoire(2), Ghana(16), Guinea(2), Mali(8), Niger(11), Senegal(6) and Togo(6). The other members of ECOWAS, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Gambia and Liberia, are yet to participate in the high level training programme.

At the meeting of the Defence and Security Commission in Abidjan, 14 – 18 August, 2002, ECOWAS resolved that the Nigeria's National Defence College in Abuja should be one of the three centres for harmonized training of ECOMOG Standby Force units, which is expected to be

able to deploy in 14 days. The NDC is charged with strategic training, while the operational training is to be conducted by the Kofi-Annan International Peacekeeping Centre in Accra, Ghana while tactical training is to be carried out at Bamako, Mali.

Through the Nigerian Army Training Assistance (NATAG) Nigeria has been able to extend training to some ECOWAS states, i.e. Gambia, Liberia, and others, by sending Nigerian officers to these countries to offer military training to their troops. Through this programme, Nigeria has been providing military training assistance to Sierra Leone since 1984 (George; 2012:399). In 1991, at

the request of the government of Sierra Leone, military assistance was again provided for Sierra Leone, while Sierra Leone signed a status of the Forces Agreement with Nigeria in 1997. All these measures facilitated Nigeria's and ECOWAS effective intervention in the Sierra Leonian conflict which followed the coup that ousted Tejjan Kabbah.

In addition, as we already noted above, through its TAC programme, Nigeria has also been deploying experts on a wide range of subjects to several ECOWAS states.

Nigerian Generals have also been appointed as Commanding Officers and other high positions in the armed forces of some West African states. General Maxwell Kobe was appointed Chief of the Sierra Leonian Army by President Kabbah in 1998. In 2007, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf also appointed Major General Suraj A. Abdurahman as Commander in Charge of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) to replace another Nigerian, Lt. General Luka Yusuf.

## 2.7. ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

It has been observed that though ECOWAS was formed as an economic integration organisation, it had to devote much attention to security issues because of the many security challenges that were obstructing economic development. This is why peace and security matters have come to dominate the activities of the community in the past two decades. Nigeria believed, as pointed out by Danjuma (2003), that West African instability is a function of poverty and underdevelopment and that in solving what appears purely as a political and economic problems, the physical challenges also have to be addressed. Accordingly, when Nigeria carries out political and military gestures to individual states or groups of states in West Africa, it is also addressing the problems of the sub-region.

Nigeria focused on achieving the fast-tracking of integration efforts, promotion of free flowing of trade,

achieving a common currency for the sub-region and promotion and expansion of infrastructural development – road, railway, telecommunication, power, gas pipeline and ultimately increased agricultural and industrial production. Already ECOWAS is one of the only regional economic communities in Africa and one of the few in the world that has achieved free movement of people, creating practically a borderless West Africa.

As the richest country in the sub-region with huge revenues from export of petroleum, Nigeria has had to play a more crucial role in sustaining the speed of regional integration and in providing targeted economic assistance to other countries in the sub-region. Under General Yakubu Gowon, particularly after the civil war, Nigeria tried to buy regional influence through generous donations to other West African states from revenues derived from a fortuitous oil boom (Adebajo, 2008: 8). Though the oil boom diplomacy ended under Shagari, Nigeria still continued to buy influence, selling oil at concessionary rates to neighbours, and providing humanitarian assistance and technical aid through its Technical Aid Corps (TAC). Over the years many ECOWAS members (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Niger and Senegal) have benefitted from the TAC programme, which deploy Nigerian experts across West Africa as requested by governments.

In line with President Obasanjo's foreign policy objectives, the main focus of Nigeria in moving forward the economic integration agenda was the achievement of a second monetary zone, which is expected to merge with the francophone CFA to form a single monetary zone. Other areas of focus for Nigeria was the promotion of free movement of people, goods and services and the building of sub-regional infrastructure including road, rail (the Lagos/Accra line, with a future plan to connect Abidjan and Dakar), shipping (ECOMARINE project), airline (ECOAIR project), power (the West African Power

Grid project), gas pipeline (the Lagos-Accra gas pipeline project to boost power generation) and others.

The ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme, which was introduced in 1990 as a measure for the progressive elimination of all customs duties within ten years by 2000, was behind schedule. Nigeria with six other ECOWAS states – Benin, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have signed an agreement to establish a Free Trade Zone where all illegal barriers, such as illegal check points would be removed on ECOWAS international highways. This should allow for free movement without a payment of any customs duty after an approval for originating industrial products from within the sub-region has been obtained.

