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## **Nigeria's Role in Conflict Resolution: A New Paradigm**

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**Abstract:** *Nigeria as a nation has since independence been involved in conflict resolution in various parts of the world, especially Africa. For Nigeria, the defence and promotion of world peace ranks as one of the pillars of her foreign policy objectives. In keeping with this, she has demonstrated her willingness to cooperate and to act in concert with other peace-loving members of the comity of nations. In her sub-region, Nigeria has led other members to contain conflict and maintain peace in a region that is conflict prone. She has been able to achieve this because of her possession of leverage and resources, relative to her neighbours. Her search for peace and security has been pursued through bilateral, multilateral and via regional security architecture of which she is a pivotal leader. Nigeria has been involved in conflict resolution since 1963 when she sent troops to Congo on a peace keeping mission in that country. There are other peace engagements that she has spearheaded such as the peaceful resolution of the differences between Togo and Republic of Benin in 1975. Nigeria equally spearheaded the deployment of troops in Chad during the imbroglio in that country. Nigeria saved OAU from disintegration with her timely recognition of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Nigerian's leadership role in conflict resolution in Africa was once again manifested in the formation of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which was formed for peacekeeping mission in the Liberia crisis. Nigeria was the largest financier of that mission and ECOMOG did not only resolve the conflict in Liberia but also the conflict in Sierra Leone. Nigeria has also played a major role in the conflict in Darfur in Sudan over the crisis in that country. Nigeria played an important role in ending apartheid regime in South Africa. Nigeria believes in the use of diplomatic means in resolving issue rather than using force. This chapter is an effort to advance understanding of the endemic conflict system that has brought untold human tragedy to the African continent. The task undertaken in this paper attempts to conceptualise conflict, then analyse the causes of conflict and explore its magnitude and consequences as a means of assessing the role*

*for Nigeria in view of the new paradigm shift in the emerging conflict resolution architecture.*

## **1. Introduction**

Today's security challenges are increasingly diverse, differentiated and fragmented. Nowhere is this more evident than in the evolving problems of developing a conflict resolution mechanism that will contain and manage conflict so as to limit its violent effects. However, the increasing dispersion and regionalization of threats are not confined to Africa alone. Many of today's security challenges are generated within individual societies, spread across borders to their surrounding environment, and exacerbated by unhealthy regional dynamics. Still others, such as the western hemisphere narcotics syndicates, originate on one side of the world but target and exploit vulnerable societies on the other side. To complicate the picture further, today's security threats encompass challenges to human security and a whole series of social and environmental degradation along with traditional military security challenges. And they occur in a time of bewildering connectivity and advancing political complexity as the world becomes increasingly and simultaneously interlinked and multi-centric.

During the cold war there was little official interest in conflict management – that is, the use of non-military means such as a mediation, 'good offices' or pre-emptive diplomatic engagement to promote negotiated alternatives to violence and political upheaval (Wohlforht, 1998). Although nuclear deterrence was underpinned by diplomacy and the credible threat to use force, conflict management was generally viewed in unidimensional terms. The dominant powers in a bipolar international system sought to 'manage' their conflicts in order to avoid a

loss of face or strategic setbacks and to prevent their conflicts from escalating 'out of control' (Waltz, 2000). However, they had little interest in using the tools of negotiation, mediation and preventive statecraft more broadly to promote durable settlements, institution-building, good governance, development and the promotion of the rule of law.

In history, moments of geopolitical change often produce new institutions as a response to that change (Talbot, 2003). The end of the First World War brought the League of Nations, which attempted but failed to create a global order through international cooperation on security matters. The end of the Second World War produced a host of institutions, most of which still function today— the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Coal and Steel Community, which has transformed over time into the European Union. However, the end of the Cold War did not result in much new global institution-building. Instead, the past two decades have seen existing institutions adapt their missions and doctrines, expand their membership, and engage in a series of agonizing reappraisals of their identity and purpose. The G7, founded in the mid-1970s as the group of the wealthiest, most developed countries with an initial focus on financial and economic issues, gradually moved into the terrain of a more political and security-oriented character.

Instead of building strengthened global security institutions, the general international pattern has been to cast doubts on the relevance of established ones. The UN and NATO were not dismantled in the post-Cold War period, but they were weakened as much by a thousand cuts as by any direct challenge to their mission. Instead of innovation, we have witnessed expansion, dilution and confusion. This history raises the question, however, of whether the world needs another institutional approach to conflict management and security. Would a new institution be capable of

responding to the complex challenges of present day conflict? Do we understand the nature of the challenge well enough to design a capable institution? Where there may be growing recognition that local, regional and global security are linked and that national security is connected to preventing or managing conflicts, the exact nature of these links remains obscure. Also obscure is the road ahead as far as reform and innovation in global institutions are concerned. There are three reasons for this: first, there are huge political hurdles to real reform, as the example of the UN Security Council makes clear; second, security has become divisible, making the quest for consensus and coherence elusive; and third, many actors prefer that the current institutional endowment remains weak and imperfect.

