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*Improving the Legitimacy of African Solutions*

BY

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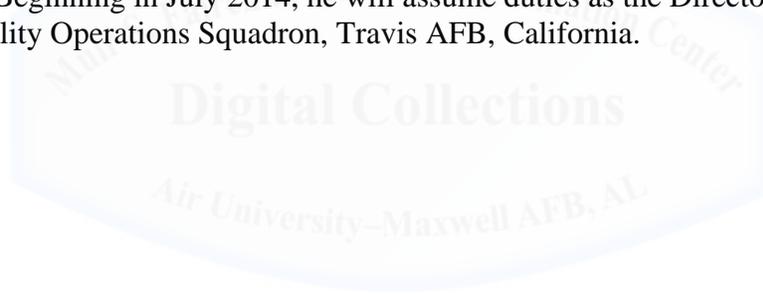
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## ABSTRACT

As the United States looks increasingly to Africa for solutions to ‘African problems,’ it is important to appreciate the merits of an ‘African solution:’ what it looks like, how it functions, and if it is effective. This paper analyzes how African leaders use subregional institutions to establish and maintain legitimate military interventions. Looking specifically at West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has a long and varied history responding regionally to common security challenges. The 1990 intervention in Liberia and the 2013 operation in Mali represented two similar situations with different responses and results. In both cases, ECOWAS member states leveraged the institution’s legitimacy to help resolve internal political conflicts by setting the conditions for a stable and secure political solution, but interests and structural limitations reduced their effectiveness. Institutions are subject to the interests of their strong members but are not their tools; norms, shared interests, and mutual benefit tie regional states together. Subregional interventions reflect the self-interest of the members and their motivation to invest in regional security. This is not unique to Africa, but the variety and proximity of weak and strong states, especially in West Africa, lends itself to post-Westphalian concepts of regional cooperation.

Legitimacy is the fulcrum upon which institutions rest, determining the utility and cost of its function. It is not easily gained, nor kept, but is a vital ingredient for institutions seeking to improve the conditions for a political resolution to a conflict of which they are not a part. Without it, an institution has no standing or credibility, loses its high ground and endangers its intervening military forces. Securing the legitimacy, and with it the viability, of African regional security responses is a chief concern for policymakers. Legitimacy as a variable of operations is dependent and interrelated to the four independent variables explored in this paper: how the institution manages member sovereignty, the cohesion and viability of the regional force, its association with outside forces, and the efficacy of its force. The analysis explores four relationships at work within ECOWAS: Self versus common interests, ad hoc versus established forces, internal versus external support, and independent versus integrated solutions. The identification of patterns in the application of regional forces in West Africa and beyond can directly assist U.S. policymakers’ efforts to improve the legitimacy and efficacy of ‘African solutions.’

Supporting subregional operations demands a delicate balance. Leveraging local interests may produce stability but with different priorities than the international community. Independent African regional solutions produce the best chance for a long-term political solution, but at increased risk of failure. Integrated international responses reduce the effectiveness of the intervention, creating satisficing behavior from a subregion who is now motivated to pass responsibility to the UN. Focusing on improving the limited logistical capacity of the subregional institutions and the African Union can help reduce foreign dependency and the threat of economic alternatives such as increased corruption and the use of surrogates. The United States will continue to lead the fight against terrorism and assist African partners as they respond to the threat, but it must allow Africans the space necessary to ensure they find their path toward long-term peace.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAFC	Allied Armed Force of the Community (ECOWAS)
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission in Mali
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CNDRE	<i>Comité national pour le redressement de la démocratie et la restauration de l'Etat</i> (Sonogo's party, Mali)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
EAC	East African Community
EASF	Eastern Africa Standby Force
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
ESF	ECOWAS Standby Force
EU	European Union
EUTM	European Training Mission to Mali
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IGNU	Interim Government of National Unity (Prince Johnson)
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (Taylor)
LPC	Liberia Peace Council
MAD	Mutual Assistance of Defense (ECOWAS 1981 Protocol)
MDSF	Malian Defense and Security Forces (Malian Army)
MICEMA	ECOWAS Mission in Mali

MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MISCA	African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic
MNLA	Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MUJAO	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (also, MOJWA: Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa)
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
PAE	Pacific Architect Engineers (Logistics Contractor)
PPD	Presidential Policy Decision
PRC	People's Redemption Council (Liberia, Doe)
PSC	Peace and Security Council (African Union)
OAU	Organization of African Unity
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RSFs	Regional Standby Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SMC	Standing Mediation Council (ECOWAS)
T/PCCs	Troop/Police Contributing Countries
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy
UN	United Nations
UNOMIL	United Nations Observation Mission in Liberia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **PROBLEM FRAMING AND SETTING**

Africa presents a difficult and complex set of problems for foreign policy professionals around the world, the chief of which being how to manage regional security concerns that threaten to destabilize weak governments, young institutions, and economic growth. The headlines tell of almost continuous strife across Sub-Saharan Africa from Mali to Somalia, with few palatable options to solve very urgent political and humanitarian crises. It is easy to link incorrectly past periods of violence with current events, leading to limited and deterministic explanations of ethnic and religious causation in an effort to make urgent action less compelling. The United Nations (UN), the United States (U.S.), and the Europeans have a history working to establish peace in difficult political, geographical, and cultural climates in Africa, with mixed results. Current interest in “African solutions to African problems” signal a shift toward indigenous responses to crises, and the growth in capabilities and political willingness of the African Union (AU) and the subregional economic communities to deliver is a positive development. History reveals both the challenges and opportunities resident within African institutions to solve common problems with assistance from external actors. African leaders, with the help of the United States and other partners, work to develop these institutions to deliver regional stability. A better understanding of the ability of African institutions to respond to instability and create the conditions necessary for political resolutions will help to focus U.S. support as those institutions increase the frequency of their responses to crises on the continent.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is the oldest and most developed of the subregional institutions, providing examples to study the effectiveness of institutional security solutions. West Africa has no shortage of problems, and the modification of ECOWAS from a collective agreement focused initially on economic issues to one organized to deliver peace and security reflects the important correlation between stability and economic development. Recognizing that relying on prior colonial powers, geopolitical superpowers, or the United Nations to address crises left them exposed if others chose not to intervene, ECOWAS members agreed first to non-aggression and later to mutual assistance focused on removing exterior influences

and furthering mechanisms for peace. Peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations in Liberia in the 1990s and in Mali in 2013 represent “book ends” of the evolution of the West African commitment to peace and security agreements and their willingness to respond to shifting threat trends. This paper seeks to find discernable patterns within ECOWAS regional security initiatives undertaken in West Africa over the last three decades to illuminate how Africans address security concerns. Specific intent is to identify their strengths, barriers to their success, and identify potential areas to improve U.S. support. The goal of the paper is to answer the question, “what barriers prevent ECOWAS from fielding a regional security response force to address security problems independent of outside forces like the UN and interested western nations?” If Africans are to offer solutions to African problems, can they do it alone? How do they gain and maintain legitimacy given competing interests and the appeal of outside support?

This initial chapter will frame the importance of African regional security responses to U.S. policymakers as noted in current policy, followed by an introduction to African regional institutions, a summary of ECOWAS’s evolution as a security institution, and concerns related to the efficacy of those institutions. The chapter concludes with a broader overview of the larger paper and the methodology, goals, and limitations therein.

### **US Policy toward African Regionalism**

The U.S. recognizes Africa as an increasingly important part of the global economy and a significant U.S. national interest. In a globalized world, African resources fuel economic expansion in Asia while its population growth outpaces the rest of the world to become an emerging labor and consumer market.<sup>1</sup> President Obama acknowledged the dynamism evident on the continent in his 2009 remarks to the Ghanaian Parliament, stating, “Africa is not the crude caricature of a continent at war.”<sup>2</sup> He also made clear that the U.S. stood ready to help address the continent’s most serious

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Dicken, *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy*, 6th ed (New York: Guilford Press, 2011), 260, 506, 513. See also Moyer, Cilliers, and Huges report, “African Futures 2050,” Institute for Security Studies. Monograph 175. January 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Obama, Barack. Remarks by the President to the Ghanaian Parliament (Accra, Ghana: Accra International Conference Center, July 2009) [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-Ghanaian-Parliament/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-Ghanaian-Parliament/) (accessed 2 Feb 2014)

challenges and to help achieve Africa's full economic potential.<sup>3</sup> Today, two-thirds of African states are secure and developing, with seven of the world's ten fastest growing economies, and more than half of Sub-Saharan countries have embraced multi-party, democratic rule.<sup>4</sup> Large scale violent conflict as seen in the late twentieth century abated due to a host of internal and external forces, but illicit networks, armed groups, and transnational extremists operating outside the reach of insufficient security institutions bring a new style of threat with implications well beyond a state's borders.<sup>5</sup> These threats are byproducts of uneven economic and population growth, and require competent governments, legitimate institutions, and smart assistance to build enduring mechanisms able to perform timely intervention. Development in Africa is vital to U.S. national security and is a strategic, economic, and moral imperative of the U.S.<sup>6</sup>

U.S. policy guidance reflects the limitations of a superpower stretched at the time between two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As those wars receded, weak domestic appetites for foreign intervention and fiscal austerity brought on by the 2008 global financial crises restricted the Obama Administration's options for U.S. involvement in Africa. Counterterrorism operations across the Sahel and rapid coalition airpower responses in Libya reflect a willingness to engage U.S. personnel and assets but require that those engagements be limited in scale and duration. Haunted by past indifference and a lack of political will to engage in Afghanistan in 1989 and Rwanda in 1993, U.S. policy intends to reduce the sanctuary provided to terror groups operating in ungoverned spaces and reduce the potential for atrocity and human rights abuses. These security issues have a military component, but it is not sufficient. Security today reflects insecurities driven by non-military challenges of meeting basic needs and aspirations of millions of people in

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<sup>3</sup> Ambassador Carson paraphrasing the President's 2009 speech. Johnnie Carson, "The Obama Administration's Africa Policy: The First Four Years, 2009-2013," *American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy* 35, no. 6 (2013): 317.

<sup>4</sup> Economic data per the World Bank. Finance and economics: The Lion Kings? A more hopeful continent. *The Economist* 398, (2011, Jan 08): 72-73. <http://www.economist.com/node/17853324>. Carson speaks to the growth of democratic governance and economic development. Carson (2013): 318, 319.

<sup>5</sup> Herman J. Cohen makes the case that the nature of conflict in Africa has changed. *Out of Conflict: From War to Peace in Africa* (Uppsala: Nordiska afrikainstitutet, 1997), 164.

<sup>6</sup> Fact Sheet: U.S. Global Development Policy (Washington, DC: The White House, Sept 2010)

Africa.<sup>7</sup> Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates' 2012 statement concerning terrorism applies even more so today in Africa: "we can't kill or capture our way to victory."

To achieve U.S. security goals, the 2012 Presidential Policy Directive toward Sub-Saharan Africa (PPD-16) called for strengthening democratic institutions, spurring economic growth, advancing peace and security, and promoting opportunity and development in the region. This policy directs national strategy toward the prevention of conflict and the mitigation of atrocities.<sup>8</sup> The four objectives are mutually supportive and reinforcing, and set government-wide priorities to align U.S. efforts and resources. Security provides the opportunity for development, and democratic governance allows disparate groups representation and inclusion in the benefits of economic growth. Decades of one party rule and "winner take all" politics excluded populations, and they resorted to violence as a means of political expression.<sup>9</sup> Inclusion reduces the effectiveness of parties willing to politicize ethnic grievances fueled by generations of mismanagement, disenfranchisement, persecution and atrocities.<sup>10</sup> Breaking the cycle of violence is a critical foundation on which to build sound economic and governing institutions.<sup>11</sup>

As outlined in the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, the 2006 and 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS), and made clear by PPD-16, it is critical to U.S. policy that security partnerships with African countries and regional organizations be expanded to help them meet their basic security needs.<sup>12</sup> President Bush declared in 2002 that "Africa's capable reforming states and subregional organizations must be strengthened as the primary means to address transnational threats on a sustained basis."<sup>13</sup> President Obama stated in his 2009 speech to the Ghanaian Parliament, "America has a responsibility to advance this vision, not with words, but with support that strengthens

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<sup>7</sup> NANA K. POKU, NEIL RENWICK, and JOAO GOMES PORTO, "Human Security and Development in Africa.," *International Affairs* 83, no. 6 (November 2007): 1155.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa (Washington, DC: The White House, June 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Cohen, Africa and the Superpower - An Agenda for Peace *Out of Conflict*, 164-5.

<sup>10</sup> Aapengnuo, Clement Mweyang. Misinterpreting Ethnic Conflicts in Africa. Africa Center for Strategic Studies: Africa Security Brief No 4, April 2010. 2

<sup>11</sup> Based on statements by President Obama. Obama, Barack. Remarks by the President to the Ghanaian Parliament (Accra, Ghana: Accra International Conference Center, July 2009)

<sup>12</sup> Obama Ghana speech, 5. U.S. Department of Defense, Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense (Washington, DC: DOD, January 2012), 3.

<sup>13</sup> As quoted in Reno. William Reno, "The Regionalization of African Security.," *Current History* 111, no. 745 (May 2012): 179.

African capacity.”<sup>14</sup> President Obama’s 2010 NSS called for the effective partnerships in Africa, and the 2010 and 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review identified that the U.S. ability to address transnational challenges in the region “will hinge on partnering with African states ... to conduct capacity building and peacekeeping operations, prevent extremism, and address humanitarian crises.”<sup>15</sup> Developed over the last four decades, U.S. African policy emphasizes that it is in the economic and security interests of the United States to curtail instability in Africa by building indigenous security capacity and the functionality and interoperability of multinational coalitions.<sup>16</sup>

African states demonstrate an increasing willingness and capacity to take the lead on security issues, but their challenge is to work together on a multilateral basis and to develop the skills and capacity necessary to prevent conflict, mediate between warring parties, and intervene to restore peace on a just and lasting basis.<sup>17</sup> Created in 2007, the African Union (AU) works to establish norms, standards, and mechanisms to organize, collaborate, and collectively address large-scale concerns on the continent.<sup>18</sup> It seeks the emergence of “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.”<sup>19</sup> Evolving beyond the limitations of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), member states revised post-colonial guiding principles of “non-interference” to ones based on “non-indifference” to create the necessary structures for collective peace and security initiatives.<sup>20</sup> This shift reflects a change in the realization that security challenges aren’t a matter of sovereignty but a reflection of the socio-economic realities on the continent.<sup>21</sup> The AU’s member states,

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<sup>14</sup> Obama, Barack. Remarks by the President to the Ghanaian Parliament (Accra, Ghana: Accra International Conference Center, July 2009)

<sup>15</sup> Obama Ghana speech, citing 2010 NSS and 2010 QDR

<sup>16</sup> For a summarized history of the development of U.S. policy in Africa, see Ploch CRS report on AFRICOM. Lauren Ploch, *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa* (Congressional Research Service, July 22, 2011), For a summarized history of the development of U.S. policy in Africa, see Ploch CRS report on AFRICOM. , <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf>. (accessed 8 March 2014)

<sup>17</sup> Stephen F. Burgess, “African Security in the Twenty-First Century: The Challenges of Indiginization and Multilateralism,” *African Studies Review* 41, no. 2 (September 1998): 38.

<sup>18</sup> Jürgen Haacke and Paul D. Williams, “Conclusions: Security Culture and Transnational Challenges - ECOWAS in Comparative Perspective.,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 26, no. 2 (April 2008): 217.

<sup>19</sup> AU Commission, Strategic Plan 2009-2012, AU document EX.CL/501 (XV) Rev.2, May 19, 2009, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Aining, Kwesi. Africa: Confronting Complex Threats. Coping with Crisis Working Paper Series. International Peace Academy. Feb 2007. 8.

<sup>21</sup> POKU, RENWICK, and PORTO, “Human Security and Development in Africa.,” 1159.

bureaucrats, and external donors are building a set of institutions and instruments, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), to provide the AU a greater role in conflict management. As Paul Williams points out, the AU faces an expectations-capabilities gap as it struggles to create concrete progress toward the vision and rhetoric of its founding documents.<sup>22</sup> The AU lacks the resources to afford these capabilities, making it dependent on donor support and subject to the political desires of more affluent member states. Additionally, the AU struggles to find its place in the relationship between the United Nations and African subregional organizations.

Africa is often referred to as a unitary whole, yet it is more accurate to discuss issues by geographic subregions, as this is how African states organize most effectively in the interest of security, good governance, and development.<sup>23</sup> The five major regions include North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa, and Southern Africa, yet the eight subregional organizations defy this common geographical grouping, reflecting the many connections states have with one another.<sup>24</sup> These Regional Economic Communities (RECs) seek to improve the economic well-being and security of its member states while protecting their sovereignty and domestic authority. Article 52 in Chapter VIII of the United Nation's Charter recognizes the importance of "regional arrangements or agencies" for settling local disputes before such disputes are brought to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Conventional wisdom states that the community of neighbors has greater interest in a local dispute; therefore, they are more motivated to act to resolve conflicts. Not all regional institutions are equal; the regions with the weakest and most anarchical structures-central and eastern Africa-have seen the greatest amount of conflict and possess the smallest potential for regionally-based

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<sup>22</sup> Paul D. Williams, "The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities" (Council on Foreign Relations: International Institutions and Global Governance Program, October 2011), 1.

<sup>23</sup> Freidman, George. "The Next Decade." Doubleday, New York. 2011. 215

<sup>24</sup> The African Union has recognized eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as officially representative regional associations of African states. Several African countries are members of several RECs at the same time. Therefore, there is a possibility of overlap and conflict of competences. These eight RECs have been set up pursuant to the Treaty Relating to the Establishment of the African Economic Community of 1991:

Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

security.<sup>25</sup> Multiple layers of supranational institutions create a complex dynamic of interests within and between subregional community of states, the broader AU, and the United Nations, where the politics of self-interest and geostrategic balancing moves often create artificial political challenges to security responses. For this reason, the lowest level of cooperation nearest the crisis tends to be the most responsive and therefore the most important. However, is it the most effective?

### **ECOWAS and Regional Security Operations**

Fifteen West African states signed the Treaty of Lagos in 1975 to establish ECOWAS.<sup>26</sup> Their goal was to strengthen economic cooperation, improve political dialogue, and resist the influence of revanchist colonial interests from dividing the region along British (Anglophone) and French (Francophone) affinities. The five initial protocols sought to eliminate customs and tariffs, enable the free movement of persons, capital, and labor, harmonize agricultural, industrial, and monetary policies, and establish a fund to help weaker member states.<sup>27</sup> A security role was not an original objective. An understanding developed that peace and security must be prevalent for economic cooperation, and supranational mechanisms must exist to resolve disputes between member states.<sup>28</sup> The 1976 Non-Recourse to Aggression Treaty, Protocol on Non-Aggression adopted in 1978,<sup>29</sup> and the agreement on Mutual Assistance of Defense

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<sup>25</sup> Burgess, "African Security in the Twenty-First Century: The Challenges of Indiginization and Multilateralism," 44.

<sup>26</sup> At the time, Mauritania was a signatory member of ECOWAS, but left in 1999. Cape Verde joined in 1977.

<sup>27</sup> ECOWAS Treaty of Lagos, 28 May 1975.