Under Obasanjo, a four-nation Co-Prosperity Alliance with Benin, Togo and Ghana was inaugurated but it soon became practically dormant. When Umar Yar'Adua became President in 2007, he made efforts to revive it. According to Ambassador Abbass (2011), Yar Adua, who became ECOWAS Chairman almost immediately he came into office, showed a great interest in ECOWAS. He attended all the ECOWAS summits and tried to revive the Co-Prosperity Alliance as a key element in building the regional integration agenda from another angle, considering the growing wave of piracy and other trans-border crimes. But the efforts did not yield the desired benefits.

However, many challenges remain. The problem of an effective payment system remains, as does the need to harmonize the economic and financial policies, the slow pace of ratification of agreements, protocols and conventions; the slow pace of domestication, and of course in the implementation, of agreements.

The plan for the establishment of the ECOWAS Central Bank was pushed forward to 2020 at the 24th Meeting of the Convergence Council of Ministers and Governors of the West African Monetary Zone

## CHAPTER III

### CHALLENGES TO NIGERIAS LEADERSHIP

Nigeria faces challenges at three levels in its leadership role in security policy in West Africa. These are at the domestic level, at the sub-regional level and from extra-regional powers bent on expanding their influence. At the domestic level, the country is increasingly being confronted by several domestic security challenges which impact negatively on its effectiveness in international affairs. Considering the critical self-assigned role of the nation as “giant of Africa” and leader of the black race and the responsibilities that come along in the field of security policy of the continent and the sub-region and even because of national need, to protect the physical integrity of the Nigerian state there ought to be an alignment between objectives and policies.

As argued by Adebajo (2010), Nigeria’s foreign policy adventures face strong domestic opposition because of the failure of both military and civilian regimes to apply the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) domestically. The internal situation in Nigeria calls for greater attention, as the country continues to suffer all manner of security challenges, ranging from wide-spread robbery to kidnapping, ethno-religious conflict, and now terrorism.

A country’s capabilities inform its role in international politics. Its ability to achieve its foreign policy objectives flows from how it assembles its variable capabilities. In a situation, where its foreign vision and assumed roles impact negatively on its domestic affairs, its foreign objectives must be re-examined and refocused (Soremekun; 1997: 12).

It is also worthy to note that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has largely been lukewarm in sub-regional security matters, dominated by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the military establishment. Even when in 2010 the Ministry of Defence organised an international seminar on Peace Support Operations and Foreign Policy, the only

semblance of MFA representation, was Joe Keshi (2010), a retired ambassador and former permanent secretary of the MFA, who presented a lead paper critical of the lukewarm role of the MFA in Nigeria’s peacekeeping efforts and regional security policy. He argued that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence don’t get along well on matters relating to sub-regional security and Peace Support Operations. Fatunla (2012), a retired diplomat also argued that the MFA considers West African security issues ‘a military affair’. The problems could also be seen as the result of the usual inter-agency competition and rivalry with different agencies trying to protect their turf instead of promoting the national interest. Unfortunately, under the democratic dispensation, the political parties including the ruling party are yet to show enough interest and engage meaningfully foreign policy and security matters.

Civil society’s interests in security and foreign policy matters are also yet to crystallize beyond the works of university scholars. However, there is a growing interest in peace and conflict studies with many Nigerian universities (Ibadan, Jos and Ilorin) that open centres for the study of peace and conflict issues.

The Ministry of Defence may be considered an institution of civil authority but it is the Military top brass who drive security policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on its part has not yet shown the necessary enthusiasm for productive engagement with defence and security agencies as already indicated. This is why Keshi (2010: 3) urged the MFA “to end its off-hand or post office approach to issues of peacekeeping.”

Imobighe (2011) had suggested, as a way forward, the need for greater input of security and defence agencies into foreign policy and more input of foreign policy into defence matters. But as Keshi (2010: 3) pointed out, the MFA could be deliberately uncooperative.

Importantly, there is no clearly stated template on Nigerian security – a factor identified by military leaders and scholars. Admiral Thomas Lokoson, Commandant of the National Defence College (2012) in a discussion with the author, noted that the lack of a coherent and

comprehensive security policy is a major obstacle to Nigeria's effectiveness and leadership in ECOWAS security policy but added that notwithstanding, the nation has played a very crucial roles in promoting sub-regional security and has sacrificed a lot of human and national resources in doing so. He pointed out that a comprehensive security policy is already being prepared. This point was also emphasized by General Owoye Azazi, the National Security Adviser, who argued that the Jonathan Administration was reconsidering its national security strategy "with the aim of developing a comprehensive arrangement for more coordinated and efficient response to crises and emergencies (The Nation. January 17, 2010).