Instead of looking to a new institution or a new set of responsibilities for an existing institution, we need to recognize that new collaborative patterns of behaviour are becoming apparent in the conflict management field. In these new patterns, approaches which depend on only one country or institution have been replaced by a growing network of formal and informal institutional arrangements that operate across national, subregional and regional boundaries. These arrangements occur for a variety of reasons – some encouraging, others less so – and the results appear to vary widely. It is important to understand these informal patterns of CCM in order to analyse why they may succeed or fail and what potential they have to reshape conflict management strategy.

However, since the end of the Cold War, concerns have heightened about sustained violent conflicts in Africa. Conflict mitigation and resolution has thus become the dominant governance activity in almost every part of Africa. Many of these conflicts seem intractable; conflict mitigation and resolution initiatives are at best yielding modest success. Even so, such successes typically provide peace in the short

term but hardly lay the foundation for the reconstitution of order and the attainment of sustainable peace. Part of the problem is the failure to acquire a deep understanding of conflict challenges and to fashion appropriate responses. This paper is an effort to advance understanding of the endemic conflict system that has brought untold human tragedy to the African continent. The task undertaken in this paper attempts to conceptualise conflict, then analyse the causes of conflict and explore its magnitude and consequences as a means of assessing the role for Nigeria in view of the new paradigm shift in the emerging conflict resolution architecture.

## **2. Conflict: A Conceptualisation**

The term 'conflict' can be used in two senses. It refers to an incompatibility in a multi-party or multi-issue situation, in other words, a state of affairs in which two or more irreconcilable views or options are posited towards the solution of a particular problem. In the second sense, conflict refers to the violent expression of this incompatibility of irreconcilability. Even though the two conceptions overlap, it is in the latter sense that the term conflict is used within the context of this chapter.

It is difficult to establish the precise causes of this conflict largely because conflicts differ from each other in terms of the combination of factors that give rise to them, and also because conflicts are social phenomena involving human beings and are not given to rigid scientific explanations. However, crises and conflicts in Africa, especially at the national and sub-national levels, can be seen to revolve around the four important issues of identity, participation, distribution and legitimacy (Stedman, 1993).

Identity involves the self-conception and self-definition of an individual with respect to his/her membership in, and allegiance to, a particular community, which may be defined in social, political, economic or territorial terms. The issue of identity will determine the extent to which an individual sees

himself as being a member or non-member of a community. To the extent that the individual identifies with a particular community, that sense of belonging bestows upon the individual some psychological (if not material) gratification. The perception of identity also sets parameters to the extent of sacrifice that individuals and groups will make for the benefit of the community (Stedman, 1993). The issue of identity has been a major cause of violent conflicts on the African continent. According to the Secretary-General of the UN:

The widespread rise of what is called identity politics, coupled with the fact that fewer than 20 per cent of all states are ethnically homogeneous, means that political demagogues have little difficulty finding targets of opportunity and mobilizing support for chauvinist causes. The upsurge of "ethnic cleansing" in the 1990s provides stark evidence of the appalling human costs that this vicious exploitation of identity politics can generate (Annan, 1999).

Participation refers to voluntary actions and choices that are open to the individual for making demands of government and expressing support, or lack of it, for government policies (Stedman, 1993). The issue of participation can become problematic and can lead to conflict when individuals or groups attempt to monopolise all available avenues for meaningful political participation to the exclusion of others. The recent pro-democracy agitation that culminated in the return to democracy in Nigeria was, in part, a reaction against the prolonged monopolization of power by the military and a faction of the Nigerian political elite.

The issue of distribution refers to the differential spread of, and access to values and resources in society (Stedman, 1993). If politics can be defined in

terms of “who gets what, when and how”, then the allocation of values and resources may be said to lie at the very heart of politics. The manner in which values and resources are distributed determines the amount of justice, fairness, and equity that are attributable to a government. Conflicts that develop as a consequence of perceptions of inequality and relative deprivation are causally linked to the manner in which values are distributed in society (Gurr, 1974). The on-going spate of violence in the oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria is a result of the perceived and actual inequality in the distribution of Nigeria’s revenues, a large percentage of which is obtained from that region.

The issue of legitimacy involves “the individual’s belief in the rightness of the rules governing political competition within a society” (Stedman, 1993). The issue of legitimacy determines the extent to which a government is seen as acceptable or not, either by opposing groups or the population at large. Indeed, for conflicts to occur, either between groups or against the state, there must be deep-seated perceptions that the configuration of power within the country is unacceptable.

Another school of thought posits that economic decline is strongly associated with violent conflicts. The argument here is that the nature of politics that is associated with a dwindling economy tends to be caustic and conflictual than the politics that is associated with a growing or buoyant economy. Thus, competition for increasingly scarce resources tends to be highly conflictive and violent.

