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NIGERIA'S RISING HEGEMONY IS ESSENTIAL TO PEACE AND
STABILITY IN WEST-AFRICA

By

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Preface

The continent of Africa has continued to lag behind other continents of the World in all facets of human development. While the Gross Domestic Product of most of African countries has shown only marginal increase over the years, their populations have grown rapidly. This has resulted in the scarcity of basic essentials of living such as food, health, education, communication, and shelter. The direct consequence of this deplorable situation is the growth of impoverished, uneducated, unemployed, hunger-stricken and restive populations all over the continent. The impact of this is the spread of conflict between ethnic nationalities leading to instability and deterioration of many states' security. West Africa is perhaps the worst affected because of its poor resource base and lack of sufficient rainfall, in most parts of the sub-region, to support meaningful agriculture needed to feed the ever-growing population.

As a citizen of Nigeria, which is one of the sixteen states of the sub-region, I am deeply concerned about the rising of conflict that has denied our people the peace and stability needed for meaningful growth. My country's effort at mobilizing other countries of the region to come together and provide for their common security and to foster economic integration is sometimes either misunderstood or not appreciated. There are some who fear that Nigeria's dominance in the affairs of the region is capable of undermining the sovereignty of weaker West African States. On the contrary, I strongly believed that Nigeria's hegemony in the sub-region has been exercised cautiously and in a responsible

manner for the interest of the entire West Africa and Africa at large as this research is aimed to prove. The apparent neglect of the region by the international community underscores the need for a wealthier and more powerful state to lead and mobilize others toward the provision for their common security. It is my humble belief that the international community will be more convince to support an African initiative toward resolution of conflict in Africa than they will be willing to intervene directly. West African states require a rallying point from where they can integrate and mobilize their resources for their common good. Nigeria's economic and military might in the sub-region provides that perfect point needed for the sub-regional integration and cooperation.

In the course of conducting this research, I must mention some individuals whose contributions have made it possible for me to accomplish the task. I will first of all like to thank Almighty God for giving me the strength and the wisdom to conduct the research. I will also like to express my gratitude to Col. I I Hassan, Nigeria's Defense Attaché to the United Nations (UN) for providing me with a lot of material for this research. My gratitude also goes to my research adviser Lt. Col. Thomas Gaylord for his guidance, support, and patience that saw me through this work. I really give him the credit for this work. Last but perhaps not the least, I wish to dedicate this work to my darling wife Hajara, and my beloved children Farida, Amira, Samira and Amira for being supportive, understanding and above all loving and caring. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the entire management of the Air University (AU) Library for being so wonderful in giving me a lot of support during this research work. My sincere gratitude also goes to Lt. Col. Phil Chansler for his support and encouragement. My sincere gratitude to all the folks too numerous to mention that have assisted me during the course of this research.

Abstract

The deteriorating security in most West African states as a result of conflicts associated with poverty, hunger, and disease has been a source of concern not only to the leaders within the sub-region but also to the international community. But the United Nation Organization (UNO) and the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U), lack funds to intervene in all conflicts all over the World and Africa inclusive. The new thinking of the developed world, who contribute substantially to the UN activities is to encourage sub-regional organizations particularly in Africa, to take responsibility for sub-regional security while they play a supportive role in the areas of training, logistics and in some cases finance.

It is the opinion of this author that the best way the international community can support this is to engage and encourage the sub-regional hegemony that have the military and economic capacity to project power beyond their boundaries. The poor economic conditions of most West African States make it more essential to engage and support Nigeria, the sub-regional hegemon in mobilizing other States to provide for their common security. The United States find itself today as the only remaining super power, and therefore has moral obligation to assist in the maintenance of World peace. Some regional hegemony like Japan and China are doing the same thing in Asia. Germany and the United Kingdom (U.K.), under the leadership of the U.S, are also engaged in shaping the security of Europe. In the Southern Africa, South Africa has found itself in the position of leadership and has mobilized

other countries within the sub-region under the South African Development Cooperation (SADC).

It is therefore imperative that Nigeria, which is the most populous and richly endowed nation in West Africa, with the largest and better-equipped military, should feel morally obligated to lead in the maintenance of peace in the sub-region. Nigeria also enjoys a lot of respect internationally because of her active contribution towards regional and international peacekeeping and her non-aggressive and generous foreign policy.

The first chapter of this research focuses on the security problem facing the West African sub-region and explains why it is essential to have a hegemon to take the lead in shaping sub-regional security. Chapter two provides the general background history of West Africa with emphasis on conflicts and conflict management mechanism put together by the political leaders. Chapter three provides an overall analysis of why Nigeria's hegemony is viewed as essential to peace and stability of West Africa. The chapter specifically compares the economic, political and military strength of Nigeria in relation to the other states of the sub-region and outlines her efforts toward regional and international peacekeeping. Nigeria, like all nations, does not have all the resources to fix all her problems and those of the sub-region. What Nigeria has however, is a relative economic and military advantage over other West African states and strong will to use those resources for the benefit of the entire sub-region. Nigeria equally enjoys the support and goodwill of the international community that can be tapped for the collective benefit of the peoples of the sub-region. Chapter four finally readdresses the main points contained in the paper.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the 21st century France will be withdrawing from West Africa as she gets increasingly involved in the affairs [of Europe]. France's West African sphere of influence will be filled by Nigeria – a more natural hegemonic power.

—Ali A. Mazrui

Nigeria's economic and military dominance in West Africa is not in question, what is however in question is whether Nigeria's dominance or hegemony will help towards peace and stability in a region fraught with conflicts. The increasing influence of Nigeria and the declining influence of France as captioned above by Mazrui suggest that Nigeria has the potential to shape the affairs of the sub-region and an apparent indication of the weaknesses of some of the West African states¹.