<http://www.ehu.es/ceinik/tratados/11TRATADOSOBREINTEGRACIONYCOOPERACIONENAFRICA/111ECOWAS/IC1111ING.pdf> (accessed 8 March 2014)

<sup>28</sup> In 1989, ECOWAS Executive Secretary Abass Bundu stated that "the Liberian crisis has demonstrated . . . that it is futile to talk about economic integration unless the environment in which you pursue such integration is peaceful and secure." Francis Deng, *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institutions, 1996), 142. Other references to the priority of security can be found in Olu. "Adeniji Olu, "Mechanism for Conflict Management in West Africa: Politics and Harmonization" (Report, Conflict Management in West Africa, 21 May 1999), 33.

<sup>29</sup> The Protocol on Non-Aggression called on member states to resolve their conflicts peacefully through ECOWAS. Article 1 states that member states shall, in their relations with one another, refrain from the threat or use of force or aggression and Article 2 states that member states shall refrain from committing, encouraging or condoning acts of subversion, hostility or aggression against another member state. This will be a fundamental element to ECOWAS security operations. 16 countries signed including Mauritania.

(MAD) in 1981 represent the initial moves taken by ECOWAS member states to address security issues in the region.<sup>30</sup> While these agreements established structures for international mediation and ad-hoc advising committees, these alone were insufficient to compel armed groups to seek a non-violent political solution.

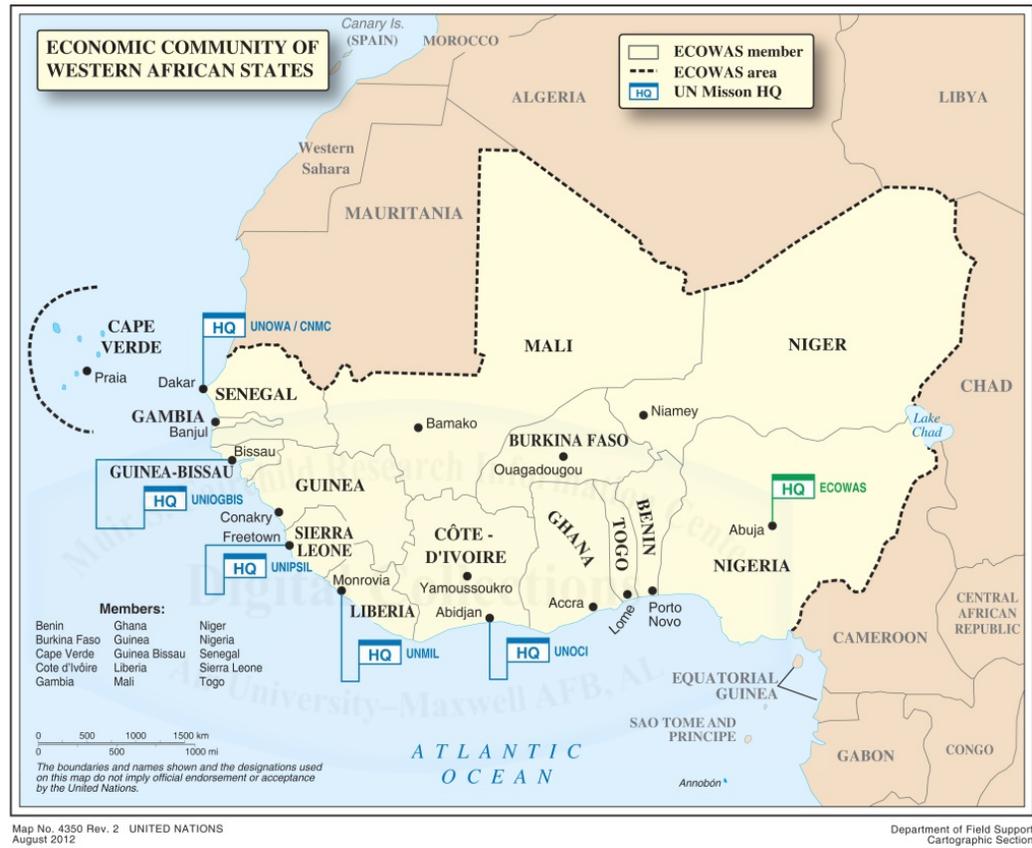


Figure 1. Political map of West Africa, ECOWAS borders and the locations of UN and ECOWAS headquarters

Source: [http://www.usaraf.army.mil/rv4\\_images/MAPS\\_WEB/ECOWAS.jpg](http://www.usaraf.army.mil/rv4_images/MAPS_WEB/ECOWAS.jpg) (accessed 8 March 2014).

Economic Community of West African States, Protocol on Non-aggression, <http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/ar/libros/iss/pdfs/ecowas/14ProtNonAggre.pdf> (accessed 8 March 2014).  
<sup>30</sup> The Mutual Assistance of Defense (MAD) promised mutual assistance for externally instigated or supported aggression as well as the creation of an Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC), consisting of stand-by forces from ECOWAS states (never established). Article 2 states that member states declare and accept that any armed threat or aggression directed against any member state shall constitute a threat or aggression against the entire community. See Economic Community of West African States, Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance of Defense, [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/3827~v~Protocole\\_d\\_Assistance\\_Mutuelle\\_en\\_matiere\\_de\\_Defense.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/3827~v~Protocole_d_Assistance_Mutuelle_en_matiere_de_Defense.pdf) (accessed 8 March 2014).

In 1990, ECOWAS created the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), primarily in an effort to respond to the escalation of fighting in Liberia between Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the forces of President Samuel Doe. This was the first major post-Cold War conflict not fueled in some part by external resources and politics, so without the balance of geopolitical power to contain it the complex equities and relationships of each side quickly extended the conflict and its effects beyond the small state of Liberia. ECOWAS sought to counter the escalation of violence, the proliferation of weapons, and the humanitarian crisis of displaced persons resulting from the conflict before it destabilized the region. Additionally, ECOWAS understood that if they wanted a political settlement to the fight then they would have to do it themselves; no other nation or organization wanted to get involved. The UN had been disinterested in yet another peacekeeping mission, and without the Cold War incentive driving their political will to engage in Africa, the United States focused their attention on the independence of Eastern Europe, the fall of the Soviet Union, and the rising tensions over Iraq's annexation of Kuwait.<sup>31</sup>

While initial intentions for ECOMOG involved just operations in Liberia, ECOWAS also deployed multilateral security forces under the ECOMOG designation in Sierra-Leone (1998 to 1999), Guinea Bissau (1998 to 1999), again in Liberia (2003) in Cote d'Ivoire (2002 to 2004), and later as part of an African Union-flagged AFISMA mission to Mali (2013). James Rossenau defines intervention as a 'coercive military involvement in civil or regional conflict (or in anticipation of such conflict) which is intended to, or does, affect internal political outcomes.'<sup>32</sup> The ECOMOG interventions marked an important turning point in the practice of peacekeeping with regionally aligned states acting in their collective interest via a subregional organization, but also introduced interesting questions about sovereignty and the legitimacy of these institutions to deploy forces into member states. Not all member states agreed to these operations, and those that did often felt compelled to do so to satisfy domestic political interests. For those fragile governments requesting assistance most did so out of a need for additional

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<sup>31</sup> Peter Arthur, "ECOWAS and Regional Peacekeeping Integration in West Africa: Lessons for the Future.," *Africa Today* 57, no. 2 (2010): 19.

<sup>32</sup> Rosenau, J (1971) 'Intervention as a scientific concept Oliver Furley and Roy May, eds., *African Interventionist States* (Aldershot, Hants ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), 2.

resources to secure their incumbency, but operations in Liberia would demonstrate the destabilizing effect of an additional security player introduced into the conflict equation.<sup>33</sup> While some theories explain West African security operations as part of a move toward collective security arrangements, others argue that these institutions simply provide legitimacy for a regional hegemon's national interests.<sup>34</sup>

Intervention in the affairs of another member state requires walking a fine line between adhering to the stated principles of a supranational institution while ensuring the continued support of its members.<sup>35</sup> ECOWAS had to balance a respect for sovereignty with intervening on humanitarian grounds, as both were protocols within their charters.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, many West African states were party to multiple organizations with different priorities and intents. The OAU Charter Article III made clear that member states shall respect the sovereignty of all member states, and the UN Charter Article 1 placed emphasis on achieving cooperation to solve international problems to include a respect for human rights.<sup>37</sup> ECOWAS, the OAU, later the AU, and the UN all had opinions on the same conflict, its causal factors, its political solution, and how to respond but with varied prioritization, resources, and political willingness to get engaged. ECOWAS rhetoric of collective action for the purpose of collective gain, to “put out my neighbors fire before it spreads to my roof,” required international approval to gain consensus and legitimacy. A collection of autocratic West African states intervening in

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<sup>33</sup> William Reno, “The Regionalization of African Security.” *Current History* 111, no. 745 (May 2012): 176.

<sup>34</sup> Barry Buzan's concept of Regional Security Complex discusses collective security arrangements, and Robert Gilpin is a good source on hegemonic realism. In West Africa, the question of Nigeria's role and intentions for working supranationally is of chief concern. Rodrigo Tavares, “The Participation of SADC and ECOWAS in Military Operations: The Weight of National Interests in Decision-Making,” *African Studies Review* 54, no. 2 (September 2011): 147.

<sup>35</sup> Arthur, “ECOWAS and Regional Peacekeeping Integration in West Africa: Lessons for the Future.” 10.

<sup>36</sup> ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression (1978) stated that the community “cannot attain its objectives save in an atmosphere of peace and harmonious understanding among the member states.” Article 1 states that member states shall “refrain from the threat or use of force or aggression or from employing any other means inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity against the territorial integrity of political independence of other member states.” Later, the Mutual Assistance on Defense Matters (1981) Article 4 empowered ECOWAS to initiate collective intervention action in any internal armed conflict, within any state, engineered and supported actively from outside likely to endanger the security and peace of the entire community.

<sup>37</sup> The OAU Charter Article III affirmed the sovereign equality of all member states, the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs, and the respect to territorial integrity and its inalienable right to independent existence. [http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/OAU\\_Charter\\_1963\\_0.pdf](http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/OAU_Charter_1963_0.pdf) (accessed March 9, 2014). The UN Charter Article I <https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml> (accessed March 9, 2014)

the internal affairs of another by challenging its sovereign monopoly on violence was an irony not lost on many, but the lack of a suitable alternative peacekeeping response allowed the international community some political maneuver room.<sup>38</sup>

Beyond the concerns of legitimacy and authority lay the concerns of generating a functional, cohesive, and sustainable multilateral force able to achieve its mandate. The dream of a pan-African security structures able to strengthen independence, protect against imperial aggression, and assist in liberation began with Kwame Nkrumah's proposal that a collective defense structure be included in the charter of the OAU.<sup>39</sup> Africa initially rejected his vision, but by 2008 the AU recognized the benefits of such a force and continues to work toward its establishment.<sup>40</sup> ECOWAS too has an interest in a standardized, permanent force after ECOMOG's perceived success in Liberia, with hopes to establish the Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC) as defined in Article 13 of the MAD agreement in 1981.<sup>41</sup> As most member states were not comfortable with the idea of an outside institution commanding national resources, this force was not created and security response remained an ad hoc process of pledged forces from troop contributing countries. While the standing force idea gained little traction, ECOWAS improved its mechanisms for coordinating responses by adopted a new protocol relating to Conflict, Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security in 1999. The intent was to improve in its legal system, standardize key operational procedures, doctrines and missions, and improve its ability to respond to a range of regional threats. The mechanism proposed the establishment of three organs to implement the security decisions: the Defense and Security Commission, the Council of Elders, the Mediation and Security Council that is responsible for the core of ECOWAS's regional security

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<sup>38</sup> Arthur, "ECOWAS and Regional Peacekeeping Integration in West Africa: Lessons for the Future.," 20.

<sup>39</sup> Funmi Olonisakin, *Reinventing Peacekeeping in Africa: Conceptual and Legal Issues in ECOMOG Operations* (The Hague ; Boston: Kluwer Law International, 2000), 57–8.

<sup>40</sup> An African Standby Force is key element of the AU's African Peace and Security Architecture.

<sup>41</sup> Seth Appiah-Mensah, "'Security Is Like Oxygen', A Regional Security Mechanism for West Africa," *Naval War College Review* LIV, no. No. 3 (Summer 2001): 52 Article 13 discusses the creation of an Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC), consisting of stand-by forces from ECOWAS states Economic Community of West African States, Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance of Defense, [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/3827~v~Protocole\\_d\\_Assistance\\_Mutuelle\\_en\\_matie\\_re\\_de\\_Defense.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/3827~v~Protocole_d_Assistance_Mutuelle_en_matie_re_de_Defense.pdf) (accessed 8 March 2014).

initiatives.<sup>42</sup> Structures help to normalize responses, but a standby force remains a strong component for both ECOWAS and the AU's security vision.

The political success of a regional force depends on the willingness of its membership to support combat operations and ensure the force employed is competent for the job. The gap between rhetoric and reality in regional security responses depends on the willingness of members to dedicate resources to these operations for their sustainment through the time necessary to achieve political goal. Sustaining a large peacekeeping force is an expensive and difficult process often inhibiting regional organizations from engaging in such operations. The UN has mechanisms in place to satisfy logistical requirements for a 'blue hatted' force, but this same capability does not exist within ECOWAS or the AU.<sup>43</sup> Faced with insufficient resources to achieve their mandate, regional interventions turn to local sources. This opens up avenues for corruption and the use of surrogate fighters or groups who understand better than the regional force the specifics of the local terrain, population, and conflict. Over time, external actors developed mechanisms to provide support to regional responses as those actors also benefited from regional solutions. When external support is an additional element to the regional response, interests and willingness extend beyond the region's members and can add a layer of complexity to the response.

Lastly, regional responses provide operational flexibility and the opportunity to capitalize on time; responding to a crisis before it develops into a larger conflict. Traditional UN Peacekeeping Operations focus on conflict resolution support, applying political and military resources to conflict mediation and resolution. 'Blue hatted' military missions involve peacemaking, peace enforcement, and peace building, allowing for a range of options to protect civilians, disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate (DDR) the combatants, support post-conflict governance, and restore the rule of law. Three principles guide UN operations to ensure legitimacy: they must be impartial, have consent of the parties, and will not use force except in self-defense and defense of their

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<sup>42</sup> 21 Adekeye Adebajo, and Ismail O. D. Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenge: Building Peace in a Troubled Region* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 8.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Williams, "The Peace and Security Council of the African Union: Evaluating an Embryonic International Institution," *Journal of African Studies* 47, no. 4 (2009): 603–26.

mandate.<sup>44</sup> These principles, while important to maintaining the legitimacy of the force, reduce the operational flexibility and usefulness of a UN force to respond to dynamic conflicts against regional non-state or sub-state actors. In areas of instability and fragility, the UN may choose to limit the exposure of their personnel. Regional and subregional institutions in some instances may be less inhibited by risk and the restrictions of the UN Charter. Working below the political and bureaucratic structures of the UN allows multilateral responses arranged around shared political interests and with different guidelines to the use of force to secure those interests. Also, external nations may be more interested in working with and supporting the operations of a smaller group of states to ensure their success or to avoid broader engagement by the UN. Multilateral operations present a series of hazards, though; just because forces can be employed may not mean that they should.

Taken together, the concept of a regional security response generates several questions. First, how do ECOWAS member states ensure the legitimacy of operations without sacrificing member state sovereignty? Some argue that the concept of peacekeeping itself is an example of a post-Westphalian international order. Second, how does ECOWAS generate, operationalize, and sustain a force made up of pledged forces to generate the necessary conditions for a political solution? The lack of a standing force, with its logistical elements, command structures, and ability to interoperate, would imply that ad hoc forces can create similar results. Third, what is the relationship with outside support? The UN, European Union (EU), AU, and external nations such as the U.S., France, and the United Kingdom all have an interest in improving peace and security in West Africa. Who is responsible for coordinating this support, what is the level of support, and who maintains the focus on resolution versus the inertia of sustainment? If the regional response is dependent on external support, is it a legitimate force? Fourth, are regional response forces an effective method to respond to different types of conflict? Across the decades, conflict in West Africa shifted from post-Cold War leadership struggles, to political conflict in new democracies, to instability generated by religion-

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<sup>44</sup> For more information about UN Peacekeeping, see <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/> (accessed 30 March 2014)

fueled extremisms and illicit networks. The experience of ECOWAS over the last three decades provides examples to study to answer these questions.

African regional organizations receive considerable attention in U.S. foreign policy, with the logic that they are best prepared to create peace and security in Africa thereby satisfying U.S. goals. This paper seeks to address the efficacy of African-led multilateral security response forces engaged to create the conditions for regional peace and security, focusing specifically on the experience of ECOWAS in West Africa. This study's purpose is to add clarity to the complexity of interacting interests and to identify principles that may improve support given to African solutions. With an increase in the frequency of multilateral responses, the AU and subregional RECs actively work to transition from ad hoc crisis planning to an established architecture, force, and process to respond to current and emerging crises. They do this with the help of the UN, the EU, the U.S. and other external actors, but that help can generate a dependency on donor support that weakens the institution and its legitimacy.

To understand better the nature of this issue, this paper will conduct a qualitative study on two past peacekeeping operations to identify patterns of behavior and barriers that may exist both in the context of working in West Africa and more broadly to African multilateral operations. Chapter Two will assess the ECOMOG operation from 1990 to 1998 and Chapter Three will cover the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) in 2013, focusing on their political mandates, authorities, funding and support, and results. Chapter Four will analyze the two cases for patterns endemic to African regional efforts and isolate causal factors where security sector reform, defense engagement, and regional support can more effectively improve those efforts. Chapter Five will conclude the paper with a brief look at current African crises and will consider the ability of regional forces to achieve political results in those circumstances based on the paper's findings. Primary and secondary sources related to ECOMOG will comprise the bulk of material for the first case. As AFISMA is relatively current, interviews with State Department, Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Staff, as well as a study of primary sources and lessons learned documents will comprise the second case.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **ECOMOG (1991-1999): A CASE STUDY**

October 1999 saw the final withdrawal from Liberia of the ECOMOG peacekeeping force. From the beginning of the war in 1989 to its formal conclusion in 1997, 200,000 people died and 1.2 million left their homes from a pre-war population of only 2.5 million. The conflict exhibited all the manifestations of post-Cold War intra-state conflict: state collapse, ethnic conflict, political fragmentation, warlordism, and a late and inadequate response from the United Nations.<sup>1</sup> Despite the conflict's severity, it ended with an agreement to end the hostilities, the disarmament of the armed factions, the establishment of political parties and the election of a new president, long-time rebel leader Charles Taylor. The mechanism for resolution was the deployment of the ECOMOG peacekeeping force by ECOWAS. Hailed as a success given similar failed efforts at regional peacekeeping in Somalia, the operation also failed to deliver on its initial mandate and had to adapt quickly to changing political and military realities. These shifts affected its legitimacy, the political will of the regional institution, and the force's political effectiveness to generate a solution. This chapter reviews the history of the first Liberian War, the players involved, and the series of political agreements that led to the end of the conflict. The intent and organization of this case study is to answer the four sub-questions: how does ECOWAS protect operational legitimacy and member sovereignty, how does ECOWAS present forces and plan for success, what is their relationship with outside support, and does this particular conflict lend itself well to a regional response? As the Liberian War serves as the cornerstone for regional security responses, analysis of the conflict and regional response will establish a foundation for this study.