Finally, the process of political transition to democracy has also been identified as providing a conducive context for the eruption of conflicts. Politicians, contenders for political power, ethnic and regional groups use the process of democratisation and the expansion of the political space to justify protests and rebellions as struggles for individual and group rights. The increased incidence of violent conflicts in various parts of Nigeria in the months immediately following the withdrawal of the military in

May 1999, are in part explained by this tendency (Gurr, 1999).

If consideration is given to the frequency of conflicts across the African continent as well as their relatively protracted nature, conflicts can be seen to constitute a major threat to security on the African continent. African states are, by and large fragile states and the meager developmental gains they may have recorded in the aftermath of independence have been eroded by violent conflicts. The economic bases of countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia have been virtually destroyed as a result of conflicts. The political superstructure of the state of Somalia had disintegrated as a culmination of civil war. As a result of its own protracted internal conflict, Angola has not been able to embark on any meaningful developmental process since its independence. Indeed, having the highest number of amputees and the largest concentration of landmines in the world, it may not be able to do so anywhere in the near future. The same tragic scenario manifests itself in every African state that has experienced violent conflict.

Lastly, a phenomenon which dramatizes the adversity of conflicts in Africa and the fragility of human security are the large populations of refugees that have been generated by such strife. According to a recent UN study, Africa has the largest refugee population of over 8 million, excluding internally displaced people. Out of this number, 12 countries alone were responsible for over 6 million of the refugees (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 1996). Although environmental factors such as drought account for some of the refugees, the vast majority of the refugees are people that have been displaced from countries that are embroiled in war.



### **3. Overview of African Conflicts**

Africa is the most conflict-ridden region of the world and the only region in which the number of armed conflicts is on the increase (Mills: 1999). Conflicts have assumed epidemic proportions and an impediment to development. A few facts may help to illustrate the immensity and destructiveness posed by these conflicts. By 1966, almost half of war-related deaths in the world were in Africa. As a result, Africa accounted for over 8 million of the 22 million refugees worldwide (World Refugee Survey, 1998).

During the 1980s, Africa was torn by nine wars, numerous other instances of large-scale violent conflicts, and a kaleidoscope of coups, riots and demonstrations. These hostilities exacted a great toll on Africa in terms of the destruction of human life, cultural damage, economic disruption, and lost investment opportunities. Indeed, it is difficult to foresee significant economic and social development over wide stretches of Africa until the burden of violent conflicts is eased.

Of the nine wars, five in Sudan, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique and Uganda – were major, with death totals, including civilian deaths, ranging from 60,000 to 100,000 commonly reported in Angola, to the three million or more thought possible in Sudan. In these large wars, the overwhelming majority of victims were civilians, including countless children, who were deprived of food, shelter, and access to healthcare because of the fighting. Three other wars, in Namibia, Western Sahara and Chad, probably resulted in deaths numbering in the 10,000 to 20,000 range. Since these wars took place in highly populated territories, it seems likely that the civilian toll was less. Little is known about the situation in northern Somalia, although the flight of 350,000 refugees to Ethiopia suggests that substantial fighting has taken place (Africa Watch Committee, Somalia, 1990). A human rights organization estimates that 50,000 to 60,000 civilians have been killed in the above-mentioned conflicts.

Added to this was the crisis in the Mano River Basin. The Mano River basin area is a sub-region of West Africa covering Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In reality, the Mano River Basin area defines an emergent political jurisdiction and not a unified ecological zone as may be assumed. An examination of its ecology shows a wide diversity of topographical conditions. The area includes the undulating plateau and rolling hills of the northwestern section, the savannah grasslands of the north; the elevated promontories, brilliant beaches and mangrove swamps along the Atlantic coast, and the tropical rainforest in the South and Southeast (Mano River Union, 1970).

Post-colonial governance institutions in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia have been shaped by their domestic and external contexts and circumstances. Among the relevant constituent factors, four seem critical: these include the nature of the colonial experience, the pattern of interaction among internal actors, the structure and response of the regional and international environment within which they operate and the quality of leadership in each country. Although colonial experience initially helped to shape governance structures, other elements have become important since the attainment of independence. The degree of success in aligning and reconciling interests among various elites and the predispositions, orientations and leadership strategies employed by the leaders have elicited domestic and external responses that have not always ensured peace and advanced development.

Liberia was the first to suffer conflict. On Christmas Eve in 1989, insurgent Charles Taylor invaded the country with only 100 irregular soldiers armed primarily with AK-47 assault rifles; within months, he had seized minerals and timber resources and used the profits to purchase additional weapons he needed to equip his forces. In 1995, Taylor's ill-trained and undisciplined insurgents toppled the government of President Samuel Doe. However, the

fighting continued for seven more years (Dokubo, 2000).

