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# MILITARIZATION OF THE NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN WEST AFRICAN SUB-REGION: THE CASE OF LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE.

*Fatile, Jacob Olufemi*

## **Abstract**

This paper examines militarism, which is a contemporary phenomenon especially in the politics of third world countries. It considers militarism in the form of peacekeeping, which is one of the methods of conflict management though the participating countries may have varying foreign policy goals in the scheme. The author argues that many African countries (most especially Liberia and Sierra-Leone) have been torn apart by conflicts and civil wars, death, destruction of lives, property and infrastructure are tragically the common feature of these conflicts thus bringing about unbearable sufferings in the refugee camps for millions of Africans. The responsibility of doubling as continental leader and sub-regional "big brother" has placed the political crises in Liberia and Sierra-Leone and other West African states on Nigeria's shoulder. No wonder, such crises have not only occupied Nigeria's foreign policy focus in the past two decades, they have severely affected the budget. Though ECOMOG intervention in Liberia and Sierra-Leone did achieve some noble objectives like saving lives, disarming troops and restoring democracy, it was argued that any future military intervention involving Nigeria must have also the sanction of both ECOWAS and U.N. Security Council to avoid the sub-regional divisions and questions of legitimacy and Nigeria must first secure the necessary financial and logistic support from the international community without which such missions cannot succeed.

## **Introduction**

There is no doubt that the compulsion to satisfy unprecedented needs generated largely by technological revolution has given rise to unparalleled interactions among the community of nations. The reasons for these interactions may be to satisfy the economic needs of the nations, to promote the political influence that could generate useful international agreements, to promote the necessary transcultural movement among nations for better understanding, to promote their sovereignty, increase their political influence and economic strength and to promote the national interest (Oyovbaire et. l., 1991:251-252).

Nigeria's relation with the world could be traced back to the beginning of the nineteenth century when colonialism brought Britain to relate with Nigeria. Since then till today, Nigeria has found herself in agreement with other states, individual countries or organizations especially at her early years of independence.

Nigeria was one of the countries that became independent in 1960, the year which has been known as 'annus mirabilis'. During the first few years of

her independence, Nigeria maintained close relations with Commonwealth countries in general and Britain in particular. During the early 1960s, she played a relatively hesitant and minimal role in international affairs, not only because she was relatively poor and weak in almost every sense. But since the 1960s, she has assumed a more vigorous posture in world affairs, largely as a result of the great political and economic changes that have taken place in the country since the oil boom that started in the early 1970s (Aluko, 1987:1).

Nigeria has been playing a significant role in West Africa, in the rest of Africa and in the larger international system. She has now become what Joseph Frankel (1963:1) has aptly described "a regional power" in Black Africa. No wonder, foreign policy experts have always looked up to Nigeria in providing leadership for Africa. Thus, the reason for the militarization of her foreign policy in Africa, beginning from the years preceding the installation of democratic government in Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As a matter of fact, Nigeria has been playing the big brother role in the continent and has been showing concern for the protection of the interest of the black race but Nigerian citizens are not in support of Nigeria's generosity to other countries on the ground that Nigerians are suffering of local deprivation.

Nigeria's position in the continent as well as the use of her troops in foreign conflicts is viewed as a diversionary tactic. Nigeria, by her position, has interfered in the internal affairs of other countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'ivoire and many others. Also, the use of her troops in conflict resolution has contradicted her policies of peaceful resolutions of interstate disputes and abolition of colonialism and Apartheid (Fafowora, 1986:37).

Ukeje (1999:103) argued that despite Nigeria's effort to reassure other African countries that she has no imperial ambitions, her African diplomacy has kindled resentment and suspicion in some quarters. These form the basis of the negative consequences of her African policy. For instance, in 1976, Senegal accused her of "trying to use her wealth to dominate the rest of Africa". In 1978, Nigeria's involvement in the secret talks between Ian Smith and Joshua Nkomo regarding Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) independence also elicited some caustic barbs from the President of Tanzania about "some people from afar who thought they could settle the Rhodesian Conflict by interfering". France also considers Nigeria as a rival for influence, especially in the West African Sub-region.