The deplorable security situation of West African states has been a source of serious concern to the leaders of the sub-region and the International community at large². In the last 10 years the region has witnessed two civil wars (Liberia and Sierra Leone) and minor intra conflicts in Cote d'Voire, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau and many military coups such as the one in Niger in 1998 and Gambia in 2000. Nigeria demonstrated her capacity to address her internal problems without foreign intervention during her civil war between 1965-1970, and also the crises that followed the cancellation of the presidential election of June 12, 1993 without resorting to arms conflict. However other countries mentioned

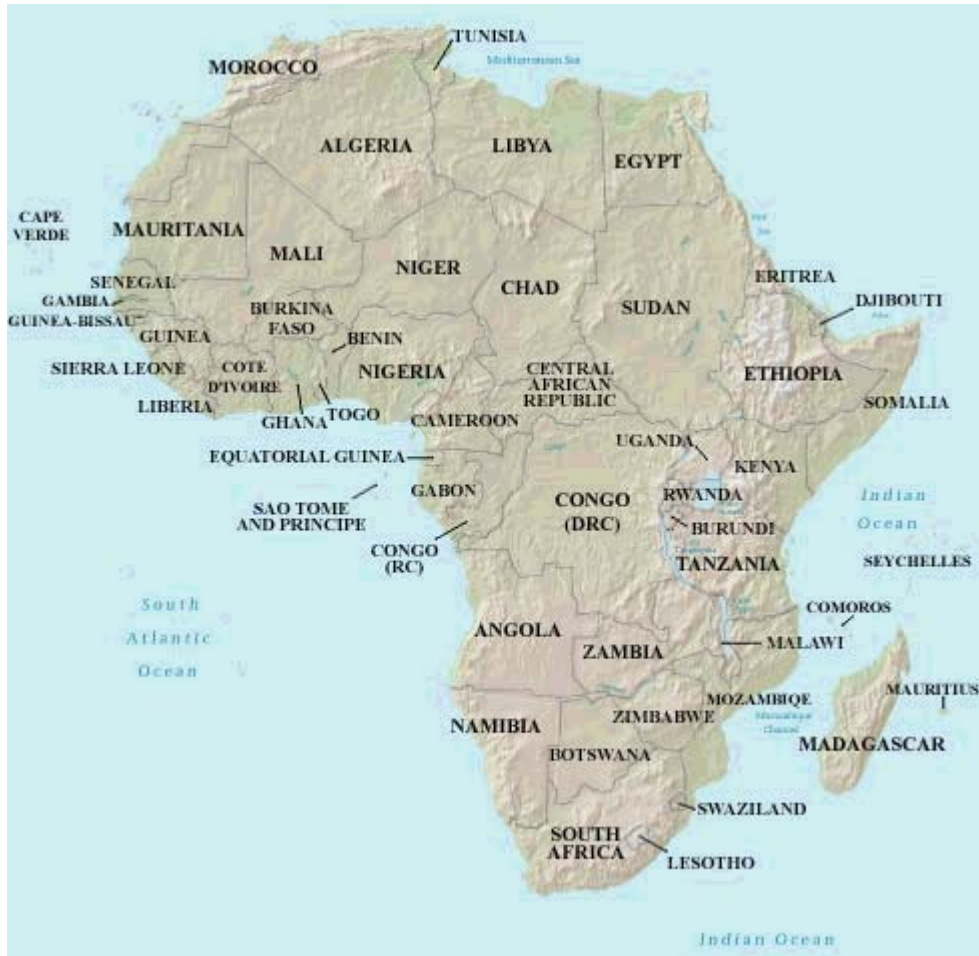
above have shown that they lack such capacity to meet the security need of their states due partly to their poor economic base and insufficient security forces.

The international community has of late shown lack of interest in intervening in conflicts within sub-Saharan Africa in general and West Africa in particular as the Liberian, Sierra Leone and Burundi and Rwandan civil wars proved. For instance the United Nation's peacekeeping force in Africa which stood at about 40,000 in 1993 was just about 1600 as of June 1999². And during the Liberian conflicts, the then United Nation (UN) Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar categorically stated that the UN would not intervene⁴. The United States (U.S) which had about 2000 Marines off the Liberian coast also refused to intervene and separate the warring factions.⁵

The apparent lack of interest by the international community as illustrated above, to intervene directly in resolving African conflicts has brought to the forefront the need for African leaders to wake up to their responsibilities of providing for their common security. West African leaders and their counterparts in other sub-regions of Africa have indeed been willing to assume this responsibility, but the poor financial position of most states has mitigated the realization of their dreams. The international community has shown more interest in supporting African countries to solve their regional problems as supported by United States National Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan⁶. The U.S. African Crises Response Initiative (ACRI) program initiated in 1997 underscore the new thinking in the international community. Africans are well aware of the grave threats to their security and the UN reluctance to become meaningfully involved in conflicts within the African continent⁷.

West African States, like their counterparts in other parts of the continent, are faced with the problem of having to provide for their common security. The major problem is however is lack of efficient leadership that will mobilize and galvanize other states to harness their resources for the collective security of the region. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is presently too weak to provide the needed leadership due to a lack of funding. Many member states have not been paying their contributions or supporting the ECOWAS projects and this has affected the effectiveness of the organization ⁸. There is the need for a capable state that can provide an alternative platform to not only mobilize other member states but also help in galvanizing ECOWAS towards the attainment of its set objective. Nigeria's economic and military power as well as the respect she enjoys within the international community permits that perfect platform. The country has for some time now been trying to provide the kind of leadership the region needs to address its problem ⁹. The international community will in the future not likely to intervene directly or finance the entire peacekeeping mission in any part of Africa ¹⁰. Part of the task of maintenance of peace will henceforth be sub-contracted to the African themselves hence the need to engage countries that have the capacity to intervene like Nigeria in the West African sub-region.¹¹

This paper will therefore focus on the general background of the West African sub-region with a view to understanding the security problem of the region, the factors responsible for the spate of conflicts. Chapter three will give an overall assessment of member states capacity to address their security problem and how Nigeria has been using her resources to help in the maintenance of peace and stability in the sub-region.