Sierra Leone was next. In 1991 Taylor and a disgruntled officer from Sierra Leone, initiated an informal alliance. Soon weapons and fighters were flowing back and forth across the borders between the two countries. In 1999, the civil war in Sierra Leone had claimed the lives of more than 50,000 people while another 100,000 had been deliberately injured and mutilated. In mid-1999 the combined efforts of the UN and West African peacekeepers proved successful in helping to broker a peace agreement. However, the conflict in the Mano River Basin claimed an estimated death toll of nearly 2 million lives.

The carnage and plunder that has taken place in the Mano River Basin area could not have continued for more than a decade in the absence of a conducive West African regional environment. With the ending of the Cold War, the vulnerability of African regimes was exposed. Disgruntled opponents of regimes could adopt opportunistic behaviours of regional scope and wealth-seeking leaders could accrue benefits by cooperating with such individuals. The internal character of West African regimes (problems of over-centralization, personal role and corruption) and the nature of their interaction among themselves (often personalized friendships and bitter antagonisms) made for an ideal environment for complex intrigues and mechanizations.

This was a conducive environment for Taylor's confidence artistry. Changing his colours and becoming all things to all West African leaders. Taylor presented himself as an understudy of Ghana's Jerry Rawlings, a son to Cote d'Ivoire's Houphuet Boigny, a Francophile to Togo's Eyadema, and a business partner to Burkina Faso's Compaore. To the military commanders of many of these countries, he strove to become an admired acquaintance, if not a close friend. To Libya's Gaddafi, he portrayed himself as an anti-Western revolutionary. Thus, he was able to receive support from such a diverse group of leaders, many of whom did not see eye to eye with each other. Once he

got started, access to natural resources provided the leverage he needed to deal with a wider range of actors.

Thus, the West African regional order, dominated by over-centralized, predatory regimes with leaders divided by colonial history, personal ambition and greed, proved to be fertile ground for conflict, including cross-border conflicts waged by armed bands led by opportunistic gangsters who could play on the fears, greed and personal ambitions of individual leaders, whose countries were veritable powder kegs and could recruit from among other wretched but youthful populations. Over a decade of violent conflicts, plunder and pillage, and illicit trade in drugs and natural resources, the region, at least the Mano River Basin area became a gangster paradise (Dokubo, 2000).

#### **4. Major Causes of Conflict in Africa**

Many of the causes of conflict in Africa today lie in the potent ambition of socio-economic dislocation burdens of debt, IMF structural adjustment programmes, the stresses of environmental and human insecurity and the pressures of democratization, including the contradiction of forces of exclusion, marginalization or domination and demands for empowerment (Adekanye, 2007). The combined effect of these had produced the alarming rise on social and ethnic tension and conflict. The links are very well established and documented in various conflict literature. Policy and action should target these areas – and urgently too - if the international community is to move towards its recently stated objectives of helping with conflict prevention and resolution and the formulation of strategies for promoting sustainable peace and development in Africa.

There is also now a growing recognition in the international community of the fact that the very

programmes of its own agencies in Africa, particularly the IMF and World Bank with their imposed political-economic package of structural adjustment programmes, have significantly become causes of tensions and conflicts. But this realization too little, came too late for many of the states, or rather not until a number of them had been thrown into violent conflicts. One of the calculated objectives of the concept of a “small government” (Adekanye, 2007). But the outcome of such restructuring of the role of the state in Africa has been the abdication on the commitments made by states to the eradication of poverty, hunger, ignorance, disease and other obstacles to the realization of attainable human development index. The latter in turn has left many millions in Africa contesting for basic survival, seeming to return the people to the Hobbesian, ‘pre-developmental state’ of things when life itself was ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short’. The result of the cutbacks in states’ social programmes, particularly affected education, health, housing, the abolition of food and agricultural subsidies and the removal of employment generation almost completely from the list of governmental responsibilities were that all the developmental gains of the 1960s and 1970s were brought to nought.

That the programme has exacerbated Africa’s poverty and conflicts has now been accepted by most, sometimes grudgingly. It was presupposed, for example, by the UN’s New Initiative on Africa, launched in April 1996. It sought to bring together all the United Nations specialised agencies with experience in Africa, namely Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), along with the Bretton Woods institutions, to mount a concerted international attack on the crisis of debt and economic and social stagnation still plaguing much of Africa.

That the UN, however, accepted the interconnectedness of the proposed public investment in the social sphere with support for an active strategy on Africa's external debt on the one hand and Africa's need to develop its own conflict resolution capacity on the other also imply an acknowledgement of the linkages between the debt-cum-adjustment burden, rising poverty and increasing conflict. Special emphasis was also placed by the Initiative on the need to control land degradation and desertification, encourage irrigation and improve soil quality.

There were also measures clearly designed to improve food security for most of the population, and to provide relief from debilitating ecological disasters, both natural and man-made. African leaders' efforts to improve governance was also to be bolstered under the Initiative through supporting the civil services to better manage development, building independent judicial systems, strengthening the functioning of parliaments and electoral processes and making public administration more accountable. Even the World Bank has now moved away from the earlier free-market-driven view to concede that a revitalized (not weak) state is and has been essential everywhere for building adequate national infrastructure required for the development of markets.