### **Background**

Liberia is a small country located on West Africa's southwest curve along the Atlantic coast that epitomizes the relationships between conflict and the political

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Tuck, "‘Every Car or Moving Object Gone’ The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia," *African Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (2000): 1.

evolution of a post-colonial state. Founded in 1821 by the American Colonization Society (ACS) in an effort to settle freed American slaves in West Africa, this diverse country's history reflects the shared African pattern of complex internal conflict between outsiders and natives, tribes against government, and ethnicities against each other. Liberia is one of only two African nations not colonized, but the English-speaking Americo-Liberian, at only 5% of the total population, dominated a disproportionate control of power in a manner similar to other colonial powers.<sup>2</sup> These settlers constituted the ruling class and dominated the political, economic, social and cultural life of the state for over a century. They identified more with the white administrators of the ACS, and most did not desire to integrate into the indigenous population having come from other parts of Africa. Regarding Liberia as the "Promised Land," they declared themselves an independent Republic in 1847 with no intention of integrating into African society.

The five main tribes of indigenous Afro-Liberians, Gola, Mandingo, Gio, Krahn and Mano, fought with the settlers over the interference of trade and misunderstandings over land titles.<sup>3</sup> The natives did not understand why the settlers had forgotten their "attachment to the land of their fathers" and why they did not place themselves under the protection of the kings of the country.<sup>4</sup> With the support of American weapons, the settlers proved difficult to remove. By 1869, the Americo-Liberians established a treaty of indirect rule, with a process of nominal submission of the tribal chiefs, reducing the 60 indigenous tribes to 28 officially recognized tribes. The political inclusion of the Afro-Liberians and control over post-World War II rubber and iron ore contracts propelled much of the conflict in the later twentieth century, with the small percentage of Americo-Liberians willing to forego reforms to maintain their dominant position. The legacy of deadly conflict in Liberia is inseparable from its evolution as a state, and that political evolution served as an incubator for conflict and state disorder.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The other nation is Ethiopia, who avoided colonization by defeating the Italians. Jeremy I. Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia: From "Paternalism" to State Collapse* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 8; These writes make the case that while not a traditional colonial holding, Liberia was in fact colonized by freed slaves. Festus B. Aboagye, *ECOMOG: A Sub-Regional Experience in Conflict Resolution, Management, and Peacekeeping in Liberia* (Accra: SEDCO, 1999), 12.

<sup>3</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 10–1.

<sup>4</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 10.

<sup>5</sup> This is Levitt's central proposition, and he guards against insufficient explanations of the Liberian conflict. His study focuses more on political roots and less on the complexity of the conflict. Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 245–6.



Figure 2. Map of Liberia

Source: National Geographic, Liberia, <http://www.hearttliberia.org/Home/living-in-liberia/liberia-maps> (accessed 3 Mar 2014).

As the English writer Graham Greene wrote in the 1930s, “Liberian politics were like a crap game played with loaded dice.”<sup>6</sup> From 1877 to 1980, the Americo-Liberians governed under a one-party system, and elections determined which of the three dominant families would control the True Whig Party to dispense patronage, appoint officials, and administer the government. Their paternalistic control over the economy and rights to resources produced vast wealth, replacing ethnicity with class and proximity to the state as the dividing factor in Liberian society. President William Tubman’s policies had appeased the Afro-Liberian clans with a greater political stake in the country, but not enough to dislodge the settler oligarchy.<sup>7</sup> President William Tolbert, the last of the Americo-Liberian presidents and the grandson of freed South Carolina slaves, took over the office after President Tubman died in 1972. Tolbert continued the policies of his

<sup>6</sup> Martin Meredith, *The Fate of Africa: A History of the Continent since Independence*, Revised and updated ed (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 545.

<sup>7</sup> Tubman served from 1944 to 1972. Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 184–5.

predecessor, but financial mismanagement, corruption, and a heavy-handed security response to rice riots in 1979 dissipated native support.<sup>8</sup> Tolbert's attempt at political reform allowed the formation of an opposition political party, but when that party called for a general strike, he had their leaders arrested on charges of treason and the party banned. Adding to these two events, Tolbert attempted to disenfranchise non-landowning Liberians and with a new mutual defense pact he chose to use Guinean troops to help the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) secure the country after the riots. On 12 April 1980, 28-year-old Samuel Kanyon Doe, a Master Sergeant in the Army, led seventeen military members in a coup. They attacked the presidential mansion where they assassinated Tolbert and twenty-seven defenders then dumped their mutilated bodies in a mass grave.<sup>9</sup> Soldiers rounded up ministers and officials, tried them by tribunal, tied thirteen of them to telephone poles on the beach in Monrovia, and executed them in front of a camera crew.<sup>10</sup> Price increases on rice and the imprisonment of protestors served as triggers for the coup, but 150 years of interdependent conflicts woven into Liberia's sociopolitical order empowered the end of Americo-Liberian rule.<sup>11</sup>

The overthrow of Tolbert was a popular development for most Liberians, but many questioned the capacity of a military junta, led by Doe, to govern the country. Doe and his ruling cadre adopted an increasingly ethnic outlook and approach to managing power. The plotters formed the People's Redemption Council (PRC), and comprised of military members from the Krahn, Dan, and Kru clans. The PRC acquired an economy that soon collapsed, as foreign corporations representing 90 percent of total investments suspended operations and withdrew \$40 million, or one-third of total deposits, from the Liberian commercial banking system.<sup>12</sup> National debt doubled from \$750 Million in 1979 to \$1.4 Billion by 1985. The PRC assumed a more authoritarian nature, executing council members, members of Tolbert's patronage network, and military leaders as they saw fit. Doe banned political activities, closed newspapers, pushed government outward to control the hinterland, and instigated conflicts between ethnic clans. Members of Doe's Krahn ethnic group, the smallest tribe in Liberia, dominated both military and political

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<sup>8</sup> Meredith, *The Fate of Africa*, 546–7.

<sup>9</sup> Meredith, *The Fate of Africa*, 548.

<sup>10</sup> Meredith, *The Fate of Africa*, 548.

<sup>11</sup> Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 197.

<sup>12</sup> Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 198.

life in Liberia to the neglect of other ethnic groups. He intervened in Constitutional Commission to ensure the new document would favor his ability to hold power, and ran in the 1985 Presidential election where he won with 50.9 percent of the vote. Doe's steadfast support of the U.S. during the Cold War provided him with political and economic support, and the U.S. demand for anti-Soviet allies in the region allowed officials to look past Doe's peculiarities and excesses.<sup>13</sup> Widespread discontent among Liberians over Doe's leadership and the perception of a rigged election triggered a coup attempt by former army commander, junta member, and Doe confidant, Thomas Quiwonkpa. The unsuccessful attempt unleashed another wave of government violence directed at Quiwonkpa's northern Gio tribe in Nimba county, with hundreds of Gio and Mano soldiers rounded up for execution.<sup>14</sup> From 1985 until the beginning of the war in 1990, Krahn soldiers carried out politically motivated killings to repress the indigenous population, splitting the tribes and disintegrating the state into ethnic camps to maintain an authoritarian hold on power.

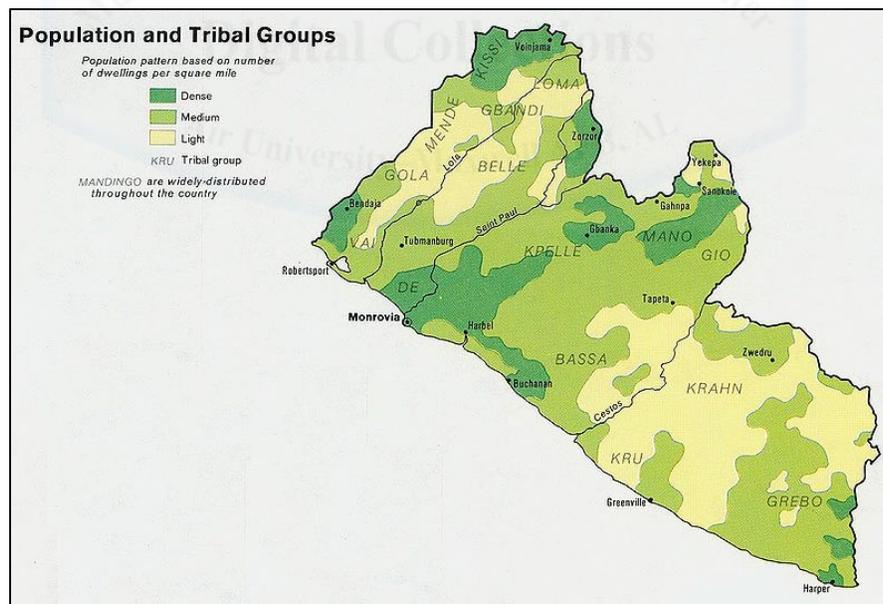


Figure 3. Population density and tribal distribution in Liberia

<sup>13</sup> Doe found support from the Reagan administration, and parroted anti-Soviet political statements to maintain aid and protection from the U.S. Meredith, *The Fate of Africa*, 551–3.

<sup>14</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 28–30.

Source:

[http://www.marysrosaries.com/collaboration/index.php?title=File:Liberia\\_Population\\_and\\_Tribal\\_Groups\\_1973.jpg](http://www.marysrosaries.com/collaboration/index.php?title=File:Liberia_Population_and_Tribal_Groups_1973.jpg) (accessed 13 Apr 2014).

On Christmas Eve 1989, a group of 100 insurgents from the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) crossed the border into northern Liberia from Cote D'Ivoire with the intent to overthrow the regime of President Doe. Headed by Charles Taylor, a Liberian expat educated in the U.S. with ties to regional leaders, the group headed for Nimba County to secure the Gio and Mano tribesmen and raise an army. Doe's army responded to the incursion with a campaign of terror against the local population, dislocating thousands of Gio and Mano tribesmen through violence. Their actions stoked ethnic hatreds simmering since the 1985 coup attempt, generating an army of new recruits for Taylor of mainly teenagers and boys seeking revenge. A major defeat of Taylor's forces in April 1990 led to the execution of many NPFL subordinates, forcing one of Taylor's allies, Prince Yormie Johnson, a Gio, to break away and form the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL).<sup>15</sup> The AFL soon collapsed under the pressure of a two front conflict with forces engaged in indirect maneuver. By May 1990, Taylor's forces reached the port of Buchanan south of Monrovia, moving north to take the Firestone estate and the airfield that he then used to import arms from Burkina Faso.<sup>16</sup> NPFL success increased defections of Mano and Gio soldiers, reducing the AFL's capacity to sustain the fight.<sup>17</sup> The INPFL planned on ousting Doe and preventing Taylor from assuming the Presidency, meaning Taylor would have to eliminate both Doe and Johnson, widening the conflict to a three-way battle for Monrovia. With the conflict split along ethnic lines, violence exploded and atrocities ensued against Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs).<sup>18</sup> By 1991, between a third and one-

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<sup>15</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 36.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Taylor had served as director-general of the general services agency, and subsequently as assistant minister of commerce in Doe's regime. After being accused of embezzling \$900,000, Taylor fled in 1981 to join opposition groups in the United States. In 1987 he reappeared in Burkina Faso where he started putting his rebel force together, receiving support from Burkinabe and Libyan regimes. Ademola Adeleke, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no. 4 (1995): 574-5; Meredith, *The Fate of Africa*, 558.

<sup>17</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 36.

<sup>18</sup> A much publicized AFL-led massacre of 562 Gio and Mano IDPs in a Lutheran Church being used by the Red Cross as a shelter took place on 30 July 1990. In retaliation, the NPFL killed many Krahn and

half of the Liberian population left the country as refugees and an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 killed.<sup>19</sup> Surrounded and without support, the AFL fell back to Monrovia where the two rebel groups cut off water and electricity and discussed terms for surrender.<sup>20</sup>

President Doe turned to international support for assistance, but his appeals to the U.S. and the UN went unanswered. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen testified to Congress that “[t]he resolution of the [Liberian] civil war [was] a Liberian responsibility,” despite the \$20 Million in direct military assistance and the presence of U.S. advisors.<sup>21</sup> Cohen would later admit that a modest intervention in Monrovia could have avoided the prolonged conflict.<sup>22</sup> The U.S. deployed a large Marine Amphibious Force to evacuate Americans from the Embassy on 5 August 1990, but had no intention to intervene further, instead focusing on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.<sup>23</sup> The Gulf crisis also consumed the attention of the Security Council, who felt the matter best handled regionally.

Regional relationships also drove institutional attention. Cote D’Ivoire and Burkina Faso hampered efforts to bring the crisis in Liberia before the UNSC in May 1990.<sup>24</sup> Both supported Taylor’s NPFL. Cote D’Ivoire’s president Houphouet-Boigny never forgave Doe for the execution of Adolphus Tolbert, the son of the former president and husband of his adopted daughter. He also sought to regain the close ties he enjoyed with the Americo-Liberians and his access to the iron-ore fields in Nimba County.<sup>25</sup> Taylor had connections to several West African leaders, some who connected Taylor with Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qaddafi who would assist with the training and equipping of elements of the NPFL.<sup>26</sup> Personal relationships between African leaders and their interests drove the actions of African nations during this time, represented best by

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Mandigo tribesman, to include several government officials. Those killings took place at the UN compound to undermine further the government’s credibility in Monrovia. Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 37.

<sup>19</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 39.

<sup>20</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 40.

<sup>21</sup> Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 207; The US considered supporting the AFL’s counterinsurgency when it learned the the NPFL had been trained and received support from Qaddafi’s Libya. Adekeye Adebajo, *Liberia’s Civil War: Nigeria, ECOMOG, and Regional Security in West Africa* (Boulder, Colo: L. Rienner, 2002), 56–7.

<sup>22</sup> Meredith, *The Fate of Africa*, 559.

<sup>23</sup> Marshall Ingwerson, “US Marines Evacuate Americans from Liberia,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 6, 1990, <http://www.csmonitor.com/1990/0806/alib.html>. (accessed 13 April 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 207.

<sup>25</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia’s Civil War*, 54–5.

<sup>26</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia’s Civil War*, 55.

Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida. Doe reached out to Babangida for help, who initially supported the AFL with weapons and then actively promoted a regional military response, led by Nigeria, into Liberia to stop the violence.<sup>27</sup> Babangida saw Nigeria as a great power in West Africa with a mandate to counter French and Francophone influence, and he exercised his political and economic power in the OAU and ECOWAS to gain legitimacy for his ambitions. Doe had become an embarrassment to Nigeria by 1990, and free of U.S. or UN involvement, Babangida sought to remove him from office, stabilize Liberia with an ECOWAS-flagged Nigerian military force, and realize his ambition of Nigerian hegemony within West Africa.<sup>28</sup>

Taylor's NPFL represented a threat to ECOWAS member states, directly to Liberia and later Sierra Leone, but also indirectly as a proponent of armed self-determination offering a sanctuary for training and assistance from external actors.<sup>29</sup> For the states in the region, the response to the crisis served as a catalyst for Francophone and Anglophone animosities to materialize between Cote D'Ivoire and Nigeria. The crisis also exposed the limitation of international humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, that being the willingness of the international community to assume responsibility and cost for the operation. Doe's request for assistance originally went to Nigeria, who then took the request to ECOWAS for consideration.<sup>30</sup> Intent on responding where the international community would not, Nigeria hoped a multilateral regional response would improve the legitimacy of the operation and the opportunity to share the cost burden

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<sup>27</sup> Babangida invested Nigerian aid in Liberia, to include \$1 million to establish the Ibrahim Babangida Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Liberia. The two countries had linked themselves economically, and Babangida served as an elder statesman to administer Liberia's international political quarrels. Nigeria also paid for the Liberian part of the Trans-African highway. Lastly, Nigeria invested \$25 million in the joint Liberian-Guinea Mifergui iron ore project, as well as \$4.5 million in the Liberian Oil Company. Nigeria had a vested interest in Liberia's security, but Babangida did not view Doe as an equal. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 48–9.

<sup>28</sup> Adebajo, who is considered an authoritative source on this subject, goes into detail on the role of Nigeria at the time. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 48–52; Adekeye Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau*, International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 29.

<sup>29</sup> The U.S. and Nigeria had concerns about Taylor's ties to Qaddafi and Libya, who invested heavily to encourage pan-African revolution, rebel movements, and terrorism. Adeleke, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia," 575.

<sup>30</sup> Several works miss this point, or in the interest of brevity advance from Doe's request to ECOWAS action. This is significant from a legal perspective that this paper will consider further. Tuck, "'Every Car or Moving Object Gone' The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia," 2; Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 49.

amongst the members and potentially the UN.<sup>31</sup> With Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso supporting the NPFL and Nigeria supporting Doe's AFL, ECOWAS lost its impartiality in the eyes of the participants.<sup>32</sup> Taylor rejected ECOWAS involvement into what he deemed an 'internal matter,' associating ECOWAS forces with Doe and Nigerian adventurism. He maintained the position that a military win equaled a political win and that by defeating the government and other factions he would earn the right to power. Frustrating internal efforts to mediate the conflict by the Liberian Interfaith Mediation Committee (IFMC), Taylor demanded Doe step down, rejected elections, and then bypassed the IFMC to establish unilaterally his own interim government with him as its leader.<sup>33</sup>

ECOWAS established a Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) of five states on 30 May 1990 to adjudicate the institution's response, and sought to mobilize the necessary political, diplomatic, economic, and military resources.<sup>34</sup> Building on the work of the IFMC, the SMC's peace plan added a military provision for a ceasefire, disarmament, and reorganization of the AFL, a social provision for the reintegration of refugees, and a political provision for the formation of a broad-based government that included all political parties but not the leaders of the warring factions.<sup>35</sup> ECOWAS negotiators lacked a comprehensive ceasefire and the willingness of Taylor to participate, so the creation of an Interim Legislative Assembly, the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), and the selection of an interim president, Dr. Amos Sawyer, occurred without all the parties to the conflict.<sup>36</sup> Not including the NPFL, who controlled 90 percent of the Liberian countryside, meant ECOWAS strayed from its peace plan of including all parties and especially the originator of the conflict and dominant power.<sup>37</sup> The SMC also recommended the deployment of a 4000-person peacekeeping force with a

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<sup>31</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 51.

<sup>32</sup> Tuck, "'Every Car or Moving Object Gone' The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia," 2.

<sup>33</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 39–40.

<sup>34</sup> The SMC included Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo as members, and Guinea and Sierra Leone as observers. ECOWAS decision A/DEC. 9/5/90 Relating to the Establishment of the Standing Mediation Committee. Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 58, 333.

<sup>35</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 58.

<sup>36</sup> Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 208–9.

<sup>37</sup> Lt Col Aboagye, in writing on his experience in a leadership role with ECOMOG, makes this point clear in his work. Nigerian distrust of Taylor colored the body against the NPLF and saddled the region with an eight-year war. Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 61; Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 73.

mandate to enforce a ceasefire that had yet to materialize.<sup>38</sup> The SMC, as a mediating body, had no authority to suggest a military action, but the consensus of the Anglophone members was to intervene militarily despite the objections of the Francophone states. Most important, formal acceptance of the SMC recommendations by the heads of state did not occur until November 1990, well after the initial deployment of troops.<sup>39</sup> There was little time to wait. Nigeria, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Ghana had tens of thousands of its citizens trapped in Liberia, and the NPFL held and later executed several thousand Nigerian, Ghanaian and other foreigners.<sup>40</sup> These four countries made up the initial 2,600 ECOMOG force that landed in Monrovia on 24 August 1990.