There is no doubt that the long period of military rule and the role of the military in peacekeeping have given the defence establishment more competence and confidence in West African security matters, thus giving the impression that the military establishment is more pan-Africanist and activist in regional security and Peace Support Operations (PSO) matters.

However, Imobighe, who noted that the defence establishment is conservative, offered that it is prudent for the nation to forge ahead in its foreign policy through greater cooperation and coordination between the different agencies involved (Imobighe; 2003: 126). Already, a critical decision has been made. The NNDP has designated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the leading agency in managing external security interests of the nation and the Ministry of Defence, represented by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is to be in charge of execution of the crises management activities (FGN; 2006: 33).

Think tanks, such as the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) have not been able to build the needed capabilities to support civil authority leadership in the area of sub-regional security and foreign policy. As observed by Akinlotan (2004: 69), the input of the NIIA into the management and conduct of foreign policy at

the level of the MFA cannot be said to be adequate. Akinlotan (2009: 50) on his part believes that Nigerian think tanks are snoring or dead.

Another challenge is the lack of appropriate focus and clarity about issues. As a result, undue idealism or undue radicalism rather than consideration of realpolitik are influencing Nigeria's actions more often than not (Ogunsanwo; 2010: 53). As a result, Nigeria is throwing money at policy issues that require greater thought and reflection.

### 3.1 PERCEPTION OF NEIGHBOURS

At the sub-regional level, the main challenge which Nigeria faces in terms of its leadership role is the suspicion of other members of ECOWAS about its real intentions. There is the desire of other members to protect their national pride and the influence of extra-sub-regional powers on some of the members to act in a certain way. Again and again some states question the legitimacy of Nigeria in sub-regional matters. Even some of the countries that have benefitted from Nigeria's sacrifices are not prepared to back Nigeria in critical situations. According to Ogunsanwo (2010: 45), Sierra Leone that has gained a lot from Nigeria was the country that blocked ECOWAS from taking a united stand in favour of Nigeria's candidacy for a United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) permanent seat.

However, Nigeria really has no choice but to continue to invest its resources in the ECOWAS integration project generally and in the West African security policy in particular because they are tied together. In addition it is in the interest of the nation to continue to do so as Nigeria's contribution to peace and security in the sub-region has become the pillar of sub-regional security. As acknowledged by President Alassane Quattara, Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State of ECOWAS, "Nigerian forces are now the stiff backbone and vanguard of ECOWAS security." He however urged other member states of ECOWAS to also make necessary contributions: "We must move to broaden this responsibility so that each of our countries makes its fair share of contribution to an effective fighting force" (2012).

(WAMZ) made up of five nations, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Meanwhile, the launching of the ECOWAS Monetary Union, meant to bring together WAMZ and the eight members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) created in 1994 and made up of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. The CFA countries have also been postponed. The plan to launch the ECOWAS currency, the Eco, has also been shifted to a period between 2015 and 2020.

The most obvious challenge to progress in regional integration is the high level of political instability in many countries and the sub-region-wide insecurity, which is why peace and security efforts and conflict resolution have continued to dominate ECOWAS activities consuming time and resources. Another obstacle to the sub-regional integration efforts remain the low level of political will and enthusiasm among some leaders, particularly of the francophone states.

Meanwhile, step by step ECOWAS is making progress, as the organisation has also decided to move from just a community of states to a community of people, against the background of the strong awareness and consciousness of ECOWAS among the people, promoted by sub-regional efforts in managing and resolving conflicts and in its other socio-economic and political efforts.

### 3.2 NIGERIA AND EXTRA-AFRICAN SECURITY INTERESTS IN WEST AFRICA

General Danjuma (2003) had suggested that the commitment of the developed nations to African states will continue to dwindle, thus freeing the developing states to take decisions concerning their security. It was also argued that external powers have no compelling strategic reasons to display much of an interest in West Africa in the post-cold war era to warrant their intervention (Oche; 2003: 183). However, in recent years, events in the area, including the domestic security problems of many West African states, threats posed by AQIM and transnational organised crime groups to Western interests and the need for the Western powers

to protect their economic interests in the Sahel/Sahara region and in the Gulf of Guinea, the expanding environment for the Global War on Terror (GWOT), the many oil and gas discoveries, the established solid mineral wealth of the region and of course the market they represent, have attracted greater attention from the Western powers.

