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## Mechanisms for Conflict Management in West Africa: Politics of Harmonization

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The pattern of co-operation in West Africa has been marked in a most remarkable manner by its colonial past. Among the sub-regions into which the OAU has divided Africa, none has been polarised as West Africa. Indeed the sub-region was described as the most varied in Africa in terms of the size of countries, colonially inherited languages, the levels of economic development, and linkages, both internal and external.<sup>1</sup> Of the 16 countries of the sub-region, 9 are Francophone, 5 Anglophone, and 2 Lusophone. In no other sub-region are there so many countries with such a mixture of colonial experiences; a situation which in the post colonial era dictated the nature of regional multilateral co-operation and institutions.

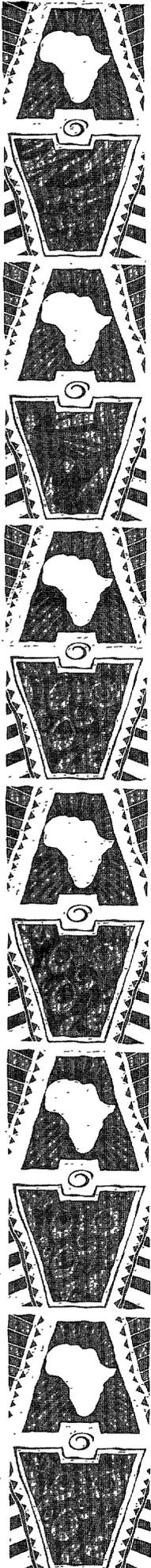
Great Britain and France were obviously the dominant colonial powers in the sub-region. The totally different concepts of colonialism were reflected in the post-colonial legacies. Though Britain had a long and intense contact with West Africa in the pre-colonial era, it was one dictated by commercial considerations. The competition which British merchants had to face from other Europeans for merchandise and slaves led to the establishment of bases on the west African coast, and the expansion into the hinterland. For Britain, therefore, it can be said that mercantilism propelled the later acquisition of colonies. The French on the other hand, saw their mission as a necessity for maintaining France's status as a major power, thus the integration of the colonial territories as outposts of metropolitan France and the attempt at assimilation of the people. The development of a commercial policy towards the colonies and the build up of the necessary military power came after the great period of colonial expansion, whose principal incentive for the expansion was the political ambition to create a Greater France and enhance its role as a world power. Whereas Britain in the post Second World War years was rather quick to reconcile herself to the prospect of independence of her colonies in West Africa, the colonial consensus which existed in France at that period was as such to make decisions in favour of granting independence to the colonial territories very difficult. The African empire in particular, which had contributed so much to France's war effort, was seen as an important source of prestige and state power. That power was most conspicuously maintained in black Africa.<sup>2</sup>

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## Post-Independence in West Africa

Post-independence West Africa thus became hostage, as it were, to the vagary of the imperial powers' attitude to independence. Even if Britain was not without the desire to maintain some control after independence, it did not seek, except in the ill fated Defence Pact with Nigeria, to formalise such links. Thus the Anglophone West African states, in demonstrating their independence, found it easy to embark on the severance of such links as could be seen as abridging their new status. By contrast, and in accordance with what was virtually a conditionality of independence, every Francophone West African state maintained a "Co-operation Agreement" with France. As was summarised by Albert Bourgi, "the new type of relationship with France under the name of co-operation was aimed to temper the process of independence which had become irreversible and to prolong, if not to consolidate beyond the indispensable political and juridical changes, the multifarious presence of the former colonizer: presence of a great number of technocrats for some time, of its army in key strategic locations, control of economic and financial life, guaranteed outlets and sources of certain articles and linguistics hegemony".<sup>3</sup>

No doubt, therefore, that the shadow of France has loomed large in the West African sub-region through the special relationship maintained with its former colonies. The "Co-operation Agreements" found expression not only in the conventional sense of development co-operation, but also included defence agreements by which the African states signatories could call upon France for direct security assistance, and military materials and equipment for their national armies. Since British presence, though not insignificant in the economic domain in its former colonies, was nevertheless less obtrusive and practically uncoordinated, the French shadow has proved very decisive in the post colonial pattern of co-operation in West Africa.