Immediately upon landing, ECOMOG came under fire from Taylor's NPFL troops. The multinational force worked to expel the NPFL from the capital but stayed neutral to Johnson's INPFL and the AFL. On September 9, less than two weeks after ECOMOG's arrival, Johnson and the INPFL killed a contingent of Doe bodyguards and kidnapped President Doe while he was under ECOMOG protection. He was beaten, executed, mutilated and put on display.<sup>41</sup> While many Liberians celebrated his death, Taylor, Johnson and other warlords all claimed the presidency. ECOMOG looked complicit in Doe's murder, and even more so when Nigeria offered asylum for Johnson. Doe's death solved some legal issues for Nigeria and ECOWAS, who no longer had to contend with an elected leader who objected to their intervention or to the imposition of the IGNU, but caused significant legitimacy concerns for the ECOMOG force.<sup>42</sup> Perception of Nigeria's motives changed, as their continued involvement in Liberia could only be to support the IGNU and the ECOWAS peace plan, not to bolster the Doe regime. The death of Doe also removed Houghouet-Bougny and Campaore's personal

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<sup>38</sup> ECOWAS decision A/DEC.1/8/90 on the Ceasefire and Establishment of an ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia. The decision does not state an authorized number of troops, so there exists a different figures. While 4000 seems to be the right figure, others use 3000 authorized. Also, there is a discrepancy as the size of the landing force, with a range between 2,000 and 3,000, but the more accurate figure is 2,600. Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 62, 335.

<sup>39</sup> Herbert Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (Winter96/97 1996): 153.

<sup>40</sup> Adebajo discusses the significance of hostages and attacks on foreigners, which he believes was an abdication of the responsibility of their governments to secure their embassies and citizens as the US had done in early August. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 48–9, 62–3.

<sup>41</sup> Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 208.

<sup>42</sup> Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 154.

reasons for supporting Taylor against a hated Doe.<sup>43</sup> Quickly reasserting its control of the ECOMOG operation from Ghanaian general Quainoo, Nigeria appointed its General Joshua Dongorayo to command the operation, and actively worked to engage with the Francophone states to secure their cooperation.<sup>44</sup>

The ECOMOG intervention into the Liberian civil war added to an already complex conflict, extended its duration, infused it with external resources and interest, yet in the end assisted with its cessation and allowed for a political solution. By the fall of 1990, two governments and a series of armed groups all jockeyed for control of land and political control. The war consisted of three phases.<sup>45</sup> The first phase, between May 1990 and August 1994, involved ECOMOG managing the limitations of its mandate and the disunity of the subregion by taking sides in the conflict and compromising its neutrality. The second phase, between September 1994 and August 1996, involved serious negotiations with Taylor as he lost control of land to his rivals and the Nigerian leaderships changed. Fierce factional fighting in Monrovia during the spring of 1996 proved to be a setback to international peacemaking efforts. The third phase involved an increase in international assistance for ECOMOG to disarm Liberia's fighters, ending in elections the summer of 1997.

Compounding the problem, the war shifted over time from a militarized political struggle to remove the president to an ethnic-based feudal state driven by warlords who were intent to secure land and political power through violence. The original two armed groups, the AFL and NPFL, splintered into several different groups, with some groups made up of more than 30 percent child soldiers. The United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) comprising of former AFL fighters loyal to Doe entered western Liberia in September 1991 and broke into two competing wings in 1994: ULIMO-J, a Krahn faction led by General Roosevelt Johnson, and the more Mandigo-

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<sup>43</sup> The two leaders of Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso maintained their personal objection to Doe, yet they both had much to gain by backing Taylor and countering Nigerian influence. Adeleke, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia," 579–80.

<sup>44</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 49; Nigeria hoped to gain compliance with Francophone states or be able to charge them with sabotaging the ECOWAS effort. Adeleke, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia," 580.

<sup>45</sup> Adebajo's summation of the conflict's timeline presents the easiest way to visualize its sequence. Adekeye Adebajo and Ismail O. D. Rashid, eds., *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region*, A Project of the International Peace Academy (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, c2004, n.d.), 44.

based ULIMO-K led by Alhaji Kromah.<sup>46</sup> Another faction was the predominantly Krahn Liberia Peace Council (LPC). ECOMOG never attained enough combat strength or centrality of command to change the tenor of the conflict, and it spent most of its time engaged in disarmament missions, ceasefire monitoring, securing the major cities, and vacillating between peacekeeping and peace enforcing. Taylor employed regional strategies where he fomented rebellion in Sierra Leone, escalating the conflict, splitting ECOMOG's attention and extending his economic reach into the rich diamond fields. The many groups engaged in warlordism, infighting, and turf battles did so to hold land supplied with valuable economic resources that they then could use to fund their fight and hold as collateral for political inclusion.<sup>47</sup>

The coordination of ECOMOG force with diplomatic negotiations, mixed with war weariness, eventually allowed the conflict to end. Over the course of the war, ECOWAS brokered 14 peace accords between 1991 and August 1996, but often the parties to the agreement lacked the will to comply and the weakness of the accords served to escalate and prolong the conflict.<sup>48</sup> The fourteenth accord initiated elections in July 1997, with Charles Taylor receiving 70 percent of the vote mainly out of a domestic concern over what he would do if he lost.<sup>49</sup> ECOMOG continued their disarmament mission until they withdrew in October of 1999, at which time fighting continued between Taylor and former ULIMO forces expanded into a second civil war that lasted until 2003. As was speculated at the time, a successful ECOMOG intervention would “strengthen a largely moribund ECOWAS and create a precedent of regional cooperation that the rest of Africa could follow.” Additionally, “it would signal to the rest of the world that African nations were also ready and capable of responding to the critical economic,

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<sup>46</sup> The United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), originally led by Raleigh Seekiewas and other supporters of the late President Doe, took refuge in Guinea and Sierra Leone to fight alongside the Sierra Leonean Army against the Revolutionary Unified Front (RUF) insurgency. ULIMO forces entered western Liberia in September 1991 and effectively broke into two competing wings in 1994: ULIMO-J, a Krahn faction led by General Roosevelt Johnson, and ULIMO-K, more Mandingo-based, under Alhaji Kromah. Another faction was the Liberia Peace Council (LPC), a predominantly Krahn organization with other ethnic groups who had suffered under NPFL occupation. It was led by Dr. George Boley and emerged in the wake of the 1993 Cotonou Accord, partly as a proxy force for the AFL. Finally, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia - Central Revolutionary Council (NPFL-CRC), a breakaway group led by former key NPFL figures Sam Dokie and Tom Woewiyu, emerged in mid-1994. Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 43–52; Howe, “Lessons of Liberia,” 156.

<sup>47</sup> Adebajo and Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges*, 47.

<sup>48</sup> Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 209–10.

<sup>49</sup> Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 210.

political, and security challenges of the new world order, without prompting from erstwhile colonial powers.”<sup>50</sup> In the 1990s, the international community saw ECOMOG as a missing middle option between unilateral operations by a dominant actor and a UN Peacekeeping mission. A common perception was that ECOWAS as a more responsive body better able to operate in familiar territory free of broader politics embroiling the UN and the OAU. Yet in reality ECOMOG’s ability to operate rested on the ambition and interest of Nigeria, and ECOWAS was not free of limitations or political infighting. Legal problems, poor conduct, and a lack of impartiality, support, and combat power limited ECOMOG’s ability to achieve its mandate and significantly detracted from its legitimacy as a force.

### **Operational Legitimacy and Member Sovereignty**

Concerns over legitimacy dogged the ECOWAS effort to respond to the Liberian crisis. How did a regional institution agree to send a military force on what some considered an invasion of a member nation without its consent? As Liberia buckled under ethnic civil war and power distributed from the elected government to the competing warlords, the region questioned Liberia’s sovereign status if Doe could not maintain control. While he remained the dually elected president of a legal and recognized government, the regional institution placed a higher value on security in the region, unlike the OAU with its non-interference policy and priority toward sovereignty. Christopher Waltz defines sovereignty as a state that can decide for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems, including whether or not to seek assistance from others or to submit to norms, rules, and agreements that limit a state’s actions.<sup>51</sup> Martha Finnemore defines a state by its monopoly on force within its territory, which means it has the ability to maintain law within its boundaries.<sup>52</sup> She adds that a necessary condition for sovereignty among states is nonintervention.<sup>53</sup> By the summer of 1990, Doe

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<sup>50</sup> Howe paraphrases and quotes Chike Akobogu of Nigeria’s Concord Newspaper. Howe, “Lessons of Liberia,” 152.

<sup>51</sup> Kenneth N Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1979), 96.

<sup>52</sup> Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 1.

<sup>53</sup> Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*, 7.

lost control over the majority of his country and the AFL could not operate outside of Monrovia. Doe did not agree to an ECOWAS intervention because of the implication that he step down, so Doe requested help directly to Nigeria.<sup>54</sup> He had lost the monopoly on force he'd enjoyed for most of the 1980s, and with Taylor threatening to assume power and potentially export rebellion through the region, the SMC and ECOWAS determined it could nullify Doe's government and Liberia's juridical sovereignty for the sake of regional security.<sup>55</sup>

Nigeria maintained the legal right to intervene in response to a bilateral request for aid, but chose instead to take the request to ECOWAS. Citing humanitarian and security concerns for the region, Nigeria invoked the 1981 ECOWAS Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense, specifically Articles 4(b) and 18(1), which states that "member states shall take appropriate measures" in the case of internal armed conflict engineered and supported actively from the outside that would "endanger the security and peace of the entire community."<sup>56</sup> Additionally, Article 52 of the UN Charter recognizes the right of regional organizations to take action at the regional level to maintain peace and security as they see fit.<sup>57</sup> Yet under UN Charter Articles 53(1) and 2(4), the UNSC must authorize any action taken by a regional organization, and members shall refrain from the use of force against the "political independence of any state."<sup>58</sup> The UNSC did not address the conflict nor authorize ECOWAS, but months after the intervention it

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<sup>54</sup> Doe understood that ECOWAS intended for him to step down to open the pathway for an interim government and new elections. Tuck, "Every Car or Moving Object Gone' The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia," 2; Adeleke, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia," 578; Doe sent a letter to the ECOWAS standing mediation committee originally requesting military assistance, but recalled the letter when he understood that the body intended him to step down. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 65.

<sup>55</sup> Buzan defines juridical sovereignty as the recognition of a state's legitimacy by other states in the system. Barry Buzan, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 91 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 221.

<sup>56</sup> See Economic Community of West African States, Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance of Defense, [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/3827~v~Protocole\\_d\\_Assistance\\_Mutuelle\\_en\\_matie\\_re\\_de\\_Defense.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/3827~v~Protocole_d_Assistance_Mutuelle_en_matie_re_de_Defense.pdf) (accessed 8 March 2014).

<sup>57</sup> President Babangida cited this as an authority for ECOWAS to act. Adeleke, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia," 578. The UN Charter, Chapter VIII, Article 52(1) states, "Nothing in the present Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations."

<https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter8.shtml> (accessed 15 Apr 2014)

<sup>58</sup> UN Charter, <https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter8.shtml> and <https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml> (accessed 14 Apr 2014)

commended the ECOMOG effort, and three years later approved resolutions sanctioning Taylor's NPFL.<sup>59</sup> The ECOWAS intervention into Liberia may have been technically illegal per international law, but some believe that the lack of condemnation by the UN is in fact tacit authorization and implied consent.<sup>60</sup>

Nigeria and the SMC's use of the Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense proved questionable for three main reasons. First, there existed a major disagreement between the Francophone and Lusophone states and the Anglophone states over the perceived role of ECOWAS.<sup>61</sup> The Francophone states viewed ECOWAS as an economic integration and development group and had reservations about an expansion into military enforcement of regional security. Anglophone states argued that without security you could have no economic progress, and that ECOMOG provided a mechanism for collective regional resources to be employed for the maintenance of that security.<sup>62</sup> Second, while the signing of the protocol by heads of state made it provisionally active, ECOWAS member states had yet to ratify it fully. Due to the nature of West African governments and their political leaders, often agreements made languish for years after without ratification. Third, ECOWAS had no criteria from which to analyze the humanitarian and security threats to the region or whether "support from the outside" meant outside the conflict zone, as in the case of external support to the NPFL, or outside ECOWAS, as in the case of Libya. The language of the 1991 MAD protocol had been aimed at former colonial powers, like France, who continued to interfere in West African affairs.<sup>63</sup> The decision to recommend the employment of a peacekeeping force hinged on the fact that the NPFL received support from sources external to Liberia; a dangerous

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<sup>59</sup> UNSC Resolution 788, signed November 1992, was signed three years after the start of the conflict. It imposed an embargo of all military equipment to Liberia except for ECOWAS and condemned all attacks on the ECOWAS peace force. Peter A. Jenkins, "The Economic Community Of West African States And The Regional Use Of Force.," *Denver Journal of International Law & Policy* 35, no. 2 (2007): 344; The UNSC's first mention of the Liberian conflict was January 1991. Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 151.

<sup>60</sup> Jenkins makes this point in his discussion on ECOWAS regional responses. Jenkins, "The Economic Community Of West African States And The Regional Use Of Force.," 343-4.

<sup>61</sup> Lusophone is Portuguese-speaking. In West Africa those states are Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde.

<sup>62</sup> David J. Francis, *Uniting Africa: Building Regional Peace and Security Systems* (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 177.

<sup>63</sup> France and Cote D'Ivoire supported the Biafran separatists against the Nigerian government during the civil war from 1967-70. This had a tremendous effect on Nigerian military and political (often one and the same) leaders. These ECOWAS documents allowed the members to respond to proxies and revolutionaries as a matter of state survival. David J. Francis, *Uniting Africa: Building Regional Peace and Security Systems* (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 147.

precedent given that nearly all revolutions receive assistance from outside sources. ECOWAS proceeded in an ad hoc fashion, operating under a veil of international agreements, to attempt to present a peacekeeping force that made better political sense than it did legal. By 1990, ECOWAS as an economic institution did not have sufficient mechanisms, legal authority, or even the consent of all members to proceed as a security institution, but the dynamics of West African politics and the lack of a suitable alternative meant that those with an interest would proceed.<sup>64</sup>

While the legal basis for the intervention rested on shaky ground, the mandate for the force was even more precarious. ECOWAS mandated ECOMOG to "conduct military operations for the purpose of monitoring the ceasefire and restore law-and-order to create the necessary conditions for free and fair elections."<sup>65</sup> Outside the irony that ECOWAS, led by Nigeria and other one-party autocrats, should deploy troops to enforce fair elections in Liberia, the broader problems with the mandate lay in definitions of peacekeeping versus peace enforcement. *Peacekeeping operations* promote security and enforce agreements between consenting parties to reduce the potential for a resurgence of violence. A peacekeeping force is essentially neutral, requiring the consent of all sides to conduct their mission while maintaining their impartiality and avoiding the use of force except for self-defense. *Peace enforcement operations*, in contrast, act to restore peace between currently hostile parties, at least some of whom do not consent to the peacekeeper's mission or presence. A peace enforcement unit goes beyond self-defense to pursue, and perhaps destroy, the violator of a commonly agreed-upon settlement.<sup>66</sup> Peacekeeping excludes coercive action, but peace enforcement evolved out of practical necessity to respond to threats and encourage the participants to honor the agreements.<sup>67</sup> Tasked with monitoring a ceasefire that did not exist, ECOMOG entered the conflict

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<sup>64</sup> Very little negotiation occurred between ECOWAS and the NPFL before the insertion of the ECOMOG force. Neither Doe nor Taylor wanted them there, nullifying their status as a peacekeeping force per UN principles. Arthur, "ECOWAS and Regional Peacekeeping Integration in West Africa: Lessons for the Future.," 11–12.

<sup>65</sup> A/Dec.1/8/90 on the ceasefire and establishment of an ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group for Liberia, ECOWAS First Session of the Standing Mediation Committee, Banjul, The Gambia, 6-7 August 1990, Article 2(2), 3.

<sup>66</sup> Howe pulls his definitions from A.LeRoy Bennett and Margaret A. Vogt. See note 14. Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 151.

<sup>67</sup> Adeleke, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia," 570–1.

without the consent of Doe or Taylor and soon found itself engaged in combat that it had not planned for to secure its positions.<sup>68</sup> The Bamako ceasefire agreement in November 1990 and the Lomé agreement in February 1991 tasked ECOMOG to monitor the ceasefire, establish buffer zones, man checkpoints, and disarm militias, but without any clear guidelines about how this would be achieved in a non-permissive environment.<sup>69</sup> The limited nature of the mandates ensured ECOMOG retained its legitimacy as a peacekeeping force, but resourcing ECOMOG to achieve only their peacekeeping role eliminated any potential coercive military power, allowed the militias the space to regroup, and prolonged the war.

Regional power politics and personal relationships added to the complexity of the Liberian civil war, and personal interests allowed ECOMOG the opportunity to continue operations and achieve results.<sup>70</sup> Nigeria's Babangida envisioned ECOMOG, led by a newly-minted Nigerian military flush with oil money, would awe the Liberians into ending the conflict.<sup>71</sup> Babangida understood that intervening in a regional crisis is what great powers do, and he saw Nigeria as a great power. As the war continued, political animosities and subregional grievances allowed the fight to extend well beyond the original intent and it fractured ECOWAS. Nigeria took a personal interest in the elimination of Taylor and the resolution of the conflict through its active support of ECOMOG and indirect support of anti-NPFL factions. Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso supported NPFL first to defeat Doe, then to counter Nigerian ambition. Suffering under its own civil war against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) supported by Taylor, Sierra Leone supported ULIMO against the NPFL. Ghana favored political accommodation with the NPFL. The support of factional proxies made an outright victory difficult for Taylor, forcing him to negotiate when he lost territory. November 1993 witnessed two events that changed the war's trajectory. The death of Houphouët-Boigny and the ascent to power in Nigeria of General Sani Abacha removed two players with a personal stake in the fight. While Abacha committed to supporting ECOMOG and resolving the conflict, domestic concerns encouraged him to seek rapprochement with

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<sup>68</sup> Arthur, "ECOWAS and Regional Peacekeeping Integration in West Africa: Lessons for the Future.," 16.

<sup>69</sup> Tuck, "'Every Car or Moving Object Gone' The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia," 3.

<sup>70</sup> Francis makes the point that the ECOMOG intervention in Liberia was driven by strategic self-interests of regional players. Francis, *Uniting Africa*, 159.

<sup>71</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 52-3; Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 154.

Taylor. The inclusion of the NPFL in governing councils was an encouraging development for the dissenting Francophone states and they soon joined ECOMOG.<sup>72</sup> As Abacha sought to mend the fracture in ECOWAS between Francophone and Anglophone states, the introduction of a francophone contingent in ECOMOG near the end of the war restored political balance and represented a subregional intent to deliver security. With Nigeria no longer obstructing Taylor's political ambitions and his power secure, he led the way toward disarmament and an end to the war.