West African states

Benin	Gambia	Ghana	Guinea
Burkina-Faso	Guinea-Bissau	Mauritania	Senegal
Café Verde	Liberia	Niger	Sierra Leone
Cote d'Voire	Mali	Nigeria	Togo

Figure 1. Map of Africa including 16 West African States. Source: (internet) CountryWatch

Notes

- ¹Purkitt Helen E.,(Ph.D). US Naval Academy.” Conflict Management in Africa” World Politics. Dushkin/McGraw. Sluice Dock, Guilford, Connecticut: Eithteenth Edition, 97/98. p.7.
- ². Eric G. Berman, et al Peacekeeping in Africa: Capabilities and Culpabilities. Sponsored by United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research Geneva Switzerland. UNIDR/2000/3. P.7
- ³. Ibid p 4
- ⁴ M.A. Vogt The Liberian Crises and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt At Regional Peacekeeping.Published by Gabumo Publishing Co Ltd Yaba Lagos.p.74
- ⁵ Ibid p.74.
- ⁶ A United State National Security Strategy FOR a Global Age: A US government Foreign Policy Document produced annually p.62.
- ⁷ Eric G. Berman, et al p.5
- ⁸ R. Omotayo Olaniyan Foreign Aid, Self Reliance and Economic Development in West Africa p125
- ⁹ Ibid p.123
- ¹⁰ Jeffrey Herbst of Western and African Peacekeepers: Motives and Opportunities. An analytical comparism. P.412
- ¹¹ Ibid p.413

Chapter 2

General Background

West Africa is becoming the symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental and societal stress in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real “strategic” danger. Disease, overpopulation, un-provoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations the increase erosion of nation-states and international borders, the empowerment of private armies, security firms and international drug cartels are now most tellingly demonstrated through a West African prism.

—Robert D. Kaplan

The West African sub-region is a mere geographical expression referring to the area on the West Coast of Africa. The sub-region covers a total landmass of approximately six million, one hundred thousand square kilometers and is made up of sixteen (16) independent states (Fig 1). Of the 700 million people in Africa, 241 million live in West Africa (Fig.2). West Africa is a region consisting of people with diverse cultural and religious beliefs. In Nigeria for instance, there are about 250 ethnic nationalities, two major religions (Islam and Christianity) and a variety of African religions¹. Before the advent of Europeans into Africa in the 18th century, West Africa existed in small homogenous societies with similarity in culture, language and religion.

The colonization of Africa and subsequent partitioning of the African continent without any regards to the peoples culture, religion, language and ethnicity have led to the emergence of states that lack the necessary internal cohesiveness. Furthermore differences among the indigenous groups were frequently exploited and exacerbated by the colonial masters². West African States, like their counterparts in the rest of Africa, have found it difficult to build a “national” identity due mainly to the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of their people³. This has continued to be a source of conflicts among

ethnic nationalities in many West Africa states. Of the 16 countries making up the West Africa, 8 were colonized by France, 5 by Britain, and 3 by Portugal. Liberia on the other hand was established for re-settled slaves that were returned from America after the abolition of slave trade. The rivalry between the French and English speaking West Africa states, mostly influenced from outside primarily by France has arose mutual suspicion and mistrust among some of the States⁴. The growing suspicion between states has been responsible for lack of concerted effort by the political leadership in the region to come together and address their economic and security problems.

West African states were basically underdeveloped and unprepared for statehood at the time they gained their independence. The colonial masters exploited their resources and left them without putting any infrastructure such as education, which is vital for development⁵. The new political leadership was able to downplay many of the region's problems partly because of the strong Pan-African feeling that was growing among the people-- particularly the elite, and the influence of the two super powers (U.S and Soviet Union) during the Cold War. West African States were not only pampered by the two super-powers with arms to support their ideology⁶, they also assisted them by helping the states obtain loans from multinational financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. But the end of the Cold War in 1989 brought about a shift in the foreign policy of Western countries particularly the United States (U.S) towards Africa. This resulted in a reduction of foreign aid which many West African states depended on to run their governments. Additionally the two super powers and their allies distributed large quantities of small arms to many states to help them fight and suppress opposition, all of, which was intended to woo West African States to their side.

These small arms have often times gotten into the hands of rebel groups and other hardened criminals who freely use them against government forces or innocent citizens.

The International Finance institutions also reduced the availability of loans to West African States and many of the earlier loans given to these countries became due. The pressure of loan repayment, coupled with reduction in foreign aid considerably reduced the funds needed by West African governments to provide social services to their people. This often led to serious political and economic pressure on the governments, which could result in armed conflict against government opposition and possible state collapse⁷. The resulting movement of refugees from the conflict areas to safe areas, as witnessed in the Liberian civil war, has led to a worsening security situation of neighboring states because they lack the necessary infrastructure to cope with the growing population.

The porous borders of West African states permit free movement of not only refugees but also criminals⁸. The conflict between Liberia and Cote D'Ivoire and between Liberia and Sierra Leone were a direct consequence of the Liberian civil war. Often times these refugee camps become a haven for all sort of crime and a market for small arms and dangerous drugs. Most West African State militaries do not possess the human and material resources or the discipline and inclination to defend their states boundaries. Some of the militaries, like in the case of Sierra Leone, became unmotivated, corrupt and subversives⁹. This has made it difficult for many West Africa states to manage their internal security.

At the attainment of Independence in the early 60s, West African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and V.S Tubman of Liberia, who were motivated by their strong desire for Pan Africanism helped champion the creation of the Organization of

African Unity (O.A.U) in 1963¹⁰. The aim of the organization as provided by its Articles II and III was to foster mutual cooperation, economic integration of the newly independent African states and non-interference in the affairs of member states. The O.A.U provides a platform for African leaders to interact with one another and also serve as a mechanism of settling disputes between member states. To provide for closer cooperation between African countries, sub-regional organizations started to emerge. In West Africa, the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), comprising of 16 Independent states was formed in 1975. ECOWAS was intended as the principal institutional mechanism and focus of West African diplomacy, like the O.A.U, to foster cooperation and economic integration among member states¹¹. The need for these types of sub-regional organizations became imperative because of the peculiarities of the problems of these sub-regions. The ECOWAS maintained the same provision of non-interference in internal affairs of member states as provided in the O.A.U Charter.