The end of colonialism and Apartheid in South Africa and the emergence of a democratic South Africa whose economic, industrial and military capabilities surpass those of Nigeria are the other factors, which have changed the external circumstances in which Nigeria's African and indeed entire foreign policy operates. South Africa's advanced technological and industrial development makes it a natural contender, along with Nigeria, for the leadership of the continent (Ibid, p. 106).

Aliyu (1997:149-150) contended that, it is unfortunate that for several years, many African countries have been torn apart by conflicts and civil wars, death, destruction of lives, prosperity and infrastructure are tragically the common feature of these conflicts, thus, bringing about unbearable sufferings in refugee camps for millions of Africans. For example, the crisis in Liberia did not only bring death, destruction and untold sufferings to the people of that country, it has also threatened the peace and stability of the whole of the West African Sub-region. More seriously, it had led to a major crisis in a sister Republic of Sierra Leone. Abbas Bundu, a former Executive Secretary (ECOWAS) excerpts "Africa Peace Review", lamented that "it is a tragedy that the problem in Liberia is happening in our sub-region and posing a threat to the peace and stability of the entire sub-region and is not the time for revolution or civil war in the crucial stage of the development of the community that consolidation and cooperation and integration are the new imperatives which should underpin all community actions in the decades of the nineties (Bundu, 1997:27).

Nigeria's interest in the Liberia Civil War is assessed to be derived from recognition of the terrible devastating impact which such a conflict will have on the stability of the sub-region, more so, as there are several of the sub-regional states in the same nature of contradiction which the Liberian situation contains. It was noted that failure of the sub-regional Heads of State to discourage the gross violation of human rights and the high level of violent suppression of democratic principles, which were characteristic of the regime of Samuel Doe, contributed to the tempo of violence in Liberia. This violence ought to have been brought to a halt to prevent the polarization of the entire sub-region. In the light of this, Vogt (1991:3-4) argued that Nigeria's national interest is defined as being predicated on a stable and orderly political environment in which effective implementation of economic integration can occur.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is located within the theory of integration. According to Deutsch (1978), to integrate generally means to make a whole out of parts – that is, to turn previously separate units into components of a coherent system. Integration then, is a relationship among units in which they are mutually interdependent and jointly produce system properties, which they would separately lack. Sometimes, however, the word integration is also used to describe the integrative process by which such a relationship or state of affairs among formerly separate units is attained.

Political integration is the integration of political actors or political units such as individuals, groups, municipalities, regions or countries, in regard to their political behaviour (Ibid.). It is possible to outline essentially two theories of political integration. The first one believes that political systems gain and retain their cohesiveness because of widely shared values among their members and general agreement about the framework of the system. Thus, systems have procedural consensus. Moreover, systems survive because of the substantive

consensus, that is, general agreement about the solutions to problems, which the political system is called upon to solve. The greater the procedural and substantive consensus, the greater the integration of the political system (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1970:279).

The second theory, which is considered as an alternative theory, it has been argued, believes that political systems become or remain cohesive because of the presence, or threat, of force. Writers such as Hobbes (1967:109), and in contemporary sociology, Dahrendorf (1959:157), have argued for recognition of the importance of coercive power in the integration of political communities.

Both the orthodox and revisionist literature on integration according to Asante (1985:83) recognize the need for leadership by one or two strong "core states" with the willingness and muscle to pull the weaker members along to initiate forward movement and underwrite the cost of integration on behalf of those who bear the brunt of these efforts. John Raven Hill for example has argued that a successful integration effort requires the "Leadership of a strong 'core' state willing and able to provide the necessary side-payments to weaker members of the partnership in order to sustain existing integrative arrangement and allow their extension into new areas of cooperation.