## **5. Africa and the New Conflict Resolution Architecture**

During the Cold War years, interest in conflict resolution was shown only by scholars, religious and secular activists, and others outside government who sought to popularize a very different discourse about national security (Kriesberg, 2007). This discourse focused on the threat of nuclear annihilation as a consequence either of direct attack or of a "nuclear winter". Proponents believed that conflict resolution

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consisted of pushing their own governments towards arms control and then eventually nuclear disarmament, thereby reducing stockpiles and removing the weapons from national armories.

In the years immediately after the end of Cold War, the world's attention shifted from tracking superpower rivalry to witnessing the outbreak on nearly every continent of civil wars: wars that habitually spilled over state boundaries, to contaminate entire neighbourhoods. Global security was redefined in local and regional terms, and the tasks undertaken to provide security widened to protecting civilians from massacre by their own governments as well as shoring up weak states threatened by struggles among factional militias (Hampson, 2008).

No longer was international security indivisible as it has been during the Cold War. Instead, it became fragmented as governments, institutions and individuals attempted to address a wide range of conflict challenges. Powerful actors assumed a "third party" conflict management role – often successful or acting as "meddlers and spoilers all in the guise of peacemakers".

The fact that so many countries are susceptible to internal conflict and social disintegration suggests that there is enormous potential for instability in the international system. While these conflicts and global threats may have made the link between national security and conflict management more apparent to policy-makers around the world, the countries and institutions that provided conflict management in the 1990s are either marginalised by current wars or like Nigeria, overburdened by the number and gravity of on-going crisis. In spite of these limitations, the AU's evolving conflict resolution architecture has made spectacular headways in Africa's conflicts.

The demise of the OAU and its replacement by the African Union was as a result of two trends of thought. The first was sponsored by then South African President, Thabo Mbeki whose core concept was to make Africa a continent that resonated and was

now ready for business. That an African renaissance could provide the enabling environment to accept not only foreign direct investment but also a profitable and stable place. While former Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo was of the opinion that a democratic Nigeria could not continue to shoulder the burden of conflict resolution in the sub-region, but that a new African Union would develop the capacity for burden-sharing in its restructuring of its conflict resolution instrument. Thus, the new AU broke the ground running by establishing the Peace and Security Council at the apex of conflict resolution (Malan, 1999).

African societies however, have created their own definitions of security and the structures that best fit their own environmental and cultural circumstances. These are likely to display considerable variety. If the ongoing debate is any indication, Africa also will provide fertile and useful examples that will assist societies elsewhere in the world as they grapple with the issues of conflict management.

The engagement of the OAU in conflict resolution in Africa dates back to the middle of the 1960s when the organization became involved in the resolution of disputes that arose out of border demarcations and the territorial claims of African states. In addition to settling border disputes, the OAU's conflict resolution efforts in its early days were directed towards the diffusion of tension that resulted from ideological differences during the Cold War. The creation of a more robust response on the part of the OAU to different forms and phases of conflict, however, is a more recent development. In June 1993, African heads of state passed a resolution leading to the establishment of the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, and resolution. The functions given to the mechanism were to anticipate and prevent situations of potential conflict from developing into full-blown wars, to undertake peacemaking and peace-building efforts if full-blown



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conflicts should arise, and to carry out peacemaking and peace-building activities in post-conflict situations. (Muyangwa and Vogt, 2000)

Although the establishment of the OAU conflict resolution mechanism should have moved the OAU to the centre of conflict management in Africa, the performance of the mechanism was not impressive. OAU/AU peace and security official noted that:

[e]ven though the OAU and its Charter came into existence as a continental framework for the promotion of the African collective will to ensure collective security and collective development, we have been unable in over thirty years to craft a comprehensive security architecture to drive the peace and security agenda of the continent. This is in spite of the establishment in Cairo in 1993 of a Continental Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (Ibok, 1999).

As a response to the ineffectiveness of the OAU's mechanism, African leaders decided in May 2001 to devise a new security regime to operate within the framework of the fledgling AU. The AU's emerging security regime was mandated to perform a wide range of peace and security functions. Specifically, the tasks that have been assigned to the AU's security mechanisms are to promote peace, security and

stability in Africa; to promote and implement peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction; to develop a common defence policy that can be operationalized, to coordinate and harmonize continental efforts in the prevention and combating of international terrorism; and to promote and encourage respect for the sanctity of human life and the protection of human rights.

## **6. Institutions of the AU's New Security Regime**

The AU's new security regime is predicated on collective security to be operationalised by an African standby force (ASF), an early warning system (EWS), a panel of the wise (PW), and a peace fund (PF). The core peace and security decision-making institutions include the assembly of heads of state and governments (AHSO), the Peace and Security Council (PSC), and the Commission of the AU. Although the AHSO makes the final decision on important peace and security issues such as the intervention in member states of the AU, the PSC, which will meet regularly at the permanent representative level, is empowered to take most decisions on security issues on behalf of the AHSO. The AHSO will, however meet at least once a year to review the work and activities of the PSC as part of its oversight of the AU.