Over the years, West African states have tried hard to manage conflicts through diplomatic channels via the O.A.U's and ECOWAS's conflict management mechanism, and in some instances through bilateral agreement. Despite the efforts of these regional organizations, the security situation of the sub-region continued to worsen. The seeming neglect of the African continent by the developed countries in areas of investment and security management has further aggravated the poor economic condition of the region leading to conflicts and instability. The rapid growth of the population in all countries of the region, without a corresponding increase in food to meet the ever-growing population, has further increased the incidences of violent conflict in the sub-region. This worsening security situation, which Kaplan describes as a "symbol of worldwide demographic and

environmental stress in which criminal anarchy emerges as a real strategic danger”¹² underscore the seriousness of the situation.

Article II and III, of O.A.U, which was upheld by ECOWAS, places a premium on sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States¹³. Hence West African States have been reluctant to intervene in the affairs of Member State in line with this provisions and as O.A.U members as well. On April 22, 1978 ECOWAS members signed a Protocol on Non-Aggression (PNA) by one state toward another¹⁴. The PNA was further enhanced with the signing in Sierra Leon of another protocol known as the Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense (PMAD) in May 1981. This protocol reinforces the earlier PNA and further provided that “any armed threat or aggression against any member state shall be constituted as a threat or aggression against the community”¹⁵.

These two protocols provided the basic framework, which outlined when member states can intervene in the affairs of another member state. However, despite these provisions, it was not until 1990, during the Liberian civil war that ECOWAS implemented these protocols. Following the Liberian conflict, ECOWAS established a military intervention force called Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to monitor the cease fire agreement that was reached between the warring factions. Apart from the Liberian conflict, ECOMOG has also intervened in Sierra Leone between 1995 to date and in Guinea-Bissau in 1998-1999¹⁶. The Nigerian intervention in Chad in 1979, though an O.A.U affair that received international community sanction was actually influenced by these protocol¹⁷.

COUNTRY	POPULATION	LANDMASS (sq. km)	GDP US\$(bn)	COLONIAL MASTER
Benin	6,590,728	110,620	6.0	France
Burkina-Faso	12,272,289	274,200	12.0	France
Cape Verde	405,163	4,033	.670	Portugal
Cote d'Ivoire	16,393,221	318,000	26.2	France
Gambia	1,411,205	10,000	1.5	Britain
Ghana	19,894,014	230,020	37.4	Britain
Guinea	7,613,870	245,857	10.0	France
Guinea-Bissau	1,315,822	28,000	1.1	Portugal
Liberia	3,225,837	96,320	3.35	N/A
Mali	11,,008,518	1,220,000	9.1	France
Mauritania	2,247,312	1,030,400	5.4	France
Niger	10,355,156	1,266,700	10.0	France
Nigeria	126,635,626	910,768	117.0	Britain
Senegal	10,284,929	192,000	16.0	France
Sierra Leon	5,426,618	71,620	2.7	Britain
Togo	5,153,088	54,385	7.3	France
	240,733,396	6,962,923	265.72	N/A

Table 1. Statistical data of West African States. Source: (Internet) CIA Factbook Feb, 2002)

The inability of West African states to provide for their security has also been attributed to lack of resources and declining aid from Western countries. The shift of priority from Africa by the international community has transferred the burden of peacekeeping, which was before now undertaken by the UN, to west African states. This new task burden will not be easy for a majority of these states considering their poor resource base.

Notes

- ¹ “This is Nigeria” A booklet published by the Nigerian Government on the tourism Potentials of the country p2.
- ² Eric G. Berman, et al Peacekeeping in Africa. Capabilities and Culpabilities Sponsored by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research Geneva Switzerland p.13
- ³ Ibid p.15.
- ⁴ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, et al African Foreign Policies. Powers and perspective: A . Foreign policy perspective of African counteris p.23
- ⁵ Eric G. Berman p.13
- ⁶ Gilbert M. Khadiagala p20
- ⁷ Ibid p.1
- ⁸ Purkitt Helen E (Ph.D) US Naval Academy. “Conflict Management in Africa” World Politics. A world political perspective. Published by Dushkin/McGraw. Sluice Dock, Guildford, Connecticut Eighteenth Edition, 97/98 p 7.
- ⁹ Eric G. Berman, et al p.18
- ¹⁰ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, et al p.21
- ¹¹ George Benneh, et al. Economic, Social and Environmental Change in Sub-Saharan Africa published by United Nations University Press p.1
- ¹² Purkitt Helen E. (Ph. D) p.7
- ¹³ Eric G. Berman, et al p 80
- ¹⁴ Ibid p.45
- ¹⁵ Colonel I I Hassan (Nigerian Army) A paper presentation delievered by Nigerian Defense Adviser (Nigerian Permanent Mission to the UN) to the UN Milad and Civpol Advisers Seminar at Fort Hamilton New York on Nov 16, 2000 p.4
- ¹⁶ Eric G. Berman, et al p.128
- ¹⁷ Ibid p.220

Chapter 3

Analysis of West African Security

The U.S Department of Defense has focused attention on conflict prevention, management, and resolution. This is done by playing “the role of a catalyst, technical adviser, and an honest broker,” and by supporting “the nascent effort of Africans to take the lead in resolving conflicts and peacekeeping efforts in the region.”