### Pattern of Co-operation

The two imperial powers had adopted the policy of linking their colonies with mechanisms of common services. These inter-territorial ties, each within its area of jurisdiction, were essential for pragmatic reasons of administrative economy and convenience. Thus British West Africa had a West African Currency Board for a common currency, the West African Airways, the West African Examination Board, the West African Research Institute. For French West Africa, integration was deeper. It included various efforts at the Federation of some territories, a common Central Bank in charge of the common currency, and common institutions of higher learning. In the years immediately after independence, the anglophone countries, obviously without any attempt at persuasion by Britain, embarked on a process of dismantling the common services so that only the West African Examination Board survived. By contrast, the Francophone states not only strengthened bilateral relations, they also promoted multilateral mechanisms for economic co-operation. Shortly before independence, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal formed the West African Customs Union which was later to become the West African Economic Community (CEAO).

The language barrier created by the pattern of colonialism and the perpetuation of the vertical link with the former imperial power at the expense of the horizontal link with neighbouring states, discouraged much meaningful relations across the anglophone/francophone divide. This situation in the sub-region was further complicated by the division along ideological lines with Ghana, an anglophone on the radical left and Cote d'Ivoire and most of the francophone states on the conservative right. Such was the distrust within the sub-region that Ghana was openly accused of subversion by most of the francophone states. Its offer to host the second ordinary session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of States and Government in 1965 brought into the open the antagonism. Most of the West African Francophone states threatened to boycott the session as a protest against Ghana's alleged subversive activities. When the summit was ultimately held in Accra, it had to adopt a "Declaration on the Problem of Subversion" in which members solemnly undertook not to tolerate any subversive activities originating in their countries against other member states, and not to tolerate use of their territories for any subversive activities directed from outside Africa against any member state of the OAU.<sup>4</sup> Even Nigeria, with its cautious foreign policy of maintaining friendly relations with all its neighbours, and advocacy of a functional step by step approach to African unity, was not fully trusted among the francophone states. Its size and economic potential were sources of concern to, paradoxically, the bigger, further geographically away, and relatively more resource endowed among the francophone states. This concern about the dominance of Nigeria in any sub-regional mechanism for co-operation surfaced in the consideration in the mid 1960s of the first proposal by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for the creation of an Economic Community of West African States. Senegal proposed that the member-

ship of the Community should be enlarged to include Zaire, whose size would counterbalance that of Nigeria. It is needless to say that Senegal was not alone in its concern of the potential role of Nigeria in the sub-region. It was a concern shared by France whose support of Biafra during Nigeria's civil war flowed from General De Gaulle's perceived obligation to protect the weak Francophone states in the sub-region. In the General's calculation, Nigeria's small Francophone neighbours would be saved from the potentially too powerful Nigeria if it were broken up.<sup>5</sup>

The Nigerian Civil War (1966-1970) interrupted the ECA's initiative on the economic integration of West Africa. At the end of the conflict however, Nigeria began an initiative for the revival of the project. To demonstrate that a small, poor country and a large, rich country, one francophone, the other anglophone, could be linked in a mutually beneficial economic co-operative relationship, in 1972 Nigeria and Togo signed a bilateral economic agreement, as "an embryo" West African Economic Community. The joint initiative of the two countries successfully culminated in the signature in Lagos in May, 1975 of the treaty creating the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) by all states of the sub-region.

Though ECOWAS was meant to provide a pan West Africa economic organisation to replace similar bodies of limited membership, and to eliminate the distrust between the anglophone and francophone states, it had a long way to go. By the time it became functional in 1977 with the establishment of its Secretariat, the smaller groupings continued in existence. Though it was realized that for ECOWAS to command the total commitment of member states and be able to function at optimum effectiveness, it was necessary to dissolve these other bodies, reality dictated that in the interim, an organised *modus vivendi* be worked out. Thus the ECOWAS Secretariat had, in its formative years, to work for the creation of an efficient framework for co-operation among all multilateral economic institutions within the sub-region, so as to avoid duplication, unnecessary competition, and dissipation of the meagre resources of the sub-region. To this end, a meeting of the Heads of Inter-governmental Organisations in West Africa was held in Monrovia in January 1979 and a programme for co-operation was prepared.<sup>6</sup>