The PSC is made up of 15 states, 10 of which are elected to serve for two years. The other five are elected to serve for three years. All countries serving on the PSC have equal voting rights; there will be no veto rights or permanent memberships. The PSC will be advised by a military staff committee composed of senior military officers from various African military establishments. The 10-member AU Commission manages the PW, EWS, ASF, and PF, and will work closely with, and provide assistance to, the PSC.

To provide an operational arm to the PSC and the security provisions of the constitutive act, the protocol provides for an African standby force – a rapid

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reaction capacity – to be fully developed by 2010. As Cedric de Coning notes, the use of the term “force” is somewhat inaccurate; the AU actually envisions creating a standby system that will build on the military capabilities of African regional organizations (Cedric, 2004). According to the AU’s policy framework for the establishments of the ASF, drafted in May 2003, it comprises a system of five regionally managed multi-disciplinary contingents of 3000 – 4000 troops and between 300 and 500 military observers, police units, and civilian specialists on standby in their countries of origin. These regional standby brigades will be placed under the operational control of the AU or the UN once deployed. The standby force is authorized to engage in the observation and monitoring of cease-fires; peace support missions; the intervention of member states to restore peace and security; preventive deployment to prevent conflict from spreading or escalating or to prevent the resurgence of violence after parties to a conflict have reached an agreement; peace-building, especially disarmament and demobilization; and the provision of humanitarian assistance.

The AU has left it to the regional leaders to determine if the regional brigades will map the membership of Africa’s regional economic communities. Some progress has been made toward the formation of these standby brigades. In June 2004, the ECOWAS defence and security commission agreed to develop an ECO task force comprising 1500 troops to be deployed within 30 days and an ECO main brigade of 5000 to respond within three months. However, it is not clear how this initiative will fit within the ASF policy framework. In February 2004, the east African chiefs of defence staff adopted a policy framework to establish the eastern African standby brigade (EASBRIG) as part of the African standby force, and reviewed a draft protocol.

The decision by the AU to establish conflict prevention, management, and resolution instruments “with teeth” may finally serve to turn the tide on conflicts in Africa that continue to ravage the

continent, leaving death, disease, and social, economic, and environmental dislocation in their wake. However, it is critical to question whether these changes are merely symbolic or whether the evolution of pan-African security will help bring peace to Africa. To understand and assess the transition from the OAU to the AU, this section would analyse framework that draws its basic insights from two ideal-type security paradigms.

The first ideal type framework is Ali Mazrui's Pax Africana. "Pax" in this configuration is defined in part by internal stability, and intervention is triggered by a request from a government - that is, the consent of a government - for assistance in maintaining or restoring internal stability. An African government therefore temporarily renounces sovereignty to allow foreign troops to assume a policing function within the country. Central to the "Africana" element of Pax Africana is the notion that the request for intervention and the troops used in intervention must come from Africa; peace must not be imposed from powers outside of Africa. The guiding principle is African solutions to African problems.

The second security paradigm, the responsibility to protect, articulates a distinct approach to peace and security. In terms of the norms governing intervention, the responsibility to protect reframes the debate surrounding intervention from a "right" to intervene to suggest that the international community has a "responsibility" to intervene in humanitarian catastrophes to protect vulnerable populations. The responsibility to protect is still very much a pro-sovereignty doctrine in as much as it recognizes that strong and accountable states are best able to protect their citizens. However, it supports a reconceptualization of the conditioning principles of sovereignty from a state's control over its people to its responsibility for its people. That is, the responsibility to protect makes clear that sovereignty entails responsibility on the part of the state to provide for the

security of its citizens. When a state is unwilling or unable to protect its population or, indeed, is targeting its citizens, the responsibility to protect is transferred to the international community. Accordingly, the international community has an obligation to act under these circumstances, even without the consent of the target state. Furthermore, the international community may respond with military force, if necessary and only as a last resort.

The responsibility to protect suggests that authorization for intervention should be provided by the international community, and more specifically, by the United Nations Security Council. In the words of the report, “[t]here is no better or more appropriate body than the United Nations Security Council to authorize military intervention for human protection purposes. While the report indicates that the UN should have the ultimate authority over any decision to intervene, it notes that the Security Council should not be surprised if regional organizations or a “coalition of the willing” do intervene if the Security Council fails to act.

The AU’s constitutive act and the peace and security protocol provide insight into the norms governing intervention, particularly the AU’s interpretation of the parameters of sovereignty and criteria for intervention. The AU’s understanding of the limits of sovereignty reflects the tension between a recognition of the importance of sovereignty as a political principle, on the one hand, and an acknowledgement of the responsibility inherent in sovereignty, on the other. In many ways, like the responsibility to protect, the documents establishing the AU reflect pro-sovereignty principles in as much as the AU recognized that it “derives its authority from state actors, and is built on the presumption of their sovereignty and legitimacy” (Cilliers and Sturman, 2002). Furthermore, African leaders’ traditional reluctance to cede sovereignty even partially to any higher authority suggests that the AU will need to continue to accord value to the sanctity of borders and the principles of non-interference.