It would appear therefore that Nigeria because of its size, weight, influence, role-orientation and power capabilities is singularly placed in a position to act as facilitator of the integration agenda in West Africa using its economic muscle and the prestige it enjoys among other West African States. As at the time Babangida came to power in 1985, it could be said that West African integration was in the doldrums. Nonetheless, IBB started out with more attention to ECOWAS occasioning the *New Nigerian* to editorialize after the 9<sup>th</sup> summit from June 30 – July 2, 1986 of "a reborn ECOWAS". In his annual Foreign Policy address during the Patron's dinner of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1985, he had stated that:

Regional Integration arrangements such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) represent useful means for promotion of accelerated economic development among countries... We shall continue relentlessly in our efforts to see the ECOWAS survive and prosper and we shall make all the necessary sacrifices within the limits of our economic resources (Olukotun, 1986:130-131).

The handling of the Abuja Summit of 1986 indicated that they meant those words. The 9<sup>th</sup> summit was preceded in the usual manner by a meeting of the Council of Ministers, which prepared the agenda for the summit in consultation with relevant authorities. At the summit, the President upbraided his colleagues pointing out that, "the hallmark of integration has been inaction and cosmetic commitment" (*African Research Bulletin*, 1986:8264).

They blamed the slow progress on trade liberalization and other matters on cumbersome legislative procedures, in each state as well as insensitivity of relevant government organs to the requirement of the community (*Ibid.*). The summit also took up the conflict between Liberia and Sierra Leone which had mutually closed borders against each other as well as the Burkina-Faso – Mali

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conflict which began in late 1985 and where the foreign Minister, Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi had tried to mediate. It mandated Nigeria and Guinea to mediate between Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Nigeria's imprints are clearly discernible in the shaping up and refurbishing of the integration agenda since 1986. Although it is possible to deepen the content of current official strategies for example by instigating genuine mass involvement, there is no doubt that the Nigerian government has made germane contribution to the West African integration agenda.

### **Conceptual Exploration**

To enhance the understanding and appreciation of this paper, it is deemed necessary to define and explain certain terms.

### **Foreign Policy**

Since every sovereign state exists and operates within a much larger community of states, it has to relate with the other foreign members of that community. Foreign policy is the instrument for the conduct and management of that relationship and its goal is to protect and promote the national interest of the country (Akindele, 1998:91). Definitions of foreign policy range from rather short, yet broad statements to more detailed propositions Cecil V. Crabb, Jr. (1972:1), considers foreign policy to consist fundamentally of two elements: "National objectives to be achieved and means for achieving them".

Another view, perhaps the most appropriate in our interdependent world, is to regard foreign policy as that segment of public policy of a state that is concerned with the relations to other states and international organizations as well as with changes in the international environment (Werner, 1984:2-3). This definition recognizes the essential interaction between different public policy sectors and indicates the multitude of activities and events with which a state's foreign policy must deal. Joseph Frankel (1963:1) also sees foreign policy as "decisions and actions, which involve to some appreciable extent relations between the state and others. Thus, foreign policy means the right to deal and conduct foreign relations of a particular State with foreign powers. It is a strategy or a planned course of action developed by the decision makers of a country aimed at manipulating the international environment in order to achieve certain national objectives."

### **Peace**

A common meaning of peace provides that it is freedom from war, hostilities, strife, dissention and civil commotion. It is also taken to mean a state of tranquility and quietness, having come from the French stem 'Pacis' or Latin 'Pax' both meaning Peace, armistice, truce, harmony, amity, calm and quiet (Hanks, 1982).

Peace in the face of conflict requires the elimination of the causes of the conflict through the restoration of justice. This is what is known as conflict

resolution in the real and true sense of the word. Hence, Martin Luther King Jnr. (1980:50-51) once wrote that, "true peace is not merely the absence of tension but it is the presence of justice".