—Dan Henz

Although West African conflicts are mostly intra-state in nature, the impact of such conflicts is always felt far beyond the countries in which they occurred. The civil war in Liberia for instance, significantly influenced what later happened in Sierra Leone. The inability of West Africa governments to maintain adequate security within their borders have often times led to violent conflict and civil wars with attendant consequences of influx of refugees, smuggling and trade in small arms and dangerous drugs across state boundaries. The ease at which these weapons are moved across state boundaries has aggravated the already poor security situation of most African countries. The change of policy toward conflict management in Africa by the developed countries as illustrated by U.S security strategy for sub-Saharan Africa as captioned above meant that African leaders must shoulder the responsibility of providing for their security¹. But most states particularly in the West African sub-region are incapable of providing adequate security within their states boundaries because of their poor economy, political rivalry, and the poor condition militaries. These countries now face serious economic hardship because of the declining aid from Western countries that no longer see any vital interest in West Africa.

Economic condition of West African States

The economy of West African states are in a deplorable states due mainly to poor resource base, lack of capital, private entrepreneurship and efficient management of the available resources by the political leadership. Seven of the sixteen countries of West Africa namely Burkina-Faso, Cape Verde, Benin, Guinea, Togo, and Niger are listed among the least developed in the World ². During the Cold War, the two super powers United States (U.S) and Soviet Union have supported many West African countries financially and in some cases with military equipment for their security. The end of the Cold War has not only reduced the level of Foreign aid to West African states, it has also reduced the level of inflow of foreign capital and loans from the international finance institutions³. With exception of Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal and Mali, a great number of West African countries' economy is largely dependent on agriculture. Unfortunately, great part of the region is within the Sahara where annual rainfall is usually insufficient to support meaningful agriculture ⁴. Cultivation of cash crops is in most cases are restricted to the coastal areas where the rainfall is usually heavier and lasts longer. But, even in such areas, the absence of mechanization limits any meaningful development of the agricultural sector, as traditional farming implements are still the practice. Lack of necessary capital, fertilizer, and poor land allocation policy has further compounded the problem of agriculture in West Africa ⁵.

Capital is very vital to economic progress. But this is seriously lacking in most West African countries due to lack of private sector participation, poor government finances, and economic position of the farmers themselves. The absence of investing public in this important sector of the economy has resulted in the neglect of farming to the

poor peasant rural dwellers whose traditional implements can barely produce enough to feed the family. Agriculture is the backbone of any nation and is the catalyst necessary for economic development that requires government and private sector participation. Lack of sound agricultural policy in most West African states has resulted in many rural farmers abandoning farming to cities where they added to the growing number of unemployed, increasing social problems. In addition, the continued migration to cities by the rural people has led to food crises, rising tension, insecurity and conflict in many parts of West Africa. The poor state of the agricultural sector has also been an impediment to industrial development of West African states. There is virtually absence of any appreciable industrial progress in most states of the region that can provide employment and lead to economic prosperity. The low Gross Domestic Products (GDP) of West African States as illustrated Fig 3.0 clearly show the poverty level of these West African states.

Many West African states have poor resource base and this has significantly affected their ability to attract foreign capital to develop their economy. With exception of Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leon, Liberia, and Guinea the rest do not have any reasonable natural resources that can attract foreign investment. The scarcity of these resources and the struggle for control by the different ethnic nationalities across the region has been the cause of rising conflict and in some case civil wars. The Liberian and Sierra Leone civil wars described as the struggle for diamond are some examples of conflicts associated with scarce resource ⁶. The difficulty experienced by West Africa states in getting into international markets has also affected their ability to improve their foreign earnings.

West African agricultural produce is no longer in high demand in developed countries either because of low quality or is even cheaper elsewhere.

Nigeria, which has abundant mineral resources, is the economic giant in the West African sub-region. The country is the leading oil producer in the whole of the Sub-Saharan Africa (Fig 3.1). With its daily output of two million barrels a day and a proven reserve of over 20 billion barrels Nigeria is ranked world leading producer of the commodity and her output surpasses the total output of the rest of the sub-Saharan countries combine (Fig.3.1). Nigeria's proven gas reserve put at over 100 trillion cubic meter places her among the world leading producers of the commodity ⁷. Most of West African states are heavily dependent on the Nigeria's oil, which is not only cheaper but also easier to import. The country is also blessed with about thirty-three varieties of solid minerals in about 450 locations (i.e. gold, bitumen, zinc, emerald, zircon, coal, columbite, sapphire, and iron-ore) that when fully exploited will make the country the leading economy in the entire continent ⁸. Nigeria presently supplies electricity to Benin and Niger all at no cost to them.

Nigeria has the best-established private sector in West Africa, which is essential for economic growth. With half of the population of the region living in Nigeria, an integrated West African market will be essential to the economic advancement of the region. The privatization of many sectors of the Nigeria's economy such as communication, energy, banking and a host of others to local and foreign investors promise to further revitalize and transform the country's economy. Nigeria's G.D.P which stood at about 117 billion dollars (Fig 2) is only second to that of South Africa, the Sub-Saharan economic leader, but equal to three quarters (3/4) Of the West African

countries combine (Fig.2). This huge economic advantage of Nigeria over other countries in the sub-region makes her a major actor in any matter concerning the sub-region. Nigeria's relative economic strength assures the country to have a better-equipped, larger, and well trained military that can project force far beyond its boundaries as her intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leon demonstrated. The strength of Nigeria's economy also affords her to attract foreign capital, provide market, and the capacity to influence major events within the sub-region. Like Grant Hammond stresses in his article that the world has changed from that in which military predominates, to the one now dominated by economy and technology ⁹. What this means is that nations with strong economic power will have a strong influence in the affairs of their region as witness in Asia and Europe. Japan's influence in Asia and Germany's in Europe demonstrates the new World order, and illustrate the relevance of economy to world politics. With the international community's apparent lack of interest in conflict management in Africa, Nigeria's economic strength makes her the central figure that can play a crucial role in assisting to shape the security environment of the region

Nigeria's leading role in the formation of ECOWAS in 1975 and the continued support it has been given to the organization is a clear manifestation of her responsible behavior in the region. In 1976 for instance, Nigeria and the African Development Bank (ADB) reached an agreement and created a fund for concessionaire loans to poor African states. The Fund known as Nigeria Trust Fund (NTF) was funded by Nigeria, with an initial capital of US\$480 million, and an additional \$88million in 1981¹⁰. This magnanimity illustrates Nigeria's commitment to the well being and stability of West Africa and Africa at large, which cannot be undertaken by any state in the region.