Liberia, like all states, had the right to self-determination whether that comes from a ballot or a bullet. ECOWAS, and Nigeria specifically, interpreted the foreign assistance given to Taylor's NPFL as an expansion of the conflict, a threat to Liberia's sovereignty, and a matter of regional security. Determining that a government led by Charles Taylor would be a destabilizing influence in the region, ECOWAS chose to assist the organization of an interim "unity" government and present a regional multilateral force into Monrovia. Taylor's rejection of this outside interference required ECOMOG to operate beyond its peacekeeping mandate to encourage a ceasefire, but a lack of resources and tactical reach hampered operations. Without a commitment from Taylor and other factions to disarm or the military might to force compliance, ECOMOG could not achieve peace by itself. The subregional divide between the francophone and Anglophone states over the role of ECOWAS meant ECOMOG did not represent the common will of the region, with both sides exploding the conflict into a proxy war. Once Nigeria found a way to work with Taylor, the Francophone states dropped their protestation of ECOMOG and joined in the regional solution. The warlords could then cooperate with ECOMOG to secure the country and find a political settlement.<sup>73</sup> When ECOMOG reflected the common will of the region, it increased the legitimacy of the force and its attractiveness to external powers who could then provide the logistical aid ECOMOG desperately required. Subregional authority comes from the shared vision and agreements amongst neighboring states, made legal with formal or even tacit authorization from the UN.

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<sup>72</sup> Five months after Nigeria's outreach to Taylor, Burkina Faso offered two battalions to ECOMOG. Burkina Faso Cote D'Ivoire, Niger, and Benin all sent troops to ECOMOG by 1997. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 244.

<sup>73</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 248.

## Cohesive and Viable Force

ECOWAS faced the challenge of generating a cohesive military force out of disparate, pledged units with the hope that they could secure the peace, disarm the factions, and set the conditions for a political solution. Command and control, interoperability, domestic and subregional politics, language and culture, and equipment and logistics deficiencies were significant detractors from the force's ability to achieve its poorly conceived mandate. The ad hoc nature of the response, driven by Nigerian regional ambitions, resources, and military, reflected a lack of understanding of the situation on the ground and overconfidence in the effect of a regional force on the conflict.<sup>74</sup> The force intended for peacekeeping was insufficient for peacemaking, placing ECOMOG troops at risk unnecessarily and emboldening the rebels that they could withstand a modern army. A deficiency of equipment, pay, and logistical support had a negative effect on morale and led to abuse, theft, and corruption, further degrading the efficacy of the force. While ECOMOG established itself as a significant factor in the conflict, it did not have the reach to extend its influence into rebel-held lands. Instead of coordinating ECOMOG combat power with political agreements to synchronize adherence and disarmament, the ceasefires merely served as an opportunity to regroup, rebuild, and reload.

Five of the fifteen ECOWAS states committed initially to ECOMOG, led militarily and politically by Nigeria.<sup>75</sup> Even though the decision of the SMC suggested sending a 4,000-man strong force, only 2,600 were available from those members willing to contribute by August 1990.<sup>76</sup> While predominantly Anglophone, Guinea, a Francophone state, chose to join the ECOMOG force to counter the threat the NPFL posed to their country as a regional spoiler. After the initial landing of 'Operation Liberty' and the NPFL's subsequent resistance, Nigeria and Ghana added 3,000 additional troops. Additionally, after the Cotonou Accords in July 1993, ECOWAS agreed to increase the troop levels to support an agreed-upon electoral process, and an end-strength increased to

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<sup>74</sup> Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 153.

<sup>75</sup> The Gambia (one rifle company), Ghana (infantry battalion, engineers, and air and naval units), Guinea (infantry battalion, tanks, armored reconnaissance, air defense, and naval patrol boats), Nigeria (infantry battalion, artillery, tanks, engineers, and naval assets), and Sierra Leone (battalion of troop reconnaissance) Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 143-4.

<sup>76</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 143.

between 8,000 and 13,500 until the end of 1997. Estimates at the time indicated a complete occupation of Liberia would require a force of 15,000 at a cost of \$135 million, but operational success required more than simply a presentation of force and a pledge of funds and the prevailing wisdom was that it was not an achievable goal.<sup>77</sup> The composition of the force remained largely Anglophone, but between January 1994 and early 1995 other African nations contributed, and after 1997 Francophone states contributed forces to assist with the election process. The composition of the force depended on two things, the political will of the leadership of member states to give concrete expressions to their faith in the principles, objectives and protocols of the ECOWAS treaty, and the national interest of those member states with either something to gain or something to lose from the crisis. For many, this included securing expatriates held at risk in Liberia, reduce the waves of displaced persons flooding refugee camps, and eliminate the threat posed by rebel factions able to move across borders.

ECOMOG increasingly supported the use of surrogate forces, who demonstrated greater commitment to fighting the NPFL than their own forces, to pressure Taylor to accept a political solution. As ECOMOG stayed largely to Monrovia, Buchanan, Kakata, and Tubmanburg (only 15 percent of Liberia's territory), they supported competing factions within ULIMO to operate elsewhere to contain Taylor's forces.<sup>78</sup> Politically expedient, inexpensive, and effective, the local factions proved useful as irregular troops and their deaths did not place a political burden on the multilateral force.<sup>79</sup> Since the factions operated outside of ECOMOG's sight, they had freedom to do as they pleased. Human rights abuses, excessive destruction, and rampant killings restricted Taylor's forces, but pushed the war into rural Liberia. ECOMOG's support to factions colored their neutrality, and their inability to control their groups undermined the cease-fire agreements made with Taylor.<sup>80</sup> After the peace settlement with Taylor in 1995, the factions turned against ECOMOG. The remnants of these factions, driven from Liberia at

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<sup>77</sup> Tuck, "'Every Car or Moving Object Gone' The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia," 4.

<sup>78</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 175.

<sup>79</sup> Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 172.

<sup>80</sup> ULIMO's fighting against the NPFL undermined the Yamoussoukro Accords in 1991, and the LPC's attacks against the NPFL hurt the implementation of the Cotonou agreements. Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 166.

the end of the war, would develop into the LURD and MODEL insurrections in 2000 that forced the end of the war and Taylor's removal by 2003.<sup>81</sup>

Despite the preponderance of Nigerian troops, resources, and funding, from its conception and deployment ECOMOG was a multilateral force with all the challenges that entails. The effort to de-emphasize Nigeria's hegemonic interest and highlight ECOMOG as a representation of collective will meant Nigeria had to find ways to integrate regional partners into planning, operations, and leadership roles. Ghanaian General Quainoo assumed command of the overall operation, while his deputy came from Guinea, his chief of operations from Sierra Leone, and chief of personnel from Gambia. Nigerian officers filled Chief of Staff and many of the key headquarters positions.<sup>82</sup> Operational assignments went to forces organized nationally, not as a combined force, to avoid placing one nation's troops under the command of another nation. ECOMOG failed to operate as a unified command, as each member state retained a say in the disposition of its national forces. Individual military commanders often communicated and received orders directly from their home governments, creating conflicting instructions when not in line with the ECOMOG Force Commander or the ECOWAS Secretariat.<sup>83</sup> ECOMOG suffered from numerous instances of independent decision-making.<sup>84</sup> Also, a lack of common rules of engagement led to problems between Nigerian, Ghanaian, and Senegalese troops, made worse by differences in military cultures in training and command structures.<sup>85</sup> As the war progressed, other nations often complained that Nigerian planners did not include other nations in the process, nor would they confer with them on decisions. The Nigerians countered that the largest contingent should determine the planning, and past efforts to do so resulted in security breaches.<sup>86</sup> Once the ECOMOG force included more ECOWAS members and looked less Nigerian, it improved its efficacy as a stabilizing force.

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<sup>81</sup> The Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) attacked in 2000 to eliminate Taylor-backed groups operating from Liberia and later forced him to agree to peace talks where he stepped down. Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia*, 217; Arthur, "ECOWAS and Regional Peacekeeping Integration in West Africa: Lessons for the Future," 12.

<sup>82</sup> Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 153; Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 75.

<sup>83</sup> Francis, *Uniting Africa*, 153.

<sup>84</sup> Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 162.

<sup>85</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 112.

<sup>86</sup> Adebajo and Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges*, 56.

While ECOMOG suffered operational challenges, Regional animosities, ineptitude, and a lack of discipline also hampered operations. Mistrust of the Nigerians caused problems between the ECOMOG troop contributors. For example, the Guinean troops felt they received assignments that were more difficult because of their francophone association. This perception generated animosity and an unwillingness to secure their position, and along with the Sierra Leonean troops, the Guineans became notorious for fleeing at the sight of NPFL fighters.<sup>87</sup> The manner in which Doe died forced Nigeria to question its assurances that Ghana would always lead the ECOMOG force, and after the removal of Quainoo for cause a series of ten Nigerian Generals ran ECOMOG until the end of operations in 1999.<sup>88</sup> Ghana and Nigeria differed on their perception of Taylor, but after the initial hostilities the operation change from multilateral peacekeeping to targeted peace enforcement using predominantly Ghanaian and Nigerian troops with Liberian surrogates.<sup>89</sup> A three-week offensive pushed back the NPFL and resulted in the Banjul peace plan signed in Bamako in November 1990.<sup>90</sup> In addition, the support given by the Monrovia to ECOMOG for their success securing the city soured afterward from corruption, poor treatment, and the degradation of standards among the Nigerian troops.<sup>91</sup>

Sustainment of the ECOMOG force was a vital element to its potential success and a consistent weakness to its operations. Troop contributing countries received instruction that their forces should be prepared to self-sustain for a period of 90 days, and most believed the fighting would not last long and that the total operation would be complete in six months.<sup>92</sup> The UN norm for logistical self-sufficiency at the time was 60 days, but for poorer countries without a suitable network to provide for their forces, they

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<sup>87</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 76.

<sup>88</sup> Francis, *Uniting Africa*, 153.

<sup>89</sup> ECOMOG originally made agreements with the volatile Prince Johnson, whose INPFL agreed to provide intelligence and assistance to the force. Later, ECOMOG secured the help of ULIMO. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 77–8.

<sup>90</sup> The Banjul agreement called for a cease-fire, a cessation of arms purchases, the creation by ECOMOG of a permanent buffer zone to separate the belligerents, and the election of an interim government, followed by the disarmament of the factions by ECOMOG. Adebajo and Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges*, 52–3.

<sup>91</sup> Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 171.

<sup>92</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 163.

deployed first with the idea that someone else would support them.<sup>93</sup> Peacekeeping in Africa presents logistical challenges that hamper even the UN from providing services to troops. Often peacekeepers operate in areas where there is no local economy from which to purchase goods, the road networks are insufficient for delivery, or the tactical environment is too dangerous. Where speed is important to establishing a presence, often the equipment and supplies necessary to sustain that presence arrives after the crisis abates.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, the lack of standardization of equipment, arms and ammunition caused significant sustainment and command and control issues because every national detachment within ECOMOG joined the force with its own equipment. ECOMOG deployed to Liberia without first detailing logistical and financial arrangements, leaving it up to the individual nations or the Nigerians to solve. Troops supplemented their needs by purchasing or taking what they needed from the local economy, earning a new meaning for their operational acronym: “Every Car or Movable Object Gone.”<sup>95</sup> Without a central administrative office, ECOMOG could not assure the proper care of all soldiers under its charge. These logistical shortfalls created poor conditions for the troops, left unpaid and abandoned in hostile conditions, who found little motivation to engage in fighting.<sup>96</sup>

Another significant problem contributing to the viability of the ECOMOG force was its lack of preparation for fighting a counterinsurgency in the swamps and jungles of Liberia. National troops equipped with modern arms and equipment found the chaos and horrors of ethnic civil war difficult to understand or influence. Fighting an assortment of young men and boys wearing wigs and dresses, most under the influence of narcotics, unsure of whose side a particular fighter fought for made for a difficult tactical environment.<sup>97</sup> Additionally, the forces fighting for ECOMOG had not fought previously in terrain similar to Liberia’s, with only Senegal and Ghana having had any jungle

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<sup>93</sup> *Out of Conflict*, 121–2.

<sup>94</sup> Anyidoho uses the UNs experience in Rwanda as an example, where US APCs arrive after the fighting ended. *Out of Conflict*, 122.

<sup>95</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 163–4; Tuck, “‘Every Car or Moving Object Gone’ The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia,” 5.

<sup>96</sup> Tuck, “‘Every Car or Moving Object Gone’ The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia,” 4–5.

<sup>97</sup> Distinguishing between combatants and noncombatants proved difficult without NPFL fighters in uniforms, and the frequent use of children devastated the morale of ECOMOG soldiers who had to fire on child soldiers in self-defense. Howe, “Lessons of Liberia,” 170.

training.<sup>98</sup> ECOMOG arrived in Monrovia with tanks, jets, and a navy, yet they lacked suitable communications equipment to maintain situational awareness and had little to no air mobility to move forces quickly on the battlefield.<sup>99</sup> The vast geographical size of West Africa and the limited road network in Liberia placed emphasis on the operational and tactical use of helicopters, especially in terms of air-to-ground support assets. A lack of logistical officers, communications equipment, and funding hampered ECOMOG's operational effectiveness throughout most of the civil war.<sup>100</sup> Insufficient intelligence also hurt ECOMOG's tactical capabilities and forced it to draw closer to proxy forces for help. The danger of deploying troops without firm guarantees of cooperation from the factions and without the provision of logistical support led to the killing and hostage taking of ECOMOG peacekeepers, most notably in 1992, 1994, and 1995.<sup>101</sup> Without a force sized to achieve its mandate or the logistical chain to pay and support that force, ECOMOG achieved what it could and found ways to use local factions to fill in the gaps. The undesirable nature of these factions on all sides led to a political solution, but in them laid the seeds of the next war.

### **Coordinated Outside Support**

While many were concerned about the grave human suffering witnessed in Liberia and its vicinity, the situation was neither sufficiently grave nor strategically important enough to warrant an international intervention. None of the states in close proximity to the conflict could escape its effects, nor could they ignore its implications. This was the reason ECOWAS intervened.<sup>102</sup> Most Liberians and others in the region felt it was the responsibility of the U.S. to come to their aid, but the Reagan and later Bush Administrations actively distanced themselves from Africa generally and Doe specifically. The large role of Nigeria in ECOMOG and the region deterred international

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<sup>98</sup> Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 170; Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 156.

<sup>99</sup> Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 168. In mid 1995, ECOMOG's only helicopter was for the Force Commander's personal travel. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 153.

<sup>100</sup> Many troops had arrived for the war without weapons, forcing Nigerian to equip several of their poorer partners. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 77.

<sup>101</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 243.

<sup>102</sup> Adeleke, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia," 589.

association due to condemnation of Nigeria's troubled military-rule government.<sup>103</sup> Calls for assistance fell to the UN, but France and the francophone states sought to influence the Security Council not to take action. The OAU would not engage either, as they saw the conflict as an internal matter and not within their charter. With the work of ECOMOG and the realization of a signed cease-fire at the Banjul summit in 1990, the international community took notice but it would be three years and more agreements before significant recognition and external support would materialize.

The ECOMOG operation suffered from a deficit in operating funds for its first three years, limiting its operational effectiveness and ability to support humanitarian initiatives. The initial \$50 million trust fund recommended by the SMC and established by ECOWAS depended on Nigeria's contribution, while efforts to find support overseas failed. Once operations commenced, ECOWAS determined that they had grossly underestimated their initial estimate for cost, made worse by the fact that members could not realize the original funding goal.<sup>104</sup> In short, war is expensive and ECOWAS could not pay for it. Insufficient funds created an operational limitation that inhibited the ability of their forces to realize strategic goals, but knowing what amount would be sufficient was unrealistic in a dynamic environment. ECOWAS had little experience working together, and assumptions on the time necessary for the operation and effectiveness of ECOMOG troops meant logistical planning received less attention than warranted. Poor equipment and personnel support affected the morale and capability of forces, without which operational success could not occur. Presenting forces without logistical support forced them to rely on the local population, the local economy, and ultimately local surrogate fighters to achieve their mandate. In a peacekeeping role where the opinion of the local population determines their willingness to accept the international force, poor treatment of the locals and association with factions colored ECOMOG to the local population and cost them their neutrality and effectiveness. Worse, deploying troops to disarm factions without logistical support led troops to be outgunned, held hostage, and killed.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Adebajo and Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges*, 44.

<sup>104</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 288.

<sup>105</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 112.

ECOWAS believed the U.S. would intercede in the conflict, and that their help could offset institutional limitations. The U.S. significantly engaged in the humanitarian response to the refugee crisis affecting the subregion, providing \$200 million by 1992. The \$8.6 million given to ECOMOG reflected the U.S. disinterest in Liberia and concern over ECOWAS involvement, and U.S. policy stated that the conflict was an internal matter for much of its early years. The U.S. pledged to increase financial support to \$30 million on condition that ECOMOG “showed a renewed capacity to play a neutral and effective role.”<sup>106</sup> The U.S. found itself caught between both sides. It appreciated the capitalism of Charles Taylor, as U.S. companies could count on his control over “greater Liberia,” but they lost faith in him after the NPFL captured and killed five nuns in October 1992.<sup>107</sup> U.S. concern and skepticism over Nigerian domestic politics forced separation from ECOWAS in 1993, later widening with a 1995 State Department report regarding ECOMOG professionalism.<sup>108</sup> The report accused Nigerian soldiers of drug trafficking and Ghanaian soldiers of child prostitution. It also cited the stripping equipment and scrap metal from factories and cities for shipment back to Nigeria, a statement confirmed by ECOMOG officials. The complicated U.S. relationship with Nigeria revolved around their economic relationship and \$4 billion invested in the growing oil industry. Since the mid-1970s, Nigeria remained between the second and fifth largest supplier of oil to the U.S. Nigeria leveraged this relationship, threatening U.S. access and investments, to generate support for ECOMOG and remove Congressional discussions of sanctions. Nigeria also used their leadership role in ECOMOG as a cover for illicit activity and corruption, and often threatened to leave Liberia to silence criticism.

The U.S. played a small, supporting role in the ECOMOG operation in Liberia, limiting itself to financial and logistical support. Engaging indirectly earlier in the conflict, the U.S. supported Senegal’s inclusion in ECOMOG in 1992, training, equipping, deploying, and sustaining 1,200 Senegalese troops as a thank you for their

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<sup>106</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 290.

<sup>107</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia’s Civil War*, 106.

<sup>108</sup> Nigeria annulled its democratic elections in June 1993, sending bilateral relations into a tailspin. Adebajo, *Liberia’s Civil War*, 126, 145, 173.

support of U.S. operations against Iraq.<sup>109</sup> After the transition to the Clinton Administration, the U.S. praised ECOMOG's success in stopping additional killing but policy remained one of non-interference. The loss of eighteen U.S. soldiers in Somalia in October 1993 forced Washington to withdraw peacekeepers from the Horn of Africa, and despite the crises in Liberia and Rwanda it was clear that the U.S. would reduce its exposure to African conflicts.<sup>110</sup> The U.S. contributed to the UN's Liberia Trust Fund, established in 1993 with the Cotonou Accords, but most of the funds went to support Ugandan and Tanzanian forces joining ECOMOG's ranks. With the progress between Taylor and Abacha and increased fighting in Monrovia in 1996, the U.S. determined it was time to act regardless of Nigerian progress. The U.S. conducted Operation ASSURED LIFT, a \$3.2 million Joint Task Force operation established from February to March 1997 to airlift 1,160 ECOMOG troops into Liberia from Mali, Cote D'Ivoire, and Ghana.<sup>111</sup> It also provided ECOMOG \$40 million for three helicopters, communications and other equipment.<sup>112</sup> U.S. logistical support for operations arrived via ad hoc bilateral agreements of support and equipment to alleviate logistical hurdles experienced by new ECOMOG contributors, and through contributions to the UN Liberian Trust fund.