### **Conflict**

Taken from the Latin word *conflictus* meaning "struck together". Conflict lexically means clash, contention, confrontation, a battle or struggle, controversy or quarrel (Hanks, 1982:350). On a more intellectual platform, Stagner (1967:16), defines conflict as "a situation in which two or more human beings desire a goal which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other, but not both ... Each party is mobilizing energy to obtain a goal, a desire object or situation, and each party perceives the other as a barrier or threat to that goal.

### **Power**

Power in everyday usage is the ability to do or act, or capability of effecting something (Hanks, 1982:1230). Hugo Reading (1977:158), conceptualized power as "the ability to control the actions of others".

Looking at power from the angle of authority (which is the recognized right to lead), some see power in the negative sense as the "unauthorized ability to control the actions of others (Ibid.). We shall adopt here, however, Hans Morgenthau's definition of Power as "... anything that establishes and maintains the control of men over man, covers all social relationships which serve that end, from physical violence to the most subtle psychological ties by which one mind controls another" (Morgenthau, 1973).

### **Militarism**

Militarism is a contemporary phenomenon, especially in the politics of third world countries. Militarism is the major weapon for conducting interstate relations. It involves the use of force, terrorist attack and military coercion in conducting the foreign policy objectives of state. Because of its violent nature, it is often used as a last resort, when for instance, diplomacy and other mechanisms of achieving peaceful settlement of dispute failed (Plano and Olto, 1982:7).

The national security of a state could be threatened by both domestic and external occurrence. To prevent these treats, a militarised policy could be introduced. Militarization in this sense can also be a situation whereby the defence policy of a state or country is very active in the quest of interaction with the outside world basically because of the international policy and socially unstable situation due to presence of wars or civil wars.

Militarism in the form of peace keeping is one of the methods of Conflict Management, though the participating countries may have varying foreign policy goals in the scheme. Nigeria, as a nation uses peacekeeping as a subtle instrument of pursuing her foreign policy goals. As it shall be seen later, ECOMOG was deployed in Liberia and Sierra-Leone as a conflict management, conflict control and conflict resolution mechanism.

### **Liberia and The ECOMOG Initiative**

Liberia was founded as a haven for freed American slaves in the 19<sup>th</sup> century precisely 1847. Liberia's place at the centre of the region's tangled web of conflicts has turned it into Pariah State. Ajibewa (1999:1) revealed that the Liberian conflict, like most conflicts in post-independence Africa was deeply rooted in the contradictions of the country and the great diversity of its economy and ethnicity. Liberia's population was approximately 2.3 million in 1989, consisting of about twenty ethnic groups with Pelle tribe constituting the largest single element, one fifth of the total.

The ethnic pronunciation/distinction between the America-Liberians who were the descendants of the early settlers and the indigeuce on the other hand, is indicative of the nature of the social and political problems. The civil war that erupted in the Republic of Liberia late in 1989 led to major security crisis in the West African region in the early 1990s and the deployment for the first time of a military force known as ECOMOG.

Vogt (1991:101-121) asserted that the conscience of the international community was repeatedly horrified by reports of the slaughter of unarmed civilians. One of the most notorious of which was the brutal killing of over 600 refugees who had reportedly fled for refuge in a local church. Matters came to a head in Liberia with the coup attempt undertaken by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor late in December 1989.

As the war intensified in Monrovia, it became increasingly evident that the lives of foreign nationals had also become endangered. Traders, journalists and nurses from West African countries were abducted and killed by the rebels, especially those nationals from the countries which had contributed to ECOMOG - Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra-Leone and Guinea (Ajibewa, 1999:16). For instance, two Nigerian Journalists, Kriss Imodibe and Tayo Awotunsin were killed in the conflict.