The U.S., the EU, especially France, have great interests in the security situation and security policy of West African states. French interests have deep roots in the colonial and neo-colonial relationship with several West African states. There is extensive French military, economic and political presence across the sub-region in a manner that actually pose an obstacle to Nigeria's effective leadership role in the sub-regional security policy.

The U.S., the UK, and the EU as a whole, have great stakes in the economy of the sub-region and are also concerned about the growing influence of terrorist groups, including AQIM, that have increasingly targeted citizens of western countries particularly France.

Others include the emerging powers China and India whose interests revolve around natural resources and markets. They remain focused on gaining access to the mineral resources of the sub-region and on investment possibilities. Libya under the late Col. Muammar Ghadaffi has also shown a very high interest in the political affairs of the sub-region, having been identified as a factor in the Charles Taylor insurgency and the Foday Sankoh uprising in Sierra Leone. Algeria has also had to extend its security influence deep into the Sahara to contain the activities of Al Qaeda elements in the sub-region.

Generally, all these powers are trying to gain control over the natural resources in the region from Mauritania to the Gulf of Guinea and far into the Sahara and with the discovery of oil in Northern Mali, and in Niger, the scramble for influence in the area by extra-African interests is likely to increase further, thus complicating the security situation in the region and undermining the role and influence of sub-regional powers like Nigeria.

According to Lohmann (2011: 12), international actors

take such high interest in the security situation of the sub-region because of the worldwide linkage of drugs, arms and human trafficking, and the fact that the events in the central Sahara are affecting Europe and the U.S. Furthermore because of the search for natural resources such as gas, oil, uranium etc., organised criminal activities pose great threats to the prospects of economic development in the sub-region and are direct threats to the dream of a Trans-Sahara oil and gas pipeline to Europe thus requiring greater involvement of the powers in the management of the security of the sub-region

West African states under threat of domestic security problems, **TOC** and terrorism are themselves becoming more open to broad security cooperation with the U.S. and its allies and are increasingly receiving U.S. assistance in line with the growing interest of the US in the sub-region stretching from the Gulf of Guinea to Mauritania. When the U.S. launched the African Crisis Response Initiative (**ACRI**) as a kind of security assistance project for African states it was coldly received.

In Nigeria there was not much enthusiasm for U.S. involvement in the security affairs of the nation or the sub-region. In fact, a former Chief of Army Staff, General Victor Malu, took the unusual step of openly opposing the security cooperation with the U.S., which President Obasanjo was committed to. The President also wanted a private U.S. security company, Military Professional Resources Incorporated (**MPRI**) to handle the re-professionalization programme of the Nigerian armed forces. Though a contract for this was awarded, the military establishment opposed the arrangement vehemently and it was eventually cancelled.

A few years later, in 2007, the U.S. came up with the idea of a U.S. African Command (**AfriCom**). Initially, **AfriCom** was not popular with the informed public in Nigeria and the military leadership. But, as a result of the many grave security challenges and the weakness of the Nigerian state, and the consequent broadening of security cooperation with the U.S. on quite a wide ranging number of issues and with the U.S. trying to bring together West African states for joint counter-terrorism

training, it seems that Nigeria has accepted the coming of **AfriCom** and with it the inevitable growing erosion of its leadership role in sub-regional security policy.

Growing American concern and influence over the security policy of the sub-region is easily visible in the frequent visit of top U.S. officials, including the Secretary of State to the sub-region, thus stepping up U.S. visibility in the area. Already, beginning in January 16, 2012, the Secretary of State visited Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Cape Verde. This carefully selected itinerary shows the security dimension of the U.S. interests in the area and the kind of challenges Nigeria's leadership will be facing in security policy in the sub-region.

Since the introduction of the Pan-Sahel Initiative (**PSI**) in 2002, and the Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership (**TSCTP**) in 2005, **NATO** powers have been expanding their influence and role in the making of security policy and in their implementation in the sub-region. Already, several African states such as Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia have been drawn into Operation Enduring Freedom Trans-Sahara, which **AfriCom** coordinates since 2008.

In 2010, the U.S. and forces from several West African countries also carried out joint exercise Flintlock. Even though **AfriCom** is currently based in the German city of Stuttgart, some West African states, i.e. Liberia, are already openly canvassing support for the project and indicating interest in hosting the military outfit hoping for financial and security benefits.