Overcommitted in African peacekeeping operations, the UN initially succumbed to pressure to avoid engagement in Liberia but later assumed a more active part in supporting ECOMOG and the peace process. The Yomoussoukro IV Accord on 30 October 1991 drew the interest of the UNSC, who issued resolution 788 in 1992 to support the accord. It called for all sides to respect the cease-fire, praised the commitment of ECOWAS, and established a Chapter VII embargo on weapons flowing into Liberia.<sup>113</sup> With the 1993 Cotonou Accords, the UNSC issued resolution 866 on 22 September 1993, which established the first UN peacekeeping mission in cooperation with an already

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<sup>109</sup> Including \$15 million. France agreed to pay one third of all costs, but later backed out. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 107.

<sup>110</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 145.

<sup>111</sup> [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/assured\\_lift.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/assured_lift.htm) (accessed 28 April 2014)

<sup>112</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 213.

<sup>113</sup> UNSC Resolution 788 (1992) 93-01046 4901Z (E).

<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Chap%20VII%20SRES%20788.pdf> (accessed 20 March 2014)

active peacekeeping mission, in this case ECOMOG.<sup>114</sup> The UN and ECOMOG would share peacekeeping responsibility, with ECOMOG responsible for disarmament and the UN Observation Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) responsible for monitoring. Resolution 866 also established a Trust Fund to support ECOMOG, estimated at \$134 million, used to secure the services of Pacific Architectural Engineering Corporation (PAE). The contract provided transport support, electricity, sector-wide communication and third-line repair facilities to ECOMOG. With the help of PAE the living conditions of the ECOMOG contingent improved considerably, and PAE-coordinated transport helicopters and soft-skinned vehicles allowed for improved operations and security.<sup>115</sup> While the UN assisted in providing some logistical support for ECOMOG, the low number of UNOMIL military observers experienced numerous attacks from armed factions and a constant conflict with ECOMOG.<sup>116</sup> Most of the ECOMOG staff and troops felt they had to do the difficult work while the UN observers enjoyed better equipment, support, and pay for little in return.<sup>117</sup> Disagreements over disarmament strategies and operational coordination hampered the effectiveness of the joint mission.

International assistance proved more important for the legitimacy it granted the ECOMOG operation than for its logistical support. ECOWAS sought international assistance in an effort to burden-share the cost of employing a regional force for longer than originally intended, but the subregional divide between Francophone and Anglophone blocs and Nigeria's domestic political challenges tarnished the institutions neutrality and legitimacy. The U.S. avoided direct engagement fearing association with ECOMOG's more negative aspects, and the UN's limited presence intended to make up for a lack of initial interest. Low numbers of peacekeepers and an inability to coordinate operations reduced the effectiveness of the joint mission. UNOMIL's unwillingness to coordinate with ECOMOG and ECOMOG's inability to protect UN personnel led to several instances of peacekeepers being kidnapped and sometimes killed. The dangerous conditions and strained relations forced the UN to reduce its manning level. While

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<sup>114</sup> UNSC Resolution 866 (1993) 93-51389 (E)  
<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Liberia%20SRes%20866.pdf> (accessed 21 March 2014)

<sup>115</sup> Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 167.

<sup>116</sup> Tuck, "'Every Car or Moving Object Gone' The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia," 5.

<sup>117</sup> The UN peacekeepers received per diem allowances in excess of \$100, compared to the \$5 daily stipend of ECOMOG peacekeepers Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 139-41.

Europe was not involved in the Liberian conflict, several European nations contributed to the UN's Trust Fund. As ECOMOG mended its internal conflicts and Nigeria negotiated a way forward with Taylor, the international community increased its involvement and contributions.

### **Effectiveness of Forces**

Assessing the efficacy of ECOWAS to deliver regional security and halt the humanitarian crisis is a difficult task depending on the aperture of analysis. Close up, it is clear to see the many missteps and self-inflicted limitations that hindered ECOMOG's operational success and extended the civil war. Widen the view, and the proliferation of cease-fires, accords and agreements highlight that ECOMOG could not reduce the security dilemma between the parties, nor could they minimize the proliferation of armed ethnic factions seeking their place at the table. The political and economic incentives for armed action and warlordism were too great, and violence proved the only means for inclusion. A subregional view exposes ECOWAS' lack of a common political will and their inability to reduce the spreading out of violence from Liberia. Yet from a zenith, ECOWAS successfully ended the Liberian civil war without much support from the international community. Some make the case that the ECOMOG intervention merely extended the inevitability of Charles Taylor's completion of his rebellion, while others believe the war was a necessary political evolution of a long-suffering indigenous population.<sup>118</sup> The conflict certainly changed ECOWAS and the self-perception of the West African region, uniting the disparate members in a common appreciation for regional security as a foundation for economic community.

Subregional engagement in a civil war carries with it many pitfalls, but presents opportunities for an interested international community. The primary argument for the use of regional forces cites a belief in their familiarity with the context, and that they have a greater incentive in resolving the conflict. ECOMOG placed that logic on its head. It required years of involvement in Liberia to understand the nature of the civil war, the interests of those involved, and the interrelation with regional forces. ECOWAS viewed the conflict as a constitutional crisis fueled by outside forces, with the sitting president

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<sup>118</sup> Tuck, "‘Every Car or Moving Object Gone’ The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia," 5.

impotent to maintain the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. To solve this problem, ECOWAS sought to catalyze Liberian civil society and the disparate factions into a unity government, using ECOMOG to stop the violence and prepare the country for elections. Yet the parties to the conflict did not recognize ECOMOG as peacekeepers, nor were they interested in a ceasefire or elections. ECOMOG planned their incursion without any understanding of Monrovia, the NPFL actively resisted their landing, and the INPFL exploited their lack of intelligence of the conflict to gain favor.<sup>119</sup> It took ECOMOG weeks to secure Monrovia, but the death of Doe and its clear conflict with Taylor's forces besmirched ECOMOG's neutrality.<sup>120</sup> ECOWAS could not agree on its motives, whether and how to respond to Taylor, and how the contributing forces should operate in the field. It took ECOWAS nearly three years to arrive at the Cotonou Accord, the first legitimate prospect for a cease-fire, demobilization and election, and several more agreements and four additional years to end the conflict.

As the conflict progressed, the chief purpose of the ECOMOG force was to respond to Taylor and hold him to a political agreement, but Taylor proved a difficult target and a strategic foe. Controlling the majority of Liberian territory and with over 10,000 rebel fighters, his NPFL held Liberia's resources and restricted ECOMOG forces to Monrovia.<sup>121</sup> Taylor used his position to secure favorable concessions during peace agreements in which he did not intend to comply, and ECOMOG found the agreements added requirements to its mission that it could not afford to support. Eager to gain financial and logistical support from the international community, ECOMOG agreed to concessions limiting its combat power to achieve an agreement. Taylor used the 1991 Yamoussoukro accords to increase ECOMOG's cost of intervention while preventing his own diplomatic isolation.<sup>122</sup> He also sought to prove that ECOMOG could not achieve its mandate to keep the region secure by expanding the war into Sierra Leone. By expanding the war, Taylor hoped to achieve three things: he would gain access to the diamond fields, he would fragment the ECOMOG coalition by forcing Sierra Leone to withdraw,

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<sup>119</sup> ECOMOG used tourist maps and photocopies of U.S. maps of Monrovia to plan their operations Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 62, 82.

<sup>120</sup> K. P. Magyar and Earl Conteh-Morgan, eds., *Peacekeeping in Africa: ECOMOG in Liberia* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire : New York: Macmillan Press ; St. Martin's Press, 1998), 5.

<sup>121</sup> Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 149.

<sup>122</sup> Adebajo and Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges*, 54.

and he would impose complexity and cost to ECOMOG's security response. ECOMOG, and Nigeria specifically, countered by supporting ULIMO in western Liberia against the NPFL to which Taylor was slow to respond.<sup>123</sup> Taylor's expansion of the war proved ECOMOG could not contain the violence from spreading, but ultimately made it more difficult for the francophone states to support him and drew the region together to support ECOMOG. ECOWAS improved their ability to function once all members agreed that the war could cost them more than their relative gains from supporting a particular side favoring national interests.

ECOMOG's efforts to compel the armed factions to change their behavior and accept outside political reconciliation exposed its weaknesses. Attacks on NPFL camps and the use of surrogate groups limited the NPFL's ability to win the war, but ECOMOG's logistical challenges restricted its operations to limited strikes.<sup>124</sup> With ECOMOG unable to impose security over the country, armed factions splintered and warlords challenged each other for control of the resource-rich sanctuary. As John Mackinlay describes in his work *The Insurgent Archipelago*, warlords no longer depended on the support of the population for supplies, instead plundering the state's resources to move on the international market.<sup>125</sup> The profits were so large that control of the land became the objective of the conflict. Macinlay opines further, "Clausewitz was being stood on his head: conflict was becoming the continuation of economics by other means."<sup>126</sup> The war proved lucrative for the warlords, and despite agreements, there was no incentive to end the fighting.<sup>127</sup> By 1995, most fighting centered on control of mineral-rich areas, where warlords exported an estimated \$300-500 million in diamonds and gold and \$53 million in timber.<sup>128</sup>

Many groups were unable to agree on disarmament due to the mutual fear of rival factions gaining military superiority and the risk of losing economic benefits from the land under their control.<sup>129</sup> ECOMOG could not alleviate this security dilemma between the warlords, instead it teamed with the NPFL after the 1995 Abuja Agreement to force

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<sup>123</sup> Howe, "Lessons of Liberia," 157.

<sup>124</sup> Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa*, 60.

<sup>125</sup> John Mackinlay, *Insurgent Archipelago* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012), 35.

<sup>126</sup> Mackinlay, *Insurgent Archipelago*, 35.

<sup>127</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 148.

<sup>128</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 175.

<sup>129</sup> Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 247.

the groups to comply or leave the country.<sup>130</sup> The rapprochement between Nigeria and Taylor produced the incentive to reach a settlement and the military reach to curb the excesses of the warlords. ECOMOG and UNOMIL could focus on the business of demobilization and disarmament of the nation's 33,000 faction fighters and prepare the nation for elections. With an estimated \$450 million in earnings during the war, Taylor had a war chest his political rivals could not match. During the 1997 elections, he used these resources to reach more voters and secure their support through private and direct communications and distributed largesse. Taylor won due to a common fear that if he lost the election then he'd continue the war, and after seven years the Liberian people were ready to move on. ECOMOG succeeded in its mandate because in the end Taylor stopped opposing them and allowed them to succeed.

The ECOMOG intervention in Liberia to contain the civil war had few advantages from their regional position, and the benefits attributed to their operation are generally exaggerated. Taylor employed the region in the war, drawing support from neighboring Cote D'Ivoire and securing access to airstrips to receive help from Burkina Faso. Faced with ECOMOG, he worked to export rebel groups to destabilize neighbors and secured international support through business relations over access to resources. The operational and logistical limitations of ECOMOG ensured it would not be a sufficient and viable force able to coerce Taylor to end the war, forcing Nigeria to accept material and personnel losses and use surrogate forces to attrite Taylor's position. ECOMOG did not contain any special regional knowledge, and the use of surrogates reflected the need to hire up more locally competent forces. The war exposed Nigeria's naked hegemonic interest, costing ECOWAS its legitimacy and prolonging the war without the help of the international community. The ability of ECOMOG to prolong the war was the key reason for its eventual termination, not from a new approach to conflict resolution.<sup>131</sup> ECOWAS, and Nigeria specifically, demonstrated the will to remain in Liberia beyond Taylor's willingness to continue the conflict my military force. Many identify this resolve as a regional trait and benefit to regional peacekeeping approaches, but the U.S. experiences in Vietnam and Afghanistan prove that it is a hegemonic trait disassociated to regional

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<sup>130</sup> Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa*, 60.

<sup>131</sup> Tuck, "‘Every Car or Moving Object Gone’ The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia," 6.

proximity and linked to domestic self-perception of the conflict's tie to national military and strategic interests. As ECOWAS shifted to represent a unified regional political will, ECOMOG's legitimacy and operational efficacy improved with the help of additional aid. ECOMOG was effective as a peacekeeping force, but its ineffectiveness as a peacemaking force in a civil war extended the conflict and its high costs.

### **Conclusion**

The first Liberian Civil War exposed the world to the wild extremes of conflict in the post-Cold War world. Unconstrained by the balancing of great powers, local warlords expanded their power and fought over control of resources. The fighting had devastating regional consequences in terms of forced migration and a massive influx of refugees into neighboring countries, massive displacement of the population, gross violations of human rights, mass killings, and widespread destruction of property. The political history of Liberia is a story of disenfranchised indigenous tribes suffering from a century of paternalistic Americo-Liberian neocolonial rule, and the violent political transition and mismanagement of Samuel Doe exacerbated ethnic tensions and divided the country. The arrival of Charles Taylor militarized the conflict, successfully challenging Doe's control over the country. Seeking to broker a political solution, ECOWAS sent in ECOMOG to help keep a peace that neither side desired. Everyone questioned the motives of the regional force, exacerbated by the death of Doe, the fighting with the NPFL, and its association with Prince Johnson's INPFL and the AFL. Taylor believed ECOMOG to be meddling in the internal affairs of Liberia, and ECOWAS justified it because it viewed Libya as meddling in the internal affairs of the subregion.

In the analysis of subregional forces and their ability to produce strategic results independent of external support, ECOMOG and Liberia is the foundational case. Not just because it is the first instance or that it includes so many factors and data points, although those certainly help. ECOMOG represents a region choosing to respond when the international community chose not to, and its political and military path reflected the difficulty and endemic characteristics in a subregional response. ECOMOG exposed the limitations of 90's-styled peacekeeping and the need for a mechanism to coerce substate actors. It wrestled with the complex layers of international legal authority, choosing to

respond to the humanitarian crisis despite the infringement on Liberia's sovereignty or the lack of UN authorization. It exposed the necessity of strong supranational protocols agreed to by the entire region to justify a military incursion in its name. Political inclusion, regionally and internally, led to solutions that ECOMOG could not deliver by force.

ECOMOG operated as an implement of the ambition of strong African leaders, subject to their willingness to engage in the conflict but without the resources necessary to achieve their mandate. Unable to deliver the peace it intended to keep, the force suffered from a lack of resources and operational cohesion reflecting the dynamics present in the politics of the subregion. Insufficient logistics hurt the efficacy of the individual units and hurt the perception of the ECOMOG force and ECOWAS as a legitimate institution able to manage the operation's needs. A culture of corruption and mistreatment, made worse by low morale and a drawn out conflict with civilian insurgents, reduced ECOMOG to a mere occupation force. To generate adequate pressure on Taylor's NPFL, ECOMOG supported surrogate groups who could operate beyond the limitations of the multinational force. Despite the proximity of troop-contributing countries to Liberia, ECOMOG was unprepared for operations. The use of surrogates solved two problems for ECOMOG. First, they were inexpensive compared to the opportunity cost of additional troops, equipment, and expected losses of a more comprehensive campaign to flush out the NPFL. Second, they alleviated the competency gap resulting from ECOMOG's poor intelligence and communication. Surrogate use imposed an increase in agency monitoring costs, international legitimacy costs through association with their excesses, and strategic and operational costs when the groups threatened established political agreements. The use of these self-interested actors incentivized their proliferation, extended the war, and laid the foundation for the following civil war.

ECOMOG struggled in its peacekeeping role, dispelling the myth that a purely regional force could succeed where international forces failed. While it proved to be no worse than other contemporary peacekeeping operations, it exposed numerous conflicts of interest that limited its approach to enduring peacekeeping problems.<sup>132</sup> It succeeded in

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<sup>132</sup> Tuck, "‘Every Car or Moving Object Gone’ The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia," 6.

stopping the civil war and helped to create the conditions on the ground for a return to constitutional government. It failed in its mandate to protect regional security and end the humanitarian crisis, and in some cases prolonged it.<sup>133</sup> ECOMOG helped save lives by protecting civilians, providing protection for humanitarian operations, and providing supplies to victims, displaced persons, and refugees at the cost of many peacekeepers lives.<sup>134</sup> ECOWAS eventually resolved the conflict by shifting its strategy from backing civil-society-based interim governments to creating an interim government involving Taylor and other Liberian warlords. ECOWAS grew more united over time as leaders changed in key countries and as the war destabilized neighboring states. ECOWAS learned from its initial mistakes with quasi-legal justifications and open-ended mandates derived from UN language to improve future responses to the situation on the ground. Liberia also allowed for the beginning of a model of co-deployment of UN and African forces coordinating in peacekeeping and peacemaking roles.<sup>135</sup> The high cost of the operation to Nigeria and the other contributors reduced the appetite for intervention, but also created precedent for external supporting relationships.<sup>136</sup> The conflict strengthened ECOWAS as a subregional community, and became a model for other African regions seeking security solutions to complex local problems.

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<sup>133</sup> Francis, *Uniting Africa*, 174.

<sup>134</sup> Francis, *Uniting Africa*, 175.

<sup>135</sup> Francis, *Uniting Africa*, 174.

<sup>136</sup> Francis, *Uniting Africa*, 176.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **AFISMA (2012-2013): A CASE STUDY**

The political and security crisis in Mali that began with the 2011 defeat of Qaddafi's forces in Libya is an example of the movement of regional threats and the importance of regional solutions. The turmoil in northern Mali captures the capability and limitations of a multifaceted security response interceding in a complex conflict with multiple actors. What started as an ethnic armed political rebellion exploded into a coup in the south and the rampant spread of Islamic extremist groups in the north. The escalation drew in the French to respond to the situation. AFISMA, the African-led International Support Mission in Mali, deployed in support of French and Malian defense forces, but could not respond in time to be the initial force envisioned by ECOWAS and the AU. Efforts to mobilize, organize, train, equip, and deploy African forces exposed logistical limitations and fundamental gaps between the political will and the operational reality of ECOWAS. Additionally, the transition of AFISMA to MINUSMA, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, revealed complications to the coordination of peacekeeping responses and the development of subregional capabilities. This chapter first discusses the history of the conflict in Mali and the associated political situation to understand better the role of French and African forces in securing a resolution. Then an analysis of the AFISMA mission addresses its political origination and legitimacy, forces, funding, support, external relationships, and results. The intent and organization of this case study is to answer the four sub-questions: how does ECOWAS protect operational legitimacy and member sovereignty, how does ECOWAS present forces and plan for success, what is their relationship with outside support, and does this particular conflict lend itself well to a regional response? The crisis in Mali adds an example of a current subregional response based on modern institutional peace and security mechanisms, and adds to the assessment of the reality behind an independent African solution.

#### **Background**

Almost twice the size of Texas, Mali is a landlocked nation in West Africa that shares a border with seven other nations. Its geography is marked by a large and sparsely

populated desert in the north, with most of its 15.5 million people living south of the Niger River in the sub-Saharan agricultural region. Mali's ethnic makeup reflects its geography, with the preponderance of Mande and other black African tribes in the south and Arab ethnicities in the northern desert. Mali's north bisects the traditional lands of the Saharan Tuareg, a traditional nomadic pastoralist people. While only 10% of the Malian population, the Tuareg are historically fierce warriors who continuously struggle against the Songhai and other southern tribes for independence. They are referred to as "Blue Men" due to the traditional indigo-dyed blue turban that covers their head and face and that dyes their skin blue over time.<sup>1</sup> Mali is 90% Muslim, with most practicing a tolerant Sufism.