As a strategic analyst has pointed out, the strategic role of ECOMOG was at first confined to the police and peacekeeping ones of restoring order in Monrovia so that an effective interim administration could be put together, as well as rescuing nationals of other countries trapped by the escalating fighting. The ECOMOG received the blessing of the United States, which supported the programme for peace outlined by the group but did little beyond offering formal and token sympathy. At the emergence of the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (IPFL) under Prince Yormie Johnson, the ding-dong on the battlefield led to the strengthening of ECOMOG under Nigerian auspices and its metamorphosis into what experts described as "a striking force" (Akinrinade, 1992:63-64).

Olagunju and Oyovbaire (1991:272) claimed that President Babangida once argued, "in fact, in a sub-region of 16 countries, where one out of three West Africans is a Nigerian, it is imperative that any regime in this country should relentlessly strive towards the preservation or avoidance of any crisis

which threatens to jeopardize or compromise the stability, prosperity and security of the sub-region...”

Thus, militarizing Nigerian foreign policy in West Africa and Nigeria's involvement in crisis management initiatives in Liberia (“a unique model of peace-keeping”) is seen here as built up with her own security objectives, as well as, commitment to West Africa integration and prosperity. The success of Nigeria's diplomatic efforts in putting her role in Liberia on the agenda of global dialogue and approval can be gauged from the tone of Resolution 788 (1992) adopted by the United Nations Security Council at its 3138<sup>th</sup> meeting on 19 November, 1992. The document applauded the “continued commitment of ECOWAS to and the efforts towards a peaceful resolution of the Liberian conflict (UN, 1992:1-3).

The statement can be regarded as an endorsement of the militarisation of Nigeria's foreign policy in Africa and her activist role in crisis management under Babangida auspices and under the various peace initiatives which included the committee of 5 meeting at Cotonou on 20 October, 1992 and the final communiqué of the first meeting in the Monitoring Committee of Nine issued at Abuja on 7 November, 1992.

Under the civilian administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the responsibility of doubling of continental leader and sub-regional “big-brother” has once more placed the Liberian political crisis on Nigeria's shoulder (Comet Editorial, 2003:11). The West African country of Liberia has been embroiled in a bitter civil war since the emergence of Charles Taylor as President of that country. The effect of the war according to Eghagha (2003:25) spiraled into neighbouring state of Sierra Leone where thousands of defenseless women and children were either maimed or killed.

The United Nations Court in Sierra-Leone indicted Taylor in March 2003 of war crimes. Liberia, under Taylor, has for long been accused of fueling the region conflicts and regional mediators are desperate to halt its role as a breeding ground for strife. Liberia has long stood accused of arming and funding Sierra-Leonean rebels in return for the “blood diamonds” mined by them (Oladesu, 2003:1).

There have been political and diplomatic pressures on United States from the United Nations, foreign groups like International Crisis (an influential lobby group) and Liberians to intervene in the Liberian crisis. It has been argued that just as United Kingdom led in Sierra Leone and France led in Ivory Coast, the U.S. must now assist the nation it helped establish including deployment of troops if necessary. There are indications that the new instability in Liberia risks spiraling to much of West Africa.

The U.S. has avoided engagements in Africa since the ill-fated Somalia intervention when 18 army rangers lost their lives in Mogadishu on a single day. There is also resistance in the Bush administration to the idea of the U.S. being co-opted as the--global policeman, especially in a region where it has no clear strategic interest. Many Republicans severally criticized the Clinton

administration for its entanglement in Somalia (Ibid.). In addition, there is little appetite in the Pentagon to take a new mission now, when the U.S. military is already being stretched by its commitments in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans and elsewhere (The Comet, Foreign Affairs, 2003:10).

It was in the light of the above that the U.S. government according to Momoh-Momoh (2003:1) believed that the West African peacekeepers should take the lead, with the United States “essentially playing a role of support” that would be “very limited in duration and scope”.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2003, the West African leaders held an emergency meeting in Accra, Ghana and the summit agreed that 1,500 peacekeepers be deployed on Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2003 while the remaining 1,750 be sent to Liberia within three weeks. It also agreed that embattled President Charles Taylor leave for Nigeria on exile (Ibid.).