Nigeria's major weaknesses are her over-reliance on one major source of income despite the abundance of other resources. Oil has been the country's major income earner since 1970 and accounted for about 90% of her foreign earnings ¹¹. This can prove disastrous for the country in the event of drop in the price of oil. The neglect of the agricultural sector was particularly on wise for the Nigerian government considering the teeming population that can be gainfully employed by the sector.

Africa's forecasts of oil Production. (000 barrels/day)

COUNTRY	1999	2000	2001
Nigeria	1,950	2,040	2,144
Angola	750	750	760
Gabon	308	294	246
Congo	268	283	274
Equatorial Guinea	102	120	185
Total	3,378	3,487	4,619

Table 2. Source : Economist Intelligence Unit (Published by News Africa October 22,2001. Page 14)

Political Landscape of West Africa

The artificial partitioning of West African states has given rise to the emergence of present states structure that are lacking in national cohesion because of ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of the people ¹¹. This colonial legacy bequeathed to the people of West Africa has been the source of rising intra-conflicts in most of the states in the sub-region as inter-ethnic and religious rivalry has been intense among the different ethnic groups. The situation was even made worst by the declining aid from the developed countries, which has been a major source of national budget to many West African states. The situation brought about considerable decline in public spending leading to collapse of social infrastructure, rising social unrest, conflict, and instability.

Political stability is closely connected to economic well being and the poor economic condition of most West African States has often times been the cause of political tension in most of these states. Governance as define by Zartman is “Conflicts management”¹² which occur among various groups within due to constrained resources, and satisfying groups is the primary function of any government. The failure by many West African leaders to adequately attend to the needs of groups within their states have helped to fuel conflicts and instability. Ethnic lineage has often times been considered in gaining access to national resources ¹³. Consequently, government became very attractive and transition from one government to another in many cases became violent. Violence has indeed been the common feature of the West African politics. Even where elections are conducted, the use of money, violence or threat of it and mass rigging of electoral processes using money or other instruments of state power have characterized such election ¹⁴. The overall consequence of this is the rise of tension and conflicts not only

among the ethnic nationalities wrestling for the control of state power but also within the same ethnic groupings with different political lineage.

The porous nature of West African states boundaries as earlier described has made it possible for the hiring of political thugs by politicians even across their state boundaries. The dirty nature of the of West African politics has resulted in the emergence of criminals and corrupt leaders that not only lack credibility to govern but also the interest for their people. Corruption and lack of stability in governments of West African states have been the vane of any appreciable development in all sectors of the region's economy.¹⁵ The collapse of infrastructure such as roads, electricity, water, and communication that are vital to economic development are attributable to poor leadership, and corruption because the little resources which should have been utilized to develop maintain these facilities have been squandered in manipulating the political process. The agricultural sector which employs about 55% of the labor force is largely neglected by many government resulting in high incidence of rural-urban migration with attendant increase of social problems resulting to unemployment, crimes conflicts and instability¹⁶.

The free movement of people and goods as guaranteed by the ECOWAS¹⁷ intended to stimulate economic interactions and integration among West African states only help to aggravate the deteriorating security of the sub-region. Politicians are not only able to high thugs from the neighboring countries but criminals find it easy to move across the sub-region committing crimes with impunity. The poor working condition of these security operatives in terms of salaries and equipment, and lack of adequate mechanism to guide the implementation of the charter of free movement further compound the problem at hand. As Kaplan stated "there is no other place on the planet where political maps are

so deceptive-where, in fact, they tell such lies as in West Africa”¹⁸. The reason for his assertion was because of the absence of control by respective states of what comes or goes out of the boundary of their countries, and this contributed to the problem associated with the implementation of the free movement charter. The poor political landscape of the West African sub-region has significantly deprive it of capital inflow from the developed nations and had kept the sub-region under-developed.

Nigeria enjoys the goodwill of the international community because of her responsible behavior within the international system. Despite being the most populous, the most economically advanced and the strongest military power, Nigeria has never threaten the sovereignty of her neighbors. Since attaining independence in 1960, Nigeria’s foreign policy was centered on four principles. These four principles were, sovereign equality of African states, respect for the sovereignty and independence of African states, non-interference in the internal affairs of African states and commitment to functional cooperation as a means of promoting African unity¹⁹. Nigeria has continued to relate with sister African countries base on the above principles. The mutual suspicion of Nigeria’s dominance expressed is mostly based on external influence and lacks any credibility²⁰. France influence in the region has largely been seen as a major cause of this rivalry between her former colonies in West Africa and other West African states especially Nigeria.

Nigeria’s major problem over the years has been the incessant military incursion into her body politics. Of the 41 years of her nationhood, Nigeria has had only 13 year of civil rule while the rest was under the military rule²¹. The 13 years of civilian administration are between 1960 to 1965, 1979 to 1983, and 1999 to date. The remaining

periods has been characterized by military incursion into her body politics negatively affected her in the eyes of the international community. However, with the country returning to civil rule in 1999, Nigeria is looked upon to provide a purposeful leadership to the entire continent ²².

Military Capabilities of West African States

The poor economic and political states of West African countries have impacted in the effectiveness and efficiency of their militaries. The poor economic state has resulted in the poor state of the military, as equipment is basically few, old and not properly maintained. Henz believed that most of the Militaries in Sub Saharan Africa are particularly weak to “maintain complex equipment, strategic mobility, advanced command, control, and intelligence, airpower, or naval power” ²³. He further opined that with exception South Africa, Nigeria and perhaps Ghana, few other states in the Sub-Saharan Africa are capable of long-range power projection, mobilization or sustained, intense military operations.