Mali's post-independence political development was typical of many African states, and until recently was widely perceived as one of the most democratic, stable, and peaceful nations in West Africa. After gaining independence in 1960 from French colonial rule, Mali experienced one-party rule under the leadership of President Modibo Keita. Oriented toward rural socialism, Keita's nationalization of economic resources produced a steady economic decline until a bloodless military coup removed him from power in November 1968.<sup>2</sup> General Moussa Traoré assumed the presidency and attempted political and economic reforms, but a severe seven-year drought and political unrest stymied his efforts. Limited political liberalization did not answer the demand for multi-party democratic expansion, ending in the 1991 March Revolution and coup.<sup>3</sup> Mali's first democratic, multi-party presidential election brought Alpha Oumar Konaré to power, followed in 2002 by Ahmadou Toumani Touré. Touré, a retired general in the Malian Defense and Security Forces (MDSF) and leader in the 1991 uprising, remained in the presidency until his removal in 2012.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kalifa Keita, *Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali* (U.S. Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute, May 1, 1998), 6.

<sup>2</sup> R. James Bingen, David Robinson, and John M. Staatz, eds., *Democracy and Development in Mali* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), 246.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/index.php/movements-and-campaigns/movements-and-campaigns-summaries?sobi2Task=sobi2Details&catid=34&sobi2Id=10> (accessed 19 Mar 2014)

<sup>4</sup> Toure had previously been in charge of the "Red Berets," or the Presidential Guard. Andrew McGregor, "Red Berets, Green Berets: Can Mali's Divided Military Restore Order and Stability?," *Terrorism Monitor*, February 22, 2013, 7.

While Mali's political state evolved into a more inclusive democracy, President Touré worked to consolidate power and reduce political opposition. Steady GDP growth rates of 5.8% over the last decade and significant international donor support point towards a successful economy, but the living standards of ordinary Malians have deteriorated since the 1990s as government policies increasingly favored the wealthy and politically connected.<sup>5</sup> Touré's 'consensus' style of government provided a mechanism for corruption and mismanagement to co-opt ethnic allegiances and heighten ethnic awareness, politics, and grievances.<sup>6</sup> Patronage and political appointments undermined both the legal system and the military, allowing President Touré to operate with less accountability. Sufi religious leaders lost credibility due to their proximity to the state, allowing increasingly radical Islamic groups the maneuver room to engage in charity work and services in the underserved north. Like other pastoral peoples, the Tuareg lack the necessary skill sets to partake in a modern economy and suffer from a lack of political representation and concern for their way of life by the predominantly southern Mande government. Poverty rates for northern Malian cities range from 77-92%, with GDP per capita rates near Afghanistan and Somalia.<sup>7</sup> This rise of Salafi Islamism in the north occurred as the more traditional and state-associated Sufism lost credibility and influence to radical groups, and along with resurgent Tuareg nationalism helped to create the conditions for Mali's current crisis with Islamic extremism.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hussein Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan.," *RUSI Journal : Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies* 158, no. 1 (March 2, 2013): 14.

<sup>6</sup> Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan.," 15.

<sup>7</sup> Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan.," 13.

<sup>8</sup> Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan.," 12.



Figure 4. Area of Tuareg population

Source: Mark Dingemans, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Twareg\\_area.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Twareg_area.png)

Tuareg nationalism and their struggle for independence define their history. In 1893, when French colonial forces drove into Timbuktu to claim the town as a French possession, the Tuareg rose up in bloody resistance until their eventual surrender in 1917. They were later incorporated into the state of Mali. After independence, state borders split the Tuareg across Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso (Upper Volta at the time), Algeria, and Libya. The Malian Tuareg fought to gain their independence four times – in 1963-64, 1990-96, 2006-09, and recently since January 2012.<sup>9</sup> The first revolt sought to separate the north from the south, but the post-colonial Malian government brutally suppressed the uprising. This nurtured grievances, which flared again in 1990 along with other elements of Malian society in the March Revolution. Significant drought cycles, mismanaged food aid, and the Malian government's heavy-handed military response to unrest in the north in 1990 pushed many Tuareg out of Mali, and some went to Libya to join Colonel Muammar Qaddafi's Islamic legion.<sup>10</sup> The subsequent peace deal created a formal peace, an autonomous area for the Tuareg in the Kidal region, and integration of the Tuareg into the armed forces and other government institutions.

Northern Mali became an increasingly dangerous place, beyond the ability of the southern government to control. The Tuareg who received training in Libya and who

<sup>9</sup> Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan.," 13.

<sup>10</sup> Adebajo and Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges*, 276.

fought in Palestine, Lebanon, and Afghanistan brought this considerable combat experience back with them to northern Mali, along with a more extremist Islamism. Relations with Al Qaeda and other regional Islamist groups developed during the 2000's, with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) conducting hostage taking and terrorist raids in Algeria from northern Mali.<sup>11</sup> The 2006-2009 Tuareg rebellion in both Mali and Niger pitted this extremist element against government forces, and the Tuareg split into ideological factions. With the help of U.S. aid and Algerian diplomacy, Mali sought a negotiated settlement with the Tuareg fighters and used their military effectively, including moderate Tuareg fighters into the ranks and responding quickly to extremist attacks. In 2011, the fall of Qaddafi brought more Tuareg fighters back to Mali, this time with modern weapons and fresh experience to question again their political marginalization and lack of independence.<sup>12</sup> Secular and nationalist Tuareg fighters formed the Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), the traditional Tuareg name for northern Mali, with the intent to drive out the military. Other Islamic groups assisted in this new push: Ansar Dine (Supporters of the Faith), the regionally focused Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), AQIM, and some connections with Nigerian-based Boko Haram. Most of these groups shared experiences from fighting jihad overseas, strengthening their bond and skill. At stake was control over organized crime and the traditional trade routes through the desert that now ferry weapons, drugs, slaves, and other illicit activity.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Algerian-based Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GPSC) later morphed into AQIM. They have been labelled as “gangster-jihadists” for their proclivity to engage in organized crime, kidnapping, and narco-trafficking. Solomon, “Mali: West Africa’s Afghanistan.,” 14.

<sup>12</sup> Crawford Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960-2010*, Africa and the Diaspora: History, Politics, Culture (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 281.

<sup>13</sup> The names of these groups in French are Mouvement national pour la libération de l’Azawad (MNLA), Mouvement pour l’unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l’Ouest (MUJAO) *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2012)* (United Nations Security Council, November 29, 2012), 2, [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2012\\_894.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2012_894.pdf); Solomon, “Mali: West Africa’s Afghanistan.,” 12.

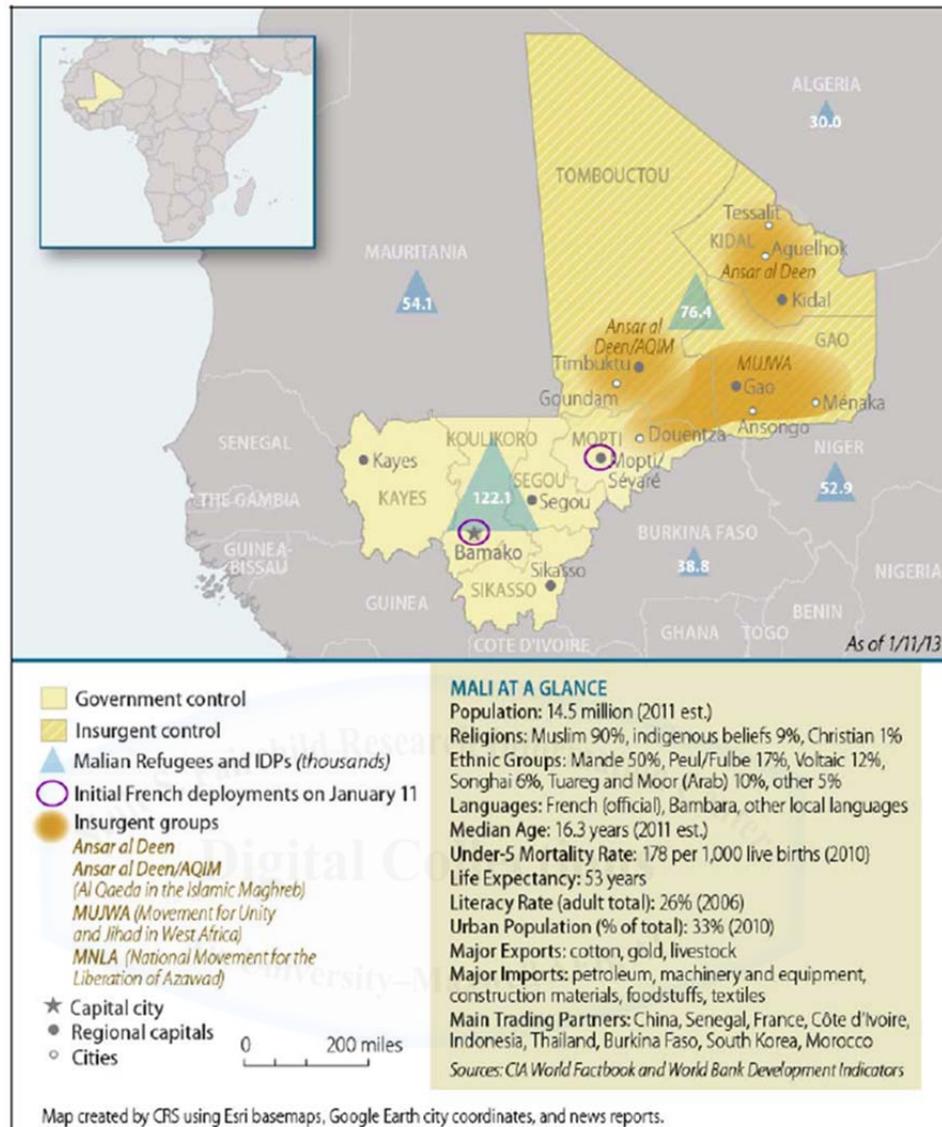


Figure 5. A political map with information dated from January 11, 2013 near the time of the northern rebellion.

Source: reprint from Alexis Arieff's CRS report "Crisis in Mali," 3.

While extremism and political patronage worked to cripple the Malian government, both factors played a large part in fracturing the military. Since 1991, the MDSF experienced the deleterious effects of underfunding, nepotism, corruption, lack of training, poor pay, and a failure to maintain its equipment sufficiently.<sup>14</sup> Professionalization gave way to association, where recruitment depended on having a

<sup>14</sup> Andrew McGregor, "Intervening In Mali: West African Nations Plan Offensive against Islamists and Tuareg Rebels," *TerrorismMonitor* X, no. 13 (June 29, 2012): 10.

high-ranking relative in the armed forces.<sup>15</sup> The widespread belief within the ranks was that the central government had neglected its obligations to the military and that senior officials diverted the necessary resources from the counterinsurgency effort in the north to enrich a few corrupt officials. Morale and support dropped so low that by the 2011 uprising there was little the military could do to quell the unrest. By mid-January 2012, the MNLA, Ansar Dine, AQIM, MUJAO, and Tuareg deserters from the Malian armed forces initiated a series of attacks against the MDSF using equipment and fighters fresh from the battlefield in Libya. The full-scale assault overwhelmed the badly outgunned forces in the north, and the rebels captured, killed and mutilated scores of Malian troops. President Touré's dismissive attitude toward this development led to accusations that he was collaborating with the rebels, which was not the first time for this accusation. His dealings with Qaddafi and Islamic rebel leaders in 2009 and his perceived permissiveness of illicit trade left most believing that secret deals were at hand for northern Mali.<sup>16</sup>

In this mistrustful and accusatory context, on 22 March 2012, a mutiny by disaffected soldiers from the defeated MDSF units resulted in a coup d'état. The *Comité national pour le redressement de la démocratie et la restauration de l'Etat* (CNDRE), a military junta led by Captain Amadou Sanogo, took power, disbanded the Government, and suspended the Constitution.<sup>17</sup> The political turmoil caused in Bamako provided a catalyst for the fall of the north. MNLA overran government soldiers in Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu and declared an independent state of Azawad on 6 April. Without an organized government resistance, the northern groups turned their attention inward, fighting amongst themselves over ideological and organizational differences. By 18 November, Ansar Dine and MUJAO removed MNLA forces from Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal to control two thirds of all of Mali. With southern forces battling over control of the government and the more moderate MNLA isolated in the north, northern Mali turned into a sanctuary for extremists to enforce their interpretation of Sharia Law. They destroyed local Sufi shrines and UNESCO World Heritage Sites while enacting harsh

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<sup>15</sup> Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan.," 14.

<sup>16</sup> Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan.," 14–5.

<sup>17</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2012)* (United Nations Security Council, November 29, 2012), 2, [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2012\\_894.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2012_894.pdf) (accessed 16 March 16, 2014)

punishments on the population, displacing over 400,000 people to seek security in the south and neighboring states.<sup>18</sup>

After the coup, ECOWAS stepped in to adjudicate the conflict. It appointed the President of Burkina Faso, Blasé Compaore, to be its representative and chief negotiator.<sup>19</sup> The body also announced the mobilization of a 3,000-strong ECOWAS standby force in case the rebels refused to accept a peaceful political solution. On 6 April the junta and ECOWAS signed a framework agreement for political transition detailing the resignation of Touré and the appointment of interim president Dioncounda Traoré, the current Speaker of the Malian National Assembly. The agreement called for elections, initially scheduled for March 2012, and a resolution of the security and humanitarian crisis in the north. On 20 April, Mali's "red beret" Presidential Guard launched a counter-coup against the junta and their allies but were unsuccessful.<sup>20</sup> On 21 May, a group of demonstrators favorable to the junta attacked and severely beat the interim President in his office.<sup>21</sup> Upon his return from medical treatment in France, the interim president agreed to the establishment of a high council with Captain Sonogo named chairman of a military committee to monitor reforms.<sup>22</sup> By 20 August 2012, a government of national unity formed, but the question of elections remained. Concerns over the legitimacy of the government, the whereabouts of the disappeared counter-coup "red berets," and the new government's ability to function brought increased attention from ECOWAS, the UN, the U.S., and other bilateral partners.

Discussions and planning for an ECOWAS force continued through the end of 2012, and on January 5, 2013 elements of Ansar Dine and MUJAO, with the support of AQIM, advanced south to capture the town of Konna. At the time, Konna was the government-controlled town north of the important city of Mopti and the strategic airport of Sevare. MDSF troops withdrew the following day, leaving the rebel groups with an

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<sup>18</sup> The destruction of shrines started in 2012. The most well known case of desecration was the attack on the Sidi Mahmud tomb in Timbuktu, as well as other historical sites in Timbuktu. "North African Salafists Turn on Sufi Shrines in Mali," *Terrorism Monitor* X, no. 10 (May 18, 2012): 1; Maj. Gen. Oliver Trandum and Lt. Col. Philippe Seigneur, "Early Lessons Learned from France's Operation Serval in Mali," *Army* 63, no. 6 (June 2013): 40.

<sup>19</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2012)*, 2–3.

<sup>20</sup> McGregor, "Red Berets, Green Berets: Can Mali's Divided Military Restore Order and Stability?," 7.

<sup>21</sup> "Mali President Traore Beaten up by Protesters," *BBC News*, May 21, 2012, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18142488>.

<sup>22</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2012)*, 3.

open advance to the capital Bamako and the south. With estimates of 10,000 men under the command of MNLA, 500 with Ansar Dine, and 300 with MUJAO, all familiar with the terrain and comfortable with desert and urban conflict, retaking the north looked to be no small feat.<sup>23</sup> The lack of progress from ECOWAS and the dysfunctional state of the MDSF led the Malian transitional authorities to request the assistance of France on 8 January to defend Mali's sovereignty and restore its territorial integrity.<sup>24</sup> France was a driving force in the United Nations Security Council to approve authorization for external forces to intercede, building on strong political, diplomatic, economic, cultural, and strategic ties it maintains with its African Francophone partners. France ushered Resolution 2085 through the UNSC, which acted under Chapter VII to authorize AFISMA to use force to intercede in the conflict and encouraged members of the international community to provide support.<sup>25</sup>

On January 11, 2013, a French Special Forces aviation unit stationed in Burkina Faso destroyed a column of small trucks near Konna. This was the first act of Operation Serval, the French military operations to support Mali and remove the extremist groups from the north, with small forces on the continent making up the initial forces. French Defence Minister Le Drian made clear the French mission: Protect Bamako and the French citizens therein; halt the militant offensive with air and mobile forces; accelerate the AFISMA deployment to begin 17 January; recapture northern Mali and reinstate government control; and deploy a 450-man European Training Mission to Mali (EUTM) to rebuild four MDSF divisions.<sup>26</sup> Operation Serval consisted of three phases: block, drive back, and clear.<sup>27</sup> Three weeks after the initial blocking force, a French brigade moved north to seize Timbuktu and Gao with combined movements, airdrops, and air

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<sup>23</sup> Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan.," 11; Estimates vary as to the number of fighters, possibly due to the context, allegiances, and location. A U.N. report estimated the total number of "core combatants" of the armed groups in northern Mali at "around 3,000" adding that insurgents were actively recruiting and had "relatively sophisticated equipment obtained from Libya" and from Malian stocks. Other reports have estimated extremist forces at 4,000-6,000 or up to 15,000 combatants. Alexis Arieff, *Crisis in Mali* (Congressional Research Service, January 14, 2013), 2, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42664.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2013)* (United Nations Security Council, March 26, 2013), 1-2,

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Report%20of%20the%20Secretary-General%20on%20the%20situation%20in%20Mali%20S%202013%20189.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 2085 (2012), Adopted 20 December 2012. S/RES/2085. 12-66067 (E). 2

<sup>26</sup> French Press Briefing, 15 January 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Tramond and Seigneur, "Early Lessons Learned from France's Operation Serval in Mali," 43.

assaults. Unlike in Afghanistan, the rebel groups chose to fight as a conventional army, taking and holding cities, travelling along roads in vehicles that made clear targets for French jets.<sup>28</sup> Supported by U.S. mobility and ISR assets, the French capitalized on good intelligence and support of locals eager to remove the extremist groups.<sup>29</sup> These groups fled to their sanctuaries in the Ifoghas Mountains north of Kidal and in the desert regions, resorting to hit and run tactics. In total, 2,900 French troops engaged in the operation with the help of 1,500 Chadian troops and elements of the MDSF, removing extremist groups from the major towns by the end of February. As of the writing of this paper, Operation Serval continues as the French and Chadian forces engage in counterinsurgency operations to seek out extremist hideouts. They continue to discuss their continued role in African security matters moving forward.

From the beginning of the crisis, the consensus of the international community was that Mali's problems reflected the exacerbating effects of regional security problems and that it would take a regional response to deliver a resolution. The death of Qaddafi ended much of the international interest in the 2011 Libyan uprising even when his fighters and weapons dispersed into other areas. Concerns that proliferation of weapons to North Africa and the Middle East would exacerbate the near term instability in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine trumped concerns over the effects to the Sahalian and Sub-Saharan states. Mali, like Niger, maintained a tenuous agreement with the Tuareg, but weak governance, difficult terrain, and a lack of resources allowed resistance forces and extremist elements to overtake the Tuareg nationalists. Ties to illicit activity presented a profit motive for control over the northern trade routes, and the new weapons and fighters presented the means in which to secure those interests and further their ideology. The international community believed that regional institutions should be the primary mechanism to counter these regional security issues if the state was unable to do so. ECOWAS began their international coordination with the AU and the UN shortly after the start of the January 2012 rebellion and increased efforts after the March coup. ECOWAS brought forward the initial UNSC resolution 2056 seeking Chapter VII authorization for the use of force and UN support for a regional security response, but

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<sup>28</sup> "Where Have the Jihadists Gone?," *The Economist*, February 2, 2013, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Arief, *Crisis in Mali*, 1.

many questions remained. During the African's planning delay and the rebel's January push south the French interceded, and ECOWAS member states rushed their forces into the field so that AFISMA could now support Operation Serval.