Oduunaga and Madunagu (2003:4) argued that in spite of the growing criticisms against the asylum granted Taylor, the Council of State endorsed the role played by President Obasanjo and commended him for taking the initiative of restoring normalcy to Liberia by sending troops to the war-torn country.

Political analysts aver that by granting Taylor asylum in Nigeria, the President is flagrantly contravening international laws and conventions, which Nigerian had signed (Eghagha, 2003:25). However, it may be argued that Nigeria acted in defiance of that arrest order because of her leadership role in Africa. The asylum is also considered as a viable option open to the Nigerian government knowing fully well that the continued presence of Charles Taylor in Liberia is inimical to the general consensus that there would be no end in the conflict that has ravaged the country.

### **Sierra-Leone Crisis and ECOMOG**

The deployment of troops from the West African Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to Sierra-Leone on the night of Tuesday, May 27, 1997 in the Nigerian Navy Landing Ship Tank (LST), NNS Ambe marked a watershed in the international security of West Africa: “Most especially the second time, African states under collective umbrella of West African security force deployed force to protect the political integrity of member states and re-instate a deposed regime democratically elected” (West Africa Defence Monitor, 2000). Nigeria was actively involved in this, since her troop was among ECOMOG and the Nigerian Navy Landing Ship Tank (LST) was used.

In fact, Nigeria played a vital security role in that country than the so-called Sierra-Leone Armed Forces. Nigeria with her military base in Jui, was giving them training by the NATAG, protecting their strategic installations such as the radio and the T.V. houses, telephone exchange, presidential lodge and state house and even in the up country like Kenema; Nigerian soldiers were stationed there to ward off Revolutionary United Front (RUF) incursion. In fact, if not for Nigerian soldiers there, the elections of 1996 would not have been held because

the Armed Forces had planned to overthrow the Bio regime and disrupt the elections (Okeke, 1997).

Moghalu (1997) noted that the Nigerian government's actions in Sierra-Leone was designed to re-establish the Nigeria's international credential as a regional power as the country lays claim to a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council in the context of the on-going process of U.N. reform with South Africa having played a crucial role in efforts to resolve the crisis in Zaire, Nigeria could use the positive glare of the international spot-light in Sierra-Leone. Following the end of the civil war in which about 30,000 people were killed and thousands mutilated, Koroma was elected to parliament in May 2002 after getting a large number of votes from the military. The United Nations indicted him in March 2003 and Koroma went into hiding in Liberia. Paul Koroma and his closest warlord Sam Bockarie were killed in Liberia between May and June 2003 (Oladesu, 2003:2). Forceful military intervention by Britain, Guinea and the United Nations crushed the rebels and Sierra-Leone formally declared the war over in early 2002.

While Sierra-Leone could continue to bask in the euphoria of hard won victory over agents of Putschism, Nigerians are counting the cost of the military adventure. Altogether, the Nigerian government spent above US \$5 billion on ECOMOG. This adventurism impinges directly on the economic situation in Nigeria. An estimated 10% of the crude oil earnings went into financing military adventurism in Liberia and Sierra-Leone (Intellectual Heritage of Nigeria, 1998:34-35).

### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

With respect to Nigeria's West African policy, there is a common policy elite that Nigeria must seek to play and be perceived to be playing a leadership role in West African sub-region, given the comparative advantage of size, human and material resources in her favour. Despite her political and economic problems at home, Nigeria has in fact historically played a "big brother" role in the West African region. She undertook peacekeeping roles and spearheaded peacekeeping activities in Chad. Nigeria annually contributes about 30% of the budget of the ECOWAS (Aluko, 1985:539-560). It has spearheaded the search for peaceful resolution or management of conflicts in West Africa and has invested time, energy and resources in search for peace in Liberia and Sierra-Leone. Clearly, the Nigerian initiative in ECOMOG (and later ECOMIL) was strong and this drew criticisms from domestic analysts and some West African countries. These criticisms span the legality, propriety, timing and operative cost of the intervention (Olukotun, 1993:111).