The difficulty in creating the necessary confidence in ECOWAS that would permit the dissolution of the other bodies was exemplified in the relationship with the largest of the francophone groupings, the West African Economic Community (CEAO). Reacting in 1983 to the pressure for its dissolution, President Diouf of Senegal said:

"It is in everybody's interest that if ECOWAS reaches its cruising speed the CEAO should normally melt into the structures of ECOWAS. We are convinced that the future is with ECOWAS, if it reaches its cruising speed and overcomes its present difficulties. What we do not want, we members of CEAO, is to be asked to eliminate something that works well, that produces brilliant results – CEAO – while ECOWAS has not reached cruising speed".<sup>7</sup>

## Security and Development Unrelated

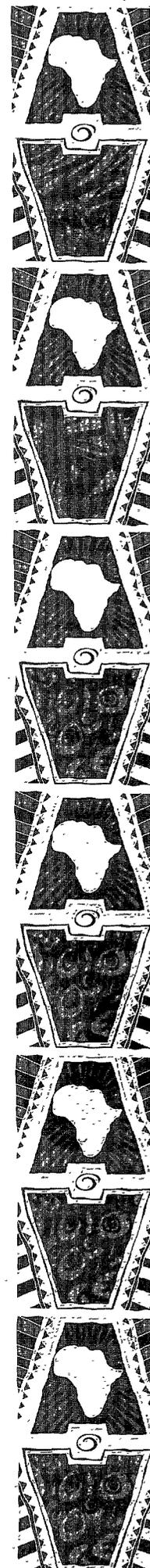
ECOWAS was the first major enterprise to bring all the West African countries together in a co-operative body. It had the precise purpose of union for economic co-operation, and its treaty faithfully reflected that purpose. In the era in which it was being created, economic development and state security were considered as two distinct issues, unrelated to one another. Security in that period had a narrow concept of the preparedness of a state to withstand foreign aggression on its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Its sole element was considered to be military power. The more militarily armed a country was the more secure it was presumed to be. This was the justification for the arms race between the two superpowers and the two alliances under their leadership. It became a universally accepted concept by which even the newly independent states of Africa proceeded to establish themselves. In West Africa therefore as elsewhere in the era of decolonisation, the new states regarded the establishment of a national army as one of the priorities of nationhood. The issue of regional security, which was seen in military terms, did not feature even in the preambles of the ECOWAS Treaty since it was not considered relevant to the project.

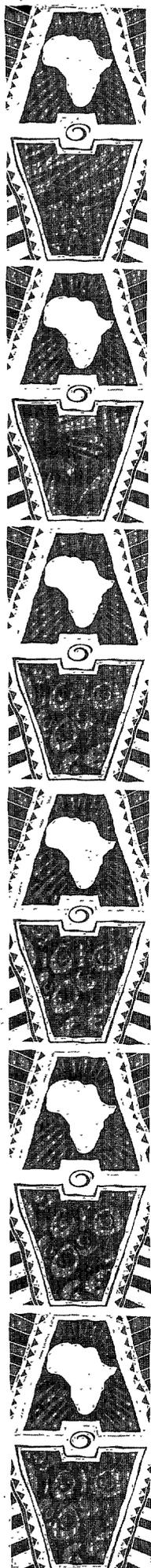
## ECOWAS Protocols:

### (I) On Non-Aggression 1978

### (II) Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence 1981 (MAD)

The two Protocols by which ECOWAS ventured into the field of security arose out of a later realisation that for sub-regional economic co-operation, an atmosphere of peace and stability must pervade the area, and that unresolved disputes between member states could escalate into armed conflicts. Furthermore, assurance of mutual assistance in case of external aggression would serve as a deterrence to potential aggressors from outside the region. Even in the period before the conclusion of the ECOWAS Treaty, there





were some events which affected the peace and security of the sub-region, which should have pointed to the necessity for the sub-regional countries to consider joint action on the issue. Among these were the mercenary attack on the Republic of Guinea in 1971, and the border conflict between Burkina Faso and Mali in 1974.