Not surprisingly then, the constitutive act and the peace and security protocol contain a number of pro-sovereignty clauses. Article 4(f) of the peace and security protocol states that is the AU will adhere to the principles of non-interference by any member state in the internal affairs of another.” Similarly, article 3(b) of the constitutive act of the AU makes clear that one of the objectives of the union is to “[d]efend the sovereign, territorial integrity and independence of its member states.”

However, Article 4 of the constitutive act relativizes sovereignty and non-intervention in ways commensurate with the protection mandate. Article 4 makes it clear that the African Union has the right to intervene without even the consent of the target state. Critically, the AU, like the responsibility to protect, clearly lays out provisions for intervention in the internal affairs of a member state through military force, if necessary and only as a last resort, in order to protect vulnerable populations. Implicit in these provisions is the understanding that sovereignty is conditional and defined in terms of a state's capacity and willingness to protect its citizens. Article 4(h) states that the AU has “the right to intervene in a member state pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances: namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.” In February 2003, the AU heads of state and government added an amendment to Article 4(h) that extends the right to intervene to situations that pose “a serious threat to legitimate order to restore peace and stability in the member state of the Union upon the recommendation of the Peace and Security Council.”

However, despite these ambiguities and uncertainties, the AU's constitutive act does stand as the first international treaty to identify a right to intervene in a state for humanitarian objectives. Moreover, the fact that the February 2003 amendment to the constitutive act enables the AU to intervene in response to serious threats to legitimate order means

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that the AU has actually set lower thresholds for intervention for human protection than those outlined in the responsibility to protect. In addition, consistent with the protection mandate and in striking contrast to the OAU, the AU does not require the consent of a state to intervene in its internal affairs in situations where populations are at risk. That is, the OAU's system of complete consensus has been abandoned. Under the AU, a decision on the part of a two-thirds majority of the assembly of the heads of state is required for intervention purposes.

In short, with respect to the norms governing intervention, the AU can be described as adhering closely to a protection mandate. Indeed, the constitutive act and the peace and security protocol provide the AU with unparalleled powers to violate the sovereignty of member-states to protect vulnerable populations and to restore peace and security. These changes, if put into practice, may move Africa closer to an inclusive peace that is centred on protecting vulnerable populations. At least in theory, the AU's emphasis on the conditionality of sovereignty, its articulation of clear triggers for intervention, and its two-thirds majority decision-making system may serve to curtail the role that unclear mandates and the national interests of member states can play in paralyzing an organization and in preventing action in situations where human lives are at risk. However, unless the AU is equipped with appropriate and effective authority structures and mechanisms for carrying out decisions to intervene under these circumstances, its normative changes will not be translated into action.

## **7. Nigeria's Role and the New Paradigm**

For Nigeria, the defence and promotion of world peace most probably ranks as one of the foreign policy objectives of so many states in the world to warrant any close scrutiny here. In so far as it is understood that the defence of justice may sometimes breach the peace of the status quo. Although militarily, Nigeria does not have the wherewithal to bring about international peace on its own, it could be done by working in concert with other well-meaning states. Nigeria has pursued its search for peace and security, through bilateral arrangements, regional arrangements and sub-region alliances.

Since independence, Nigeria has accepted the UN as an important multilateral pivot, through which she could contribute to international peace and security. As a newly emerging independent state, in the Cold War period, the government genuinely felt that its independence could not be sustained without a stable international security environment. Thus, the preservation of world peace through peacekeeping and peace-making efforts was an acceptable way of contribution for the new state.

Despite the new security architecture in Africa, with the provision of regional brigades and early warning systems, Nigeria's burden in conflict resolution might still remain the same.

The ECOWAS Community's intervention force composed of standby multi-purpose modules from member states, ready for immediate deployment. According to Article 22 of the Mechanism's protocol, ECOMOG can be responsible for the following missions: observation and monitoring; peacekeeping and restoration of peace; humanitarian intervention; enforcement of sanctions, including embargoes; preventive deployment; peace-building, disarmament and demobilization; and policing activities, including the control of fraud and organized crime. To help ECOMOG troops fulfill their missions, three training schools have been established in the region: the Peacekeeping School (Côte d'Ivoire); the International



Training Centre (Ghana); and the War College (Nigeria). These are to provide tactical, operational and strategic training to standby units. It is foreseen that it would become compulsory for each member state to have standby units to be regularly inspected by the Defence and Security Commission.