Adisa (1992:214) claimed that some Francophone members of ECOWAS argued that the organization is an economic integration not prepared yet for a military role, especially intervening in the internal affairs of member states. ECOMOG's intervention was thus seen as the act by powerful state(s) in

the sub-region seeking to manipulate ECOWAS for selfish ends and these states, to them, were the Anglophone states, especially Nigeria.

It is pertinent to state that as a country which makes some claims to continental leadership, 'Nigeria views her participation in ECOMOG as a practical expression of her leadership position in Africa. The country has been ranked fourth in terms of military deployment outside her borders on peacekeeping operations (Saliu, 1999:29). In deed, a peacekeeping centre has been established at the National War College, Abuja with a continental mandate. Her preoccupation with peacekeeping in Sierra-Leone and Liberia among others is a kind of price Nigeria has to pay for her own security (Ibid. p.30).

Adebayo (1999:48-49) argued that with the death of Apartheid and the end of the post-independence decolonisation struggle, Nigeria is increasingly forced to focus attention on the West African sub-region. Nigeria's Generals have been fully committed to activist security role in Liberia and Sierra-Leone since 1990, despite often strong opposition from a Nigerian public opinion. Thus, Nigeria made an outstanding sacrifice for the survival of sister states and for the preservation of its peoples from barbarism, inhuman suffering and annihilation. In this instance, Nigeria has emerged the real big power and benign keeper of her brothers in West Africa (Mbu, 1997:25). It is not surprising that the U.N., USA, and the European Union have not only recognized and praised Nigeria's efforts in Liberia, but also supported and cooperated with her. This is in consonance with Articles 52 and 53 of the U.N. charter.

Onyeka (1999:19) explained that as the most populous black nation in the world and for the very fact that democracy is an expensive business, the emphasis on the cost of achieving the status of the big brother Africa super power, though worrisome, should be de-emphasized. It cost Americans billions of dollars and will still cost it billions to maintain its status as the world's brother. Nigerian must bother about the goings on at least in the West African sub-region. Although Nigeria's population and resources place her above most African states, some African and neighbouring states, as well as the entire world are equally part of the human race. Liberia, Sierra-Leone and Cote d'Ivoire crises have not only occupied Nigeria's foreign relations focus in the past two decades, they have severely affected its national budget. In short, the customary tactics have been to convene ECOWAS and AU Conference on these crises and then craftily heap the responsibility on Nigeria.

The endless dimension of the crisis now calls for a global review and universal contribution. Thus, Nigeria's age long sacrifice in Liberia must be appreciated by the contribution of other states, financially, materially and militarily.

Obasanjo must energetically champion the adoption of the proposed ECOWAS mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution and peacekeeping for regional security which would set aside sub-regional troops for peacekeeping, involve most states in decision-making, strengthen ECOWAS's capacity to manage conflicts, and attempt to secure logistical and financial

support for peacekeeping missions before they occur. The problems in Liberia and Sierra-Leone and other West African states are not primary responsibilities of Nigeria, but the international community whose primary tool of managing conflicts is the United Nations (U.N.).

Nigeria will have to be careful not to arouse the fears of her neighbours through unilateral military intervention and other actions that make it appear to be pursuing parochial policies in an effort to dominate her sub-region. In order to fulfill her leadership ambitions in West Africa, Nigeria will have to be able to provide, not just the military muscle for sub-regional peacekeeping, but the vibrant domestic market that can sustain economic integration, provide economic assistance to her neighbours and ease the acceptance of her role in West Africa. Only by being strong at home can Nigeria effectively contribute to resolving problems abroad.

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