The Protocol on Non Aggression provided essentially for the peaceful resolution of disputes between members. For its part, the more elaborate Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence (MAD) spelt out situations that would call for joint sub-regional action on external aggression, as well as intervention in inter-state and intra-state conflicts. MAD envisaged the conclusion of additional Protocols. It also provided for organs for collective action. These are:

- The Authority of Heads of State and Government
- Defence Council
- Defence Committee
- Allied Force of the Community

and the appointment in the ECOWAS secretariat of a Deputy Executive Secretary for Military Matters.

### **Non Implementation of the MAD PROTOCOL**

There has been widespread speculation as to why the Protocol on Mutual Assistance and Defence (MAD) has not been implemented. Some scholars have postulated that the same reluctance to create ECOWAS which certain states in the sub-region entertained was even stronger when it came to the issue of a multilateral security body. According to them, francophone states feared the overwhelming influence which Nigeria might exert within such a body, and whether such influence would always be in pursuit of common objectives. These states widely believed that Nigeria's main interest was to whittle away the influence of France with whom they maintain defence agreements, the more easily to establish its own regional big power status. Other scholars point out that the provision in the Protocol, which calls for all foreign troops in the sub-region to be withdrawn once it becomes fully effective, is seen as a diminution of the sovereign right of states to conclude defence arrangement considered in their best interest. Difficulties connected with organising joint defence, such as language barrier, diversity in military traditions, variations in training and mode of deployment, types and sources of equipment used by the various armies, poor communications infrastructure, and lack of well developed command within the various armies have always been adduced. All these reasons are a reflection of the general lack of political will to implement the Protocol. Many observers believe that this predilection for not fulfilling obligations has been facilitated by the existence of a parallel security mechanism which is exclusively francophone.

### **Accord de Non Aggression et d' Assistance en matiere de Defense (ANAD)**

The Accord which was signed in 1977 is considered as the security arm of the West African Economic Community (CEAO) having the same parties with the addition of Togo. The impulse for its conclusion was the same as led to the creation of the CEAO, that is the creation of a francophone security arrangement particularly after the border war between Burkina Faso and Mali in 1974 had shown that defence links with France could not necessarily deter all forms of local threats. The Accord sets out the general principles of the commitment of the parties not to use force to settle any dispute among them and to come to each others assistance in defence against aggression. It was the first multilateral African mutual defence mechanism to be established, and, remarkably, considerable effort was made for its implementation. The Protocol of Application was adopted in 1981 and all the envisaged institutions including the Secretariat were made functional. Between 1981 and 1987, 12 other Protocols and 7 related instruments were adopted. Thus unlike the ECOWAS Protocol on Mutual Assistance and Defence, ANAD had enough commitment of parties for its implementation.

### **Security Interventions: ANAD and ECOWAS.**

#### **ANAD and the Burkina Faso/Mali Conflict**

If the conflict between Burkina Faso and Mali in 1974 was partly responsible for its creation, the same issue was to provide ANAD occasion for its application. The "Christmas War" between the two countries in pursuit of their irreconciled territorial claims in the Agacher region, broke out again on December 25, 1985. On December 29, the first extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers convened in the ANAD headquarters in Abidjan, and arranged a cease-fire which was signed by the Presidents of Burkina Faso and Mali on December 30. The following day the ANAD Truce Observation Force composed of military officers from all member states except the two antagonistics, arrived on the

theatre of hostilities. On January 17, 1986, the first extra-ordinary session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government convened at Yamoussoukro to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. By January 31, 1986 it was possible to withdraw the Observer Mission. It is interesting to note that a simultaneous peace mission initiated by Nigeria and Libya was turned down in favour of the ANAD initiative. It will be instructive to compare the action of ANAD on this, with that of ECOWAS on Liberia.

## ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia

Eighteen years after ECOWAS adopted the Protocol on Mutual Assistance and Defence, it was confronted with its first practical challenge. The Liberian Civil War which had broken out in December 1989, had by early 1990 degenerated into veritable mayhem. Notwithstanding its continued escalation in barbarity, and the vivid images carried on international television channels, no organisation showed any inclination to intervene. The United Nations was totally engrossed in the Gulf Crisis. The OAU had neither the mechanism nor the resources to intervene. The United States which had always been seen as Liberia's patron, was devoting its total attention to the Gulf, and was equally totally indifferent to events in Liberia. Under the circumstances, ECOWAS waded into the Liberian crisis in order to arrange a cessation of the fighting and thereafter assist the Liberians in installing a democratic government. The saga of the ECOWAS intervention is well known and though not yet over, has been exhaustively analysed.<sup>8</sup>

The complications that arose from the intervention can be traced to the non implementation of the ECOWAS (MAD) Protocol. Unlike ANAD, which could rely on the structure it created for conflict resolution, ECOWAS had none to fall back on. Therefore, while it could not be denied that the Liberian civil war justified the invocation of Art 4b of the MAD Protocol, recourse to it had to be improvised. This gave rise to the issue of the legality of the operation first openly challenged by President Campore and later raised by many.<sup>9</sup>

The MAD Protocol provides decisions on peacekeeping action be taken by the Conference of Heads of State and Government. Therefore the initiative by the Standing Mediation Committee alone to send troops into Liberia, and the composition of the troops from among its own members, not only raised legal issues, but cracked open the politically sensitive anglophone-francophone divide in the sub-region. The Liberian operation came to be regarded by francophone states as an attempt to impose anglophone authority in the sub-region. The non existence of appropriate ECOWAS institutions, namely the Defence Council, the Defence Committee, a jointly appointed Commander of an Allied Armed Forces of the Community and Deputy Executive Secretary for Military Affairs to direct the operations further heightened the distrust. Notwithstanding efforts to arrange a sub-regional consensus starting with the meeting of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government in Bamako in November 1990, ECOMOG has remained an essentially anglophone undertaking. Members of the parallel security arrangement – ANAD – (with the exception of Senegal which contributed troops for a short period) did not heed the many ECOWAS appeals to contribute troops or resources.

## Drawbacks of the Present Security Arrangements in West Africa

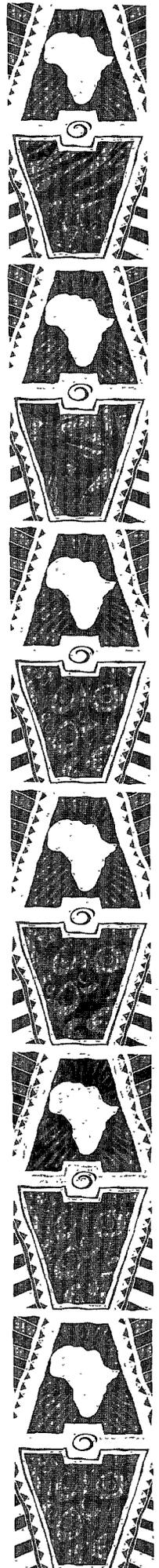
The existence, side by side, of two security bodies, MAD and ANAN has serious setbacks not only in the diversion of attention and resources which ought to have been concentrated into one body, but also in accentuating the weaknesses of each of them. The weaknesses of ANAD are very obvious. First it is based exclusively on linguistics identity in a multi-lingual sub-region.

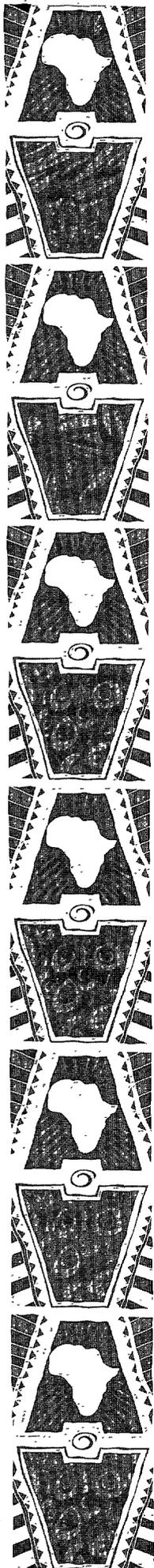
Secondly, its permission of the maintenance of defence agreements by its members with non Accord parties opens up the possibility of foreign intervention in the sub-region.