The police of most of the West African countries are poorly trained and lack the necessary equipment to provide the necessary security of their respective states. Not only are the troops lacking in training and equipment, but also their salaries are too little to sustain a decent living, and are usually unpaid for months. This poor state of the military funding of West African states as illustrated by Figure 3.1 clearly illustrate their inadequacy, poor training and equipping. Budgets are often inadequate to support the existing forces and downsizing is fraught with potential for turmoil or even coups.

Nigeria’s abundant human and material resources has affords her the capacity to raise, train and equip a larger, better trained and efficient military that can meet her

internal security need and have surplus to assist in maintaining the security of the region. With a military strength of 94,000, Nigeria's military is about three quarters (3/4) of the entire military of the West African countries combine, while her military expenditure surpasses that of the rest of the states combine (Fig.3.1). In 1999 for instance, Nigeria's military expenditure was put at above two billion dollars while those of the remaining 15 countries in the sub-region was only a paltry 688,000 million dollars (Fig 3). Nigeria has been contributing toward the maintenance of regional and global peace since her independence in 1960.

The history of Nigeria's participation into the UN peacekeeping operations dates back to 1960 in Congo just few days after her independence. Nigeria has since then been involved in many UN peacekeeping operations in many parts of the world some of which are Bosnia Herzegovina, Iraq, Kuwait, Western Sahara, Rwanda, Somalia, Mozambique, Cambodia, Congo, Lebanon, India and Pakistan. Nigerian troops are still serving in many UN missions in places like Kuwait, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Sierra Leon, Bosnia Herzegovina and Western Sahara. As at December 2000, Nigeria had 3404 troops serving under the UN making her the second largest contributor to UN peacekeeping missions in the world after Bangladesh, which has 6040²⁴. Over 100,000 Nigerian troops have served in UN peacekeeping missions around the world since her first participation in 1960. This long history of participation in peacekeeping operations has given the Nigeria's military sufficient exposure and experience that is valuable not only to the country but also to the entire sub-region.

Country	Strength&Exp199		Strength&Exp1998		Strength&Exp1999	
	S (000)	E(\$m)	S (000)	E(\$m)	S (000)	E (\$m)
Benin	4,800	\$27.0	4,800	\$32.6	4,800	\$33.1
Burkina-Faso	10,000	\$67.0	10,000	\$80.1	5,800	\$73.1
Cape Verde	1,100	\$4.0	1,100	\$4.0	N/A	\$6.8
Cote d'Ivoire	13,900	\$101.0	13,900	\$119.6	8,400	\$126.9
Gambia	800	\$15.0	800	\$14.8	800	\$15.6
Ghana	7000	\$134.0	7000	\$135.4	7,000	\$117.9
Guinea	9,700	\$51.0	9,700	\$58.3	9,700	\$58.5
Guinea Bissau	9,300	\$8.0	9,300	\$4.9	7,300	\$5.8
Liberia	14,000	\$45.0	5,300	\$45.5	5,300	\$24.4
Mali	7,400	\$43.0	7,400	\$35.6	7,400	\$33.1
Mauritania	15,700	\$24.0	15,700	\$25.7	15,700	\$23.4
Niger	5,300	\$22.0	5,300	\$25.7	5,300	\$27.3
Nigeria	77,000	\$1965.	94,000	\$2118.	94,000	\$2180.
Senegal	11,000	\$71.0	11,000	\$82.0	11,000	\$78.9
Sierra Leone	5,000	\$51.0	3,000	\$25.7	3,000	\$10.7
Togo	7,000	\$29.6	7,000	\$34.6	7,000	\$33.1
Total						

Table 3. Military Strength(S)and Expenditure (E) of West Africa States

Source CIA Factbook (Internet)

Nigeria's military might in the West African sub-region is perhaps more aptly demonstrated through her intervention in the Liberian and Sierra Leon civil wars in 1990 and 1995 respectively. The Liberian conflict was something the West African leaders could not just fold their arms and watch because of the carnage that was taking place. There was complete collapse of law and order as a great percentage of the country was taken over by the rebels of National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) headed by Charles Taylor. The situation deteriorated further following the emergence of another faction from the NPFL called Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) led by Yeduo Johnson as a result of serious disagreement between the two warlords.

Series of calls by eminent personalities, governments and none governmental organizations for the international community to intervene was neglected. The European Ambassadors for instance warned that Liberia was on the verge of "national suicide"²⁵ but all these did not impress the UN. The then UN Secretary General categorically stated that the UN will not intervene. The U.S. who had about 2000 marines off the coast of Liberia also refused to intervene and the world looked helpless as more innocent Liberians continued to die not only from the combatants' crossfire, but also from starvation, hunger and diseases. Vogt stated in his book that--"the government of Liberia had collapsed and that a large number of innocent people including women, children and foreign nationals were in severe danger of extinction"²⁶." Although there was a general consensus by all the sixteen heads of governments of the sub-region, only seven of the sixteen members namely, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leon contributed forces due to lack of funds. Of the 15000 troops at the height of the operation in Liberia, Nigeria contributed about 12000 and also expended about ten (10) billion U.S Dollars in

maintaining her troops in Liberia and Sierra Leone²⁷. The then UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali was so overwhelmed that while commending her efforts stated that--

“The case of Nigeria is important because in the various (peacekeeping) missions the expenses are paid by the United Nations but in the case of Liberia, the expenses were paid by Nigeria which allied the ECOMOG effort that successfully restored democracy in Liberia and Sierra Leon.”²⁸

Boutros Boutros Ghali

The ECOWAS initiative which was spearheaded and substantially financed by Nigeria was not only endorsed by the international community but received a lot of financial and logistics support from some of the wealthy nations particularly the U.S and the United Kingdom (UK). The U.S for instance donated the sum of five hundred thousand dollars and about three million, five hundred thousand dollars (\$3.5 million) in military aid and further made additional grant of 3.3 million dollars to help the Peacekeepers in Liberia²⁹. The United Kingdom (U.K) on her part made a total donation of 1.439 million pounds sterling to for the victims and of the Liberian conflict³⁰. More supports were also received from Germany and some other developed nations and UN agencies such as the Red Cross, commission for Refugee. The operation as a whole was endorsed by the international community who saw it as a reawakening of the Africans toward the security of their region. Nigeria’s first intervention in regional conflict was in Chad in 1986 under auspices of the O.A.U. The operation, which was the first and the last to be organized by the O.A.U, was poorly handled and Nigeria, which contributed the largest troops had also to write off about 80 million dollars which was owed to her by the organization³¹.