The obvious dependency of Nigeria on U.S., UK and other extra-African powers in resolving its own internal security challenges cannot but be a major handicap if not an obstacle, to the effectiveness of its leadership role in security policy in the sub-region. The situation has become very embarrassing because senior Nigerian officials cannot resist appealing to any visiting foreign dignitary for assistance in managing national security at every opportunity that offers itself. A country with such a pathetic national self-assurance cannot expect to

command or even enjoy the undiluted support on such a matter as security from other member states of **ECOWAS**.

Accordingly, the U.S., France and the EU have been providing assistance both of a military and socio-economic nature to the member states of **ECOWAS** considering the fact that they lack necessary resources and are poorly equipped to manage their security challenges effectively. Mali, with its vast poorly governed Sahara territory, and one of the most tormented by terrorist activities has armed forces of 12500 soldiers (See [Table 3](#)).

The 2012 Tuareg insurrection in Mali, which has already led to a military coup against the elected Government of President Ali Toure, and the carving out of Mali, the so called Azawad Republic by pro-**AQIM** Tuareg Islamists have further complicated the security situation in the Sahel, creating still more complicated security problems for **ECOWAS** and putting Nigeria's leadership under a new kind of pressure.



## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that Nigeria has been able to play a defining role in the security policy of West Africa because it possesses all the attributes of a regional leader (population, national endowment, financial resources and military capabilities), which put it ahead of other nations in the sub-region. Furthermore, it has provided leadership inside **ECOWAS** in critical situations. Admittedly, Nigeria's role is not based on a clearly defined national security policy, and derived largely from a poorly conceptualised notion of "manifest destiny" and the ambition of many of its leaders over the years.

The nation's leadership in the security affairs of the sub-region became even more assertive in the late 1990s as the end of the Cold War had created a security environment devoid of ideological competition and supportive of collaboration among countries – a development that has had a salutary effect on security co-operation in West Africa. At the same time, the opening of a democratic space in many countries of the sub-region led to open rebellion against an autocratic political culture, widespread corruption, high levels of unemployment, abuse of human rights, marginalisation of the people, lack of infrastructure, and the lack of effective social and welfare systems.

Nigeria is playing its leadership role in **ECOWAS** security affairs in a subtle way, i.e. mainly through providing resources in men and material and diplomatic muscle through peace-keeping, mediation, and training of military personnel. It is also strengthening the collective efforts against transnational organised crime, terrorism, and other security threats. Finally, Nigeria is employing democratic consolidation programmes, including electoral assistance and support for constitutional rule and the continuing efforts to achieve economic integration as a pathway to economic development.

However, there is no strong national consensus on the utility of Nigeria's efforts in sub-regional security matters and peace support operations, largely because of leadership failures at home. In fact, there has been a

national outcry over the manner leaderships have waded into trouble spots in the sub-region; at great cost to the nation without any tangible benefits, while the country continues to face serious socio-economic challenges at home. The worsening security situation inside Nigeria has forced the people to show more appreciation for the necessity for greater involvement in sub-regional security, however.

There is no doubt that Nigeria plays a critical role in the making of sub-regional security policy and in its implementation: any time Nigeria does not participate or support a particular security policy initiative, this policy is bound to fail. This is due to the considerable leverage Nigeria brings to the table in terms of military capabilities, strategic clarity and focus, material resources, as well as enormous political and diplomatic clout.

Nigeria's leadership is also a clear statement about the capability of African states to resolve African problems. In this regard, Nigeria's role is so fundamental, because it both determines the direction of security policy and provides the backbone for its implementation. The successful interventions of **ECOWAS** in Liberia and Sierra Leone under Nigerian leadership have shown that, given the necessary political support, African states could successfully manage their security challenges.

The general direction of Nigerian involvement is now informed by a broadly defined foreign policy objective, built on a specific perception of its national role, documented in its National Defence Policy, and informed by conventional perspectives about security threats. Based on this, a national defence architecture has been put in place, again informed by the philosophy and doctrine in line with conventional thinking, developed largely by the military establishment.

The lack of Good Governance has been recognised as a major source of security challenges that **ECOWAS** states are being confronted with. Accordingly, while conventional security measures should continue to be improved upon, new frameworks ought to be developed to address the changing character of security challenges,

particularly to human security. The civilian political leadership should also be more engaged strategically and meaningfully in the defence and security issues, while more serious efforts should be made towards improving inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination for success in a world increasingly challenged by insecurity.

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