Thirdly, the fact of being simultaneously parties to the agreements on MAD and ANAD creates contradictory obligations by which an ANAD party can be called upon to take action of a military nature against a fellow ECOWAS party to MAD when no recourse has been had to the latter agreement.

Fourthly, the absence of the regional big power, Nigeria, creates a big vacuum, which has been demonstrated by the ECOWAS operation in Liberia. It has become obvious that for any sub regional security body to be credible in its ability to threaten or actually undertake a peace enforcement action, Nigeria, the only state that has the capability to project power in the sub-region far beyond its own borders, must be a party. One does not need to be a believer in Conteh Morgan's theory of collective hegemonic leadership in conflict management for Africa to face the reality of the indispensable roles of certain key countries in their respective sub-regional institutions.<sup>10</sup>

Fifthly, notwithstanding the flurry of institution setting which marked the early years of ANAD, it has fallen victim to a waning of interest among the parties. For instance, between 1987 and 1995, ANAD





held no meeting, contrary to its provisions. According to the Secretary General, "the activities of the General Secretariat saw a great slow down in those years and only after the Extra Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers in Nouakchott in December 1995 followed by an Extra Ordinary Session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government in the same venue in April 1996, was a new dynamism breathed into the organisation".<sup>11</sup> In spite of that optimistic assessment, it is doubtful that the current enthusiasm will go beyond the forthcoming twentieth anniversary celebrations due to be held this year. This assessment is based on the increasing doubts about its relevance in the present security landscape of the sub-region. It is remarkable that Togo for instance was not represented at all in either the Council of Ministers or the Conference of Heads of State in the Nouakchott series of 1995 and 1996. Questions have arisen as to its relevance in a situation in which West Africa has been embroiled in a conflagration of the proportion in Liberia in which ANAD has found no role.

ECOWAS which, through the invocation of the MAD Protocol, has intervened in Liberia has the obvious advantage over ANAD in that its coverage is sub region wide. Nevertheless, it has not capitalised on its strength.

First, it has not up till the present been signed by two of the sub-regional states, namely Mali and Cape Verde. Of the other 14 countries that have signed it, 3 have not yet ratified it, namely, Benin, Mauretania and Gambia.

Secondly, though the Protocol entered into force in 1986 when it was ratified by the seventh state party, none of its provisions has been implemented. Until the Liberian crisis, it remained a mere declaration of intentions as opposed to an active mechanism. What is most remarkable is the non creation of the institutions that were intended to bring it alive.

Thirdly, until the basic step for institution building is taken, any measure by ECOWAS in the security field is bound to be at least legally controversial.

Fourthly, MAD was concluded four years after ANAD, but made no reference whatsoever to the latter's existence nor to the necessity for its dissolution in favour of the larger body. Indeed it seems curious that MAD requires that as soon as its provisions have enabled ECOWAS to meet the defence requirements of its members, those with foreign military bases in their territories would take appropriate action to end them, but did not go further to deal with the issue of a smaller body based on exclusiveness, which perpetuates the linguistic polarisation of the sub-region.

Fifthly, the non implementation of MAD leaves open the exercise of hegemony by a strong regional power, the fear of which paradoxically, is often cited by scholars as the reason for the reluctance by smaller countries to make the Accord operational. The Liberian situation which had been dealt with ad hoc, has shown that hegemony works best in a situation of structural vacuum. The absence of a MAD structure appropriate for the situation, imposed on Nigeria the burden of leadership translated into the overwhelming preponderance of Nigerian troops in ECOMOG and therefore its veto-power-type of role in the direction of the operations, including the almost total monopoly of the appointment of the ECOMOG Commander. That predominance implies also the risk that the operation could be totally derailed if some upheaval were to occur in Nigeria itself. As Adekeye Adebajo pointed out on the aftermath of the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Nigerian Presidential elections, President Babaginda's chosen successor as the Head of the Interim National Government, Chief Ernest Shonekan<sup>11</sup>, a cost conscious industrialist keen to balance Nigeria's books", voiced public doubts about the \$500,000 a day that ECOMOG was costing the Nigerian treasury, and talked of withdrawing Nigeria's troops from Liberia. It is a matter of conjecture what he would have done if he had remained in office longer than the three months he spent, since his sentiments for bringing the boys back home had wide public support.<sup>12</sup> What is not in doubt is the result of a Nigerian withdrawal or even a drastic cut back of its participation in ECOMOG. The whole operation would have come to a halt plunging Liberia back into the state of anarchy worse perhaps than the 1990 situation since there are now many more factions than at that time.