Despite undeniable progress, logistical and financial constraints to peacekeeping missions continue to be significant. First of all, ECOMOG is confronted by the same difficulties as any other multinational army: language differences, different training standards, lack of common standards for equipment, arms and ammunition, etc. Secondly, there are constraints specific to ECOWAS' situation: poor integration of different troops; excessive control by home governments; understaffing; etc. The experience of the three ECOMOG missions has demonstrated the importance of securing financing support before embarking on an intervention. To date, ECOWAS has been heavily dependent on funding from outside. Moreover, without the commitment of a lead nation such as Nigeria, ECOMOG cannot form a meaningful force on its own.

To better guarantee the availability and sustainable management of fund for peace and security activities, ECOWAS is working with its partners towards the creation of a Regional Peace Fund similar to the AU Peace Fund. Such a fund will enable ECOWAS to finance a full range of activities regrouped according to three "windows": conflict prevention and capacity building; conflict management and peacekeeping; and reconstruction (both political and humanitarian aspects).

ECOWAS has considerably improved its responsiveness to conflict and has become the key player enhancing peace and security in West Africa, as proven by the ongoing mission in Côte d'Ivoire. The Secretariat has progressively taken more important initiatives to tackle security challenges faced by West African populations and obtained consistent international support to build its capacities in this area. The focus of ECOWAS initiatives on security has

progressively begun to address dimensions of human security beyond physical violence, as demonstrated, for instance, by the creation of Child Protection Unit (CPU) within the Secretariat.

The role of ECOWAS as a guarantor of peace and security in West Africa, beyond peacekeeping and conflict management and resolution, could be developed further if ECOWAS were involved in providing a regional framework for DDR programmes implemented at the national level.

Some of the obvious challenges Nigeria would continue to face are the scarcity of financial and military resources. The others are challenges associated with the nature and quality of the international support measures for inter-African security cooperation, and also the associated lack of institutional capacity. In the ECOWAS sub-region, there are multiple regional organizations that cohabit, such as the Union Economique et Monetaire Ouest-Africaine (UEMOA), the Mano-River Union (MRU), and the Community of Sahel and Saharan States (ENSAD). The overlap amongst regional organizations not only leads to wasteful duplications of efforts and counter-productive competition among countries and institutions, but also tends to dissipate collective efforts towards the goal of conflict resolution.

Given these negative aspects, ECOWAS must strengthen its efforts to dis-entangle Africa's web of institutional overlaps. However, this may not prove easy as countries often benefit politically from multiple memberships, which are seen to justify the extra expenses by increasing a country's regional influence and donor attractiveness. Nonetheless, ECOWAS should, at the very least, clarify the many procedural questions arising from the resultant overlaps. For example, there needs to be a better understanding of priorities and procedures when troops, pre-identified for deployment by multiple organizations at the same time could be problematic, and pressure Nigeria to shoulder more than the required burden to

dispatching more troops. Without a well-defined understanding of which organization or crises area has primacy in these situations, problems with force projection and force generation will continue, and Nigeria's dominance of the conflict resolution agenda would continue.

Furthermore, asymmetrical regionalism, which refers to the uneven development of sub-regional organizations and initiatives due to their differing colonial heritage, political and security agendas, incompatible visions, differing development of member states and widely varying level of outside support, affects Nigeria's role in the old as well as the new paradigm. While there is hardly anyone to blame for these differences, these inevitably hamper ECOWAS integrationist efforts, and undermine consensus required to pursue a collective security mandate and execute effective responses to conflict through regional initiatives.

The inability of regional states to deal with their own security has led to dependence on extra-African actors. Reliance on foreign sources of funds means that, donors could influence which mission the sub-regional organization can undertake based on the interest of the extra-African donors. Thus, donors can influence a mission's mandate by placing terms and conditions on continued funding, or by withdrawing funding if the donors no longer agree with the scope of the mission. In such circumstances, the burden would most likely fall on Nigeria whose systemic security vision goes beyond the nation's border. Thus, unless Nigeria adopts an insular and inward looking security policy, the new paradigm would to Nigeria be more of the same.

Given these contributions in the maintenance of regional peace, given its enormous human and natural resources, given her experience and capabilities in conflict management, and given the changing nature of global conflict, Nigeria stands in good position to represent Africa and the Black people all over the world in the Security Council. Regionally, Nigeria's efforts in building institutional capacity for conflict

management as clearly demonstrated in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Guinea Bissau, and Equatorial Guinea, as well as its support for democracy and development have become indispensable in the dealing with crises. Continentally, concern with pan-African economic integration, and bringing in experiences learnt in ECOWAS and ECOMOG has helped it demonstrate Nigeria's leadership in affairs affecting Africa.

If this leadership role were to be relevant to Nigeria and Africa in the coming years, it must be placed at the service of pan-African integration, an active engagement and struggle, in conjunction with other countries in Africa against its marginalization, and an insistence on self-reliance, fair trade terms, and a pursuit of greater south-south cooperation. Finally, an active agenda must be pursued in dealing with international financial institutions, especially the World Trade Organization (WTO).

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