Notes

- ¹ Henz Dan, et al “ African Crises Response Initiative.A US Program on the Transformation of African Security p.22
- ² R. Omotayo Olaniyan An African Foreign policy Reader p.2
- ³ Eric G. Berman, et al Peacekeeping in Africa. An analytical Assessment p.15
- ⁴George Benneh, et al Economic, Social and Environmental changes in Sub-Saharan Africa p.221
- ⁵ Ibid p.222
- ⁶ Russ Feingold (Internet) www.EBSCOhost.com: A Congressional Testimony on the Liberian conflict
- ⁷ Uchenna Nwankwo A reader on Nigeria’s Economic Agenda p.1
- ⁸ This is Nigeria A Nigerian government publication p.6
- ⁹ Grant T Hammond : A paper on the need for change in US national Security System p.2
- ¹⁰ Raph Uwechue “Africa Today” p.48
- ¹¹ Uchenna Nwankwo p.21
- ¹² Eric G. Berman, et al p.13
- ¹³ R. Omotayo Olaniyan p.130
- ¹⁴ Zartman William I et al Government as conflict Management p.1
- ¹⁵ Garvin Williams Reforming Africa p.3
- ¹⁶ Ibid p.6
- ¹⁷ George Benneh p.8
- ¹⁸ R. Omotayo Olaniyan p.121
- ¹⁹ Puekitt Helen E (Ph D) “Word Politics 97/98 p.11
- ²⁰Olajide Aluko Foreign policy thrust of African countries p.163
- ²¹ R. Omotayo Olaniyan p.122
- ²²Zartman William I, et al p.150
- ²³ Ibid p.151
- ²⁴ Dan Henz p.9
- ²⁵ Hassan Nigeria in Regional and UN peacekeeping operation (presentation) p.5
- ²⁶ M. A. Vogt “The Liberia Crises and ECOMOG” p.73
- ²⁷ Ibid p.73
- ²⁸ Hassan “A paper presentation to class 2001 of U.S Army War College p.1
- ²⁹ “This is Nigeria” A federal Government of Nigeria Publication p.10P
- ³⁰ M.A. Vogt “The Liberian Crises and ECOMOG p.354
- ³¹ Ibid p.348
- ³² Ibid p.333

Chapter 4

Conclusions

With Nigeria back to democracy, West Africa and indeed Africa as a whole have received a big boost in their efforts achieve regional integration, extinguish local conflicts and promote Economic development.

— President Abdou Diouf of Senegal
Democracy is Back

The rising wave of conflict in the West African sub-region has been of serious concern to the leaders and people of the region. Conflicts in West African states have continued unabated resulting into violent crimes, displacement of people, food scarcity, proliferation of small arms, and dangerous drugs causing insecurity and instability in the region. Poor economic condition of most West African states owing to poor resource base, natural calamities like drought, decline in foreign assistance from the developed world and the burden of foreign debt servicing have all combined to keep these states poor and underdeveloped thereby increasing the incidences of conflict and instability. Respective state governments have failed to provide the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, and adequate security to their people because of declining revenue and leading to rising wave of crimes, conflict and instability. Conflict has become the trademark of West Africa as evident from Robert D Kaplan article “The Coming Anarchy” as quoted in chapter two.

The current neglect of the continent by the international community particularly in the areas of conflict management, and aid, have informed a new thinking by the leaders of

the region to the need for them to take steps toward the maintenance of their security. The international community no longer see Africa as of vital interest and has become unwilling to invest its resources to the region. The international community is now more interested in assisting and supporting African initiative toward conflict management in the region than direct intervention. The poor economic condition of West African states has been a major contributor to the growing conflict in the region and the inability by many of the states to provide adequate security within their boarders. Achieving any meaningful peace and stability in West Africa will require the active participation of those countries that have the resources and willingness to commit their resources for the well being of other poor states. Nigeria is not only the most populous state in West Africa, but also the economic, and military giant of the region. The country has been committing her resources for the maintenance of peace and stability of the region as illustrated in the establishment of a trust fund with ADB for granting loans to poor African states. Nigeria has also been deeply engaged in ensuring peace within West African region as demonstrated by her engagement through ECOMOG and the enormous resources that was committed towards the operation.

The support and commendation of Nigeria's role in ECOMOG during the Liberian and Sierra Leone conflicts by the international community clearly support the view of this paper of the country's relevance to the peace and security of the sub-region. The operation in Liberia and Sierra Leone would never have been possible without Nigeria's determined leadership and her strong military and financial muscles that were all committed to the operation.

Despite these achievements by Nigeria, it will be out of place to think the country alone, has all the resources to fix West African problems. What is needed now is cooperation between member states in order to find solution to the economic, and security problems facing the region. Efforts in the past toward economic and security integration of the region has not yielded required result due to mutual suspicion among member states largely influenced from out side. With these foreign influences declining, West African states must now look inward. Nigeria's relative economic power, her military might and international recognition needs now to be tapped for the overall interest of the sub-region.

Nigeria's contribution to the security and economy of many West African states is a demonstration of her ability and commitment to ensuring a stable and economically prosperous West Africa. The statement credited to Senegalese President as captioned above clearly underscore the confidence West African leaders have on Nigeria 's potential to lead in shaping the security of West Africa and that of Africa at large.

Glossary

UN	United Nations
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Cease fire Monitoring Group
ACRI	African Crises Response Initiative
ADB	African Development Bank
NSS	National Security Strategy
SADC	Southern Africa Development Cooperation

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