Sixth, and arising out of the ad hoc nature of the intervention in Liberia, no prior plan was made for financing the operation. The MAD Protocol's provision of joint Community financing of peacekeeping operations could not be invoked. The ad hoc creation of a fund did not attract contributions in spite of several appeals. The result is that the burden has been heaped exclusively on the troop contributing countries.

## Way Forward

Global security in the new world order compels each state to conceive its security and stability as being closely linked with those of its neighbours. This is particularly so in Africa which still confronts the unresolved problem of state formation and its conflict generating propensity. The post-Cold War era of Afro-fatigue has thrust upon the continent the onus of resolving its own conflicts, sometimes with, and often

with no timely interest shown by the wider world. Yet it is increasingly clear that the resolution of these conflicts is an indispensable step for the creation of peace, security and stability which in turn are the pre-requisite for sustainable development.

How best to devise an effective conflict resolution mechanism is a problem which has engaged post-Cold War Africa. In the aftermath of the neglect of some of Africa's new conflicts in the new era, the ECOWAS intervention in Liberia was initially hailed as a bold and practical demonstration of sub-regional concern and determination to assume responsibility for peace and security. As it became immersed in controversy and complications however, some scholars argued for decision making on such operations to be made at the continental rather than the sub-regional level. Professor Vogt for instance argued that the primary responsibility for defining the decision to intervene (especially when it involves the deployment of forces) should be at the continental level.<sup>13</sup> While the creation of the OAU Mechanism is yet to demonstrate the disposition to support the mechanism and make the necessary sacrifices to implement its decisions.

The danger which Professor Vogt was quick to point out in qualification of her continental preference, that the level of commitment and interest may not be high in states which are far removed from the area of conflict, is a reflection of the reality. The decision to inject troops from some East African countries into the ECOMOG operation in Liberia was in keeping with continental solidarity and OAU responsibility. However that involvement did not last long and those troops were withdrawn even when the end of the operation was nowhere in sight. The sub-regional; states, on the other hand, have had to persist in the operation because they have more at stake for the peace and security of their own countries as well as the sub-region. From this lesson therefore it follows that notwithstanding a continental mechanism, there is need simultaneously for sub-regional mechanisms which can effectively act. Indeed those mechanisms are necessary complements to the continental structure.

For West Africa the problem is not a lack of mechanism but of creating an effective body out of a multiplicity. The two existing mechanisms have their strengths and weaknesses as have been pointed out earlier in this paper. If ANAD has the privilege of being first among the multilateral security bodies in the continent, and a homogeneity of military transitions and similarity of equipment, it has also the fatal flaw of being artificial. As parts of West Africa that are not immediately contiguous, ANAD parties cannot pretend to be capable through that agreement to assure the peace and security of the entire sub-region. Indeed the ANAD Conference of Heads of State held in Nouakchott in April 1996 admitted this much when they observed:

"To extend peace and security to the whole of West Africa, Heads of State will work to extend ANAD to other states in the sub region."

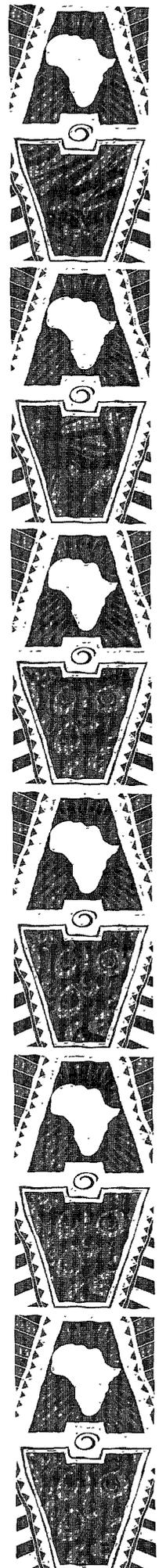
They charged the current chairman to undertake the necessary steps towards that end.<sup>14</sup> The prescribed solution of extending ANAD to other states in the sub-region ignores its origin in francophony. More important is that it ignores the existence of the ECOWAS MAD Protocol, which is already sub region-wide in its coverage.

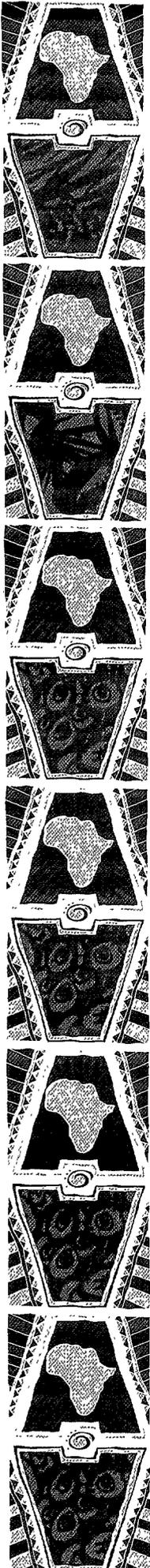
As Peter Vale has pointed out, when a mechanism is no longer appropriate for the times, it is amended and then integrated into a wider superstructure. He gave the examples of the institutions in Southern Africa, namely the "Frontline States" and the Southern Africa Development Co-ordinating Committee (SADCC). Both of these bodies were established to deal with the situation created by Apartheid. Once that system was abolished, SADCC was transformed into Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and a conflict resolution or security branch is being created to replace the "Frontline States".<sup>15</sup>

In order to encourage the process of institutional adjustment, ECOWAS should commence the implementation of the MAD protocol so as to activate its mechanism and thus facilitate the abandonment of any smaller body in the same field. The Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS should resolve to convene the Defence Commission of MAD, and charge it with undertaking the elaboration of the Additional Protocols for its application, within a stipulated time frame which will also trigger the dissolution of the ANAD structure.

The Mandate of the ECOWAS Defence Commission should include the elaboration of a comprehensive mechanism for prevention as well as the management and resolution of conflicts in the sub-region. It should also include the institution of Confidence Building and Peace Building capacities.

The important issue of a focal point for conflict resolution and political co-operation may require a new approach. MAD envisages a unit in the ECOWAS Secretariat to be headed by a new Deputy Executive Secretary for Military Affairs. It will be useful to investigate if the ECOWAS Secretariat, whose primary responsibility is to follow-up the already problematic Protocols on trade liberalisation, can digest within its headquarters structure, a unit on political and security co-operation. The importance attached to conflict prevention and resolution is such that a separate outfit may have to be considered





as an addition to the institutions listed in Article 6 of the Revised Treaty of ECOWAS. The rationale for upgrading the mechanism derives from the fact that strengthened political relations, and co-operation for peace and mutual security are critical components of the required environment for regional co-operation and integration. This pre-modal endeavour requires the support of an effective and efficient mechanism. It will be instructive to examine the experience of other areas in expanding mechanisms and structures which were originally created for economic co-operation, to include political and security arrangements. In Africa, an obvious example is the ongoing effort in Southern Africa.<sup>16</sup> Beyond the continent, the institutional proliferation in Western Europe may also provide example of the pitfalls to avoid. Thus for West Africa one can conceive of a political and security arm which will be part of ECOWAS, but may function independently of the ECOWAS Secretariat particularly if its mandate is expanded to go beyond the original scope of the MAD Protocol, as contained in the recommendations of the Committee of Eminent Persons charged with the revision of the ECOWAS Treaty.<sup>17</sup>

## NOTES

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6. ECOWAS: Report of the Executive Secretary to Council of Ministers ECW/CM/VI/2 Nov. 1979.
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