### **Operational legitimacy and member sovereignty**

In the construction of their regional strategy, ECOWAS sought to respond quickly with political, economic, and military options that were realistic, legitimate, and respectful of Mali's sovereignty. Ever mindful and protective of incumbent governments, ECOWAS employed its tools with a focus on establishing a functioning democracy after the coup and ensuring that Mali received the support necessary to regain its territorial integrity. The situation in Mali fit well into the ECOWAS peace and security mechanisms established during the 1990s to broaden regional security options beyond the limitations of the UN charter. Some of the language derived directly from lessons of ECOMOG's experience in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The preamble of the 1999 Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security states that illicit transnational flows and cross-border criminality "contributes to the development of insecurity and instability and jeopardizes the economic and social development of the sub-region."<sup>30</sup> Of note, Article 25 states that intervention is required under circumstances of civil conflict that threaten to induce a humanitarian emergency or pose a significant threat to regional peace and security. This legitimizes military action to support and stabilize a member state suffering from the overthrow of the elected government or a crisis stemming from human rights violations (or both).<sup>31</sup>

To alleviate the political challenge in the south, ECOWAS employed a variety of tools to re-establish order and attempt a political resolution to the double crisis. First, ECOWAS initiated severe sanctions against Mali on 1 April 2012 to encourage the junta-

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<sup>30</sup> The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security can be found here <http://www.comm.ecowas.int/sec/index.php?id=ap101299&lang=en> (accessed 5 Jan 2014) Adam Sandor, *The Problems and Prospects for ECOWAS Intervention in Mali*, Background (www.africaportal.org: Africa Portal: a project of the Africa Initiative, January 2013), 1–2, <http://www.africaportal.org/articles/2013/01/23/problems-and-prospects-ecowas-intervention-mali>.

<sup>31</sup> Sandor, *The Problems and Prospects for ECOWAS Intervention in Mali*, 2.

controlled government to return to constitutional order.<sup>32</sup> This effort yielded the signing of a framework agreement on Friday, April 6, 2012 to restore the constitution and establish an interim government while talks continued on the future of elections.<sup>33</sup> While it worked with the interim government to alleviate challenges in the south, ECOWAS also worked to establish their role as a political coordinator for the fight in the north while it planned a security response. Negotiators and interlocutors from ECOWAS established talks with all parties and coordinated the interests of the neighboring states.<sup>34</sup> While these talks ultimately failed to secure a lasting agreement, the ability to respond quickly to the developing crisis and engage with the right people on all sides allowed the potential for a favorable political solution. ECOWAS maintained focus on the need for constitutional order so that any agreements with the north would be with legitimate institutions instead of agreements based on personal relationships with the junta.

ECOWAS' planned military response was legal per its institutional mandate and as a response to Mali's request for help, but required authorization by the AU and the UN if it was to gain broader international support. The complexity of the operation required far more coordination and capability than ECOWAS could deliver to be politically and militarily effective, and recent history proved that multinational operations without UN authority could be perceived as lacking moral authority. The UNSC issued three resolutions during 2012 to provide guidance, authority, and structure to the international response.<sup>35</sup> In June 2012, the ECOWAS commission initiated an evaluation of the feasibility of deploying a stabilization force to help the Malian authorities and the MDSF regain their territorial authority in the north. ECOWAS and the AU submitted the initial plan to the UNSC for authorization, but the UNSCR 2056, dated 5 July 2012, agreed that the situation warranted their support but requested additional information on the feasibility of the action. Additional planning conferences throughout the summer sought

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<sup>32</sup> Anne Look, "ECOWAS Imposes Sanctions on Mali," *VOA*, April 1, 2012, <http://www.voanews.com/content/west-african-leaders-impose-sanctions-on-mali-145801255/180314.html>. (accessed 3 April 2014)

<sup>33</sup> "Mali Sanctions Lifted: ECOWAS - Times LIVE," accessed April 3, 2014, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/africa/2012/04/08/mali-sanctions-lifted-ecowas>. (accessed April 3, 2014)

<sup>34</sup> Negotiations and dialogue occurred with Ansar Dine and the MNLA in Ouagadougou in November 2012. The MNLA stated that their April 6, 2012 Declaration of Independence of Azawad was an attempt to draw attention to the fate of the population in the north. *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2013)*, 9.

<sup>35</sup> UNSC Resolutions 2056, 2071, and 2085.

to improve the robustness of the plan. On 1 September, the Malian transitional authorities sent a letter to ECOWAS requesting military assistance to reorganize their armed forces and restore territorial integrity within the mandate of the 1999 ECOWAS protocol. Again, ECOWAS and the AU sought authorization from the UN, and received UNSCR 2071, dated 12 October 2012, which encouraged robust international and UN assistance to finalize planning for an AFISMA force. UN planners joined an assortment of other nations, to include planners from AFRICOM, to assist ECOWAS with their operational and logistical plan for the deployment of the AFISMA force. The result was the 'harmonized joint concept of operations,' endorsed by the ECOWAS chiefs of defence staff on 6 November, by its Mediation and Security Council on 9 November, by the Heads of State and Government on 11 November and by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) on 13 November.<sup>36</sup> The AU PSC urged the UNSC to give its full support to the strategic concept of operations, and to authorize, for one year, AFISMA under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In the request, the PSC urged the UNSC to authorize the establishment of a support package funded by the UN's assessed contributions to facilitate a faster deployment. The final resolution, UNSC Resolution 2085, authorized the employment of the force but encouraged additional planning, and only mentioned a future consideration of a UN logistical package.

The complex security environment in Mali challenged the ability of the UN to employ traditional peacekeeping mechanisms, but encouraged the use of regional forces. A lack of a political agreement, the disaggregation and infighting within both the rebel forces and the interim government, and a worsening security situation eliminated the UN as a viable response option. Associations with the government to ensure the delivery of services and the protection of civilians invited the rebel groups to question the impartiality and legitimacy of the UN. The MONUSCO mission in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and the UNMISS mission in South Sudan demonstrate the difficult circumstances in which UN peacekeepers can find themselves as rebel groups target them as an associate of the government.<sup>37</sup> While the UN's position on the use of force has

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<sup>36</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2012)*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) found itself involved with the M23 insurgent group's August 2012 and the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)

evolved over the last decade, non-use of force except for self-defense remains a key principle to maintain the UN's legitimacy and impartiality. ECOWAS had experience with peace enforcement in Liberia, and felt comfortable inserting troops to aid the Malian government without a ceasefire agreement. The coup represented an additional challenge, as elements of the junta did not support UN or ECOWAS involvement. ECOWAS' mandate allowed it more flexibility to operate without agreements in place and to favor the incumbent government in a conflict. From the start, the intent of AFISMA was to bolster the MDSF, not separate the parties. The AU and ECOWAS used the UNSC resolutions as a mechanism to gain legitimacy for regional action, but more important it was an attempt to gain logistical support and sustenance.

During the AFISMA planning phases of 2012, ECOWAS employed a variety of tools to ensure it responded quickly, within the power of its mandate, and with the approval of international organizations to secure Mali's territorial integrity and regain its constitutional government. It did not have to do this, and working with the junta might have provided expedient options to resolve the crisis. Many recognized the challenges of balancing the objectives of various actors aiming to support Malian governing institutions, administer peace enforcement and humanitarian relief, counter violent extremism, and cater to the interests of regional countries and international actors. These various end states are not necessarily compatible. Sometimes, participatory and inclusive transitional political processes could be contrary to methods necessary to counter extremist groups. The interests of regional actors may contradict the desires of international actors seeking military results and criminal prosecution, as well as those local interests who look for lasting and sustainable gains.

### **Cohesive and Viable Force**

To present forces for AFISMA, ECOWAS chose to employ their portion of the Africa Standby Force as envisioned by the AU's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).<sup>38</sup> Five separate brigades, aligned regionally, in theory would be capable of

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<sup>38</sup> The AU established the APSA in the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, which was signed in July 2002. <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-protocol-en.pdf> (accessed 30 Mar 2014)

deploying within thirty days in support of an AU authorized intervention.<sup>39</sup> The West African force, or ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF), includes ECOWAS-member forces previously identified for inclusion in the unit, to provide continuity, standardization, and interoperability. The ESF consists of military, police and civilian components consistent with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter that provides for Regional Peace and Security arrangements, and authorized by Article 21 of the 1999 ECOWAS Protocol.<sup>40</sup> While ECOWAS has historical experience deploying and operating forces, the forces identified for the ESF had little experience working together beyond a few planning conferences and exercises. Additionally, ECOWAS continues to mitigate limitations, such as a lack of indigenous airlift and weaknesses in planning and command and control.<sup>41</sup> Another limitation identified earlier is the ESF's limited experience with different terrains. The UN report mandated by UNSCR 2071 identified the assumption that the international force had the required capabilities, including the ability to operate in a desert environment and effectively meet an identified threat in northern Mali, as a major delaying factor because those "*capabilities still need to be generated.*"<sup>42</sup> Units pledged to the ESF, along with other units pledged from African nations outside of ECOWAS and the MDSF, required coordination if they were to become an operationally capable force for achieving their mandate and generating the conditions to encourage a political resolution.

The French and Chadian forces that entered Mali in January assumed the lead on many of the operational objectives required of the AFISMA force, but the goals of Operation Serval fit within the requirements of UNSCR 2085 and the AFISMA mandate. The strategic end state involved the creation of the conditions necessary for a stable, democratic state capable of exercising authority over Mali's national territory, protecting the population, property and livelihoods, responding to regional security challenges, and

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<sup>39</sup> If the international community fails to act in response to a fast-developing humanitarian crisis, this force could be deployed within 14 days. Alex Vines, "A Decade of African Peace and Security Architecture," *International Affairs* 89, no. no 1 (January 2013): 98.

<sup>40</sup> For more information, see the AU's 2010 APSA Self Assessment. [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/447~v~African\\_Peace\\_And\\_Security\\_Architecture\\_-\\_2010\\_Assessment\\_Study.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/447~v~African_Peace_And_Security_Architecture_-_2010_Assessment_Study.pdf) (accessed 30 March 2014). 43-45.

<sup>41</sup> APSA Self Assessment. 45.

<sup>42</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2012)*, 16.

removing international terrorism and transnational criminal activities.<sup>43</sup> To achieve this, the resolution called for the force to achieve the following tasks:<sup>44</sup>

- (a) To contribute to the rebuilding of the capacity of the MDSF, in close coordination with other international partners involved in this process, including the European Union and other Member States;
- (b) To support the Malian authorities in recovering the areas in the north of its territory under the control of terrorist, extremist and armed groups and in reducing the threat posed by terrorist organizations, including AQIM, MUJWA (MUJAO) and associated extremist groups, while taking appropriate measures to reduce the impact of military action upon the civilian population;
- (c) To transition to stabilization activities to support the Malian authorities in maintaining security and consolidate State authority through appropriate capacities;
- (d) To support the Malian authorities in their primary responsibility to protect the population;
- (e) To support the Malian authorities to create a secure environment for the civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance and the voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees, as requested, within its capabilities and in close coordination with humanitarian actors;
- (f) To protect its personnel, facilities, premises, equipment and mission and to ensure the security and movement of its personnel

The structure of the AFISMA concept led to considerable delays and concerns over its efficacy as conditions on the ground changed. The plan intended the AFISMA force to provide support for the Malian military to regroup, strengthen, equip, and take the lead in operations, and second to engage in support of the MDSF in those operations. Based on statements by Malian interim authorities, planners assumed that equipping and supporting the MDSF could achieve gains against the rebel groups and that their losses in early 2012 were a result of a lack of support from Bamako. As identified earlier, the

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<sup>43</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2012)*, 12–3.

<sup>44</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 2085 (2012). S/RES/2085. 12-66067 (E). 4

problems in the MDSF were systemic as well as logistical and extended beyond the March coup. When rebel groups drove south in January 2013, Captain Sonogo and the junta military leadership observed that the MDSF would not stand up to the Islamic forces. Most of the units scattered to different parts of Mali and to adjoining countries, awaiting external assistance to fix a broken, outgunned, and demoralized force. Without the MDSF, AFISMA lacked the manpower, desert experience, and local logistical support to engage in operations in the north alone. Aside from the Chadian forces, most African troops deployed prepared for peacekeeping and not coordinated combat and counterinsurgency military operations.

With the events of January 2013 and subsequent French intervention, AFISMA's mission changed from one secondary to the MDSF to one secondary to the French. The French supported accelerating AFISMA's deployment, despite the inability for ECOWAS to meet the obligated number of troops or provide for their transport and support when needed. Although Operation Serval and AFISMA maintained their autonomy, French leadership sought to employ African units within population centers to maintain stability and preserve gains made by the French and Chadian force.<sup>45</sup> French liaisons working with the AFISMA headquarters coordinated unit moves and required actions, but limited the amount of information shared due to a lack of security.<sup>46</sup> The operational arrangement proved mutually beneficial, as African troops ill prepared for desert combat freed the capable French force to concentrate efforts against extremist strongpoints. While ECOWAS sought to engage the northern groups to reach political agreements, the French provided the military force necessary to compel those groups to come to the table. While predominantly used as a stabilizing force, AFISMA units did engage in one combat operation in the Wagadou Forest in March but saw little action.<sup>47</sup>

Training the Malian military also moved to a European lead. International agreements identified that the EU would establish a training mission, the European Union Training Mission in Mali, to help restructure, reform, and build the capacity of the Malian security forces and produce four battalions of 650 trained and equipped soldiers

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<sup>45</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2013)*, 2.

<sup>46</sup> AFISMA Headquarters had no measures for operational security (OPSEC) and did most of their coordination over mobile telephones. Based on conversation with CMD Ken Sutton, USARAF Liaison to AFISMA Hq. interviewed 12 March 2014.

<sup>47</sup> Interview, Sutton. 13 Mar 2014.

each. To that end, bilateral partnerships, the EU, and ECOWAS would assist in equipping, training and providing logistical support to the MDSF. Most of that support was to come from international partners and ECOWAS. The objective was for the MDSF and the international force to establish a secure environment for the restoration of state authority, including through the redeployment of rule-of-law and security institutions, both in the south and in the north as forces reclaimed territory. Additional tasks involved helping Malian authorities to create a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees. Lastly, the force would support the authorities in their primary responsibility to protect the population with regard to international human rights and international humanitarian and refugee law. Police training elements were critical to growing an indigenous and professional security infrastructure restarted after years of mismanagement.

Initially, the 2012 ‘harmonized joint concept of operations’ developed by ECOWAS served as a strategic operational framework to structure the separate but interdependent operational plans of the international force and the MDSF. The ECOWAS/AU proposal envisioned a 3,300-person deployment in support of a Malian military contingent of 5,000 troops, with the MDSF in command of operations. After January ECOWAS revised their pledged number of troops to over 5000, but most of these additional forces required equipment and training so weren’t readily available to deploy. Besides infantry battalions, the force makeup included appropriate enabling capacities, such as engineers, fire support, air assets and logistics, and a police element, including formed police units.<sup>48</sup> Chad contributed 2250 to be included under the AFISMA banner, but operationally they attached to the French operation. Total pledged forces for AFISMA reached 7,670 by February, including Chadian forces.<sup>49</sup> By mid-March 6,288 military personnel had been deployed, including 84 officers at AFISMA headquarters.<sup>50</sup> French forces totaled 4,000 in-country, but this figure doesn’t include the large expeditionary effort to deliver air strikes, logistics, and other enabling functions.

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<sup>48</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2012)*, 14.

<sup>49</sup> Interview, MAJ Philip Bonney, USA. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs, Office of Regional Security. 26 January 2014.

<sup>50</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2013)*, 8.

MDSF forces tallies vary, as not all were available for operations and some MNLA and indigenous forces in the north also fought against extremist groups. Despite the vast distance and harsh climate, the mix of forces provided the fulcrum necessary to shift the balance away from extremist control.

By April, AFISMA gradually assumed operational responsibilities for several areas in northern Mali as Operation Serval began their draw down.<sup>51</sup> By 30 May, AFISMA manning was 6,085 troops, with personnel deployed in the towns and regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Ménaka, along the border with Burkina Faso in the area of Douentza and along the border with Mauritania in the area of Diabaly. The AFISMA contingent, previously based in the town of Kidal, redeployed to Aguelhok and Tessalit early in May. Operation Serval continued to maintain a company there. Figure 6 shows the distribution of AFISMA forces by the end of June 2013.

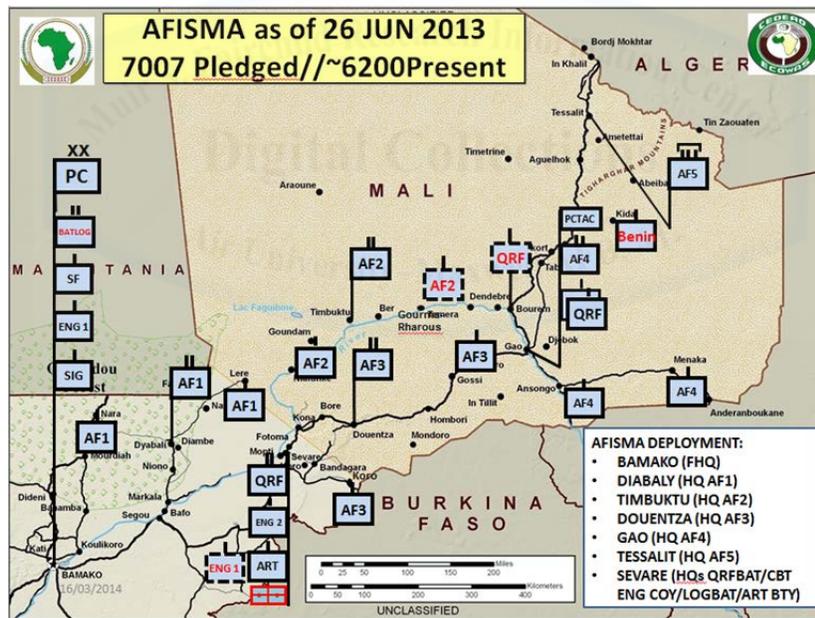


Figure 6. AFISMA forces as of the end of June 2013

Source: reprint from brief “AFISMA Operational History,” 26 June 2013. Permission received from CDR Sutton, USARAF)

The transition from French operations to African forces reflected several facts on the ground. First, French efforts during 2013 effectively drove extremist groups into

<sup>51</sup> This was French intention, announced by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Laurent Fabius, in Bamako on 5 April.

hiding, decimated their membership and leadership, and reduced them to terrorist and insurgent tactics in and around northern cities to which African peacekeeping forces were positioned to respond. As the operation shifted from seize and hold combat operations to more steady-state nation building, counter-insurgency, and peace enforcement, France, ECOWAS, and the AU pushed within the UN to transition AFISMA to a UN mission. The UN report submitted 26 March 2013 per UNSCR 2085 offered two options to shift the operation to a UN mission. The first option maintained the status quo, where the UN political office in Mali (UNOM) would maintain its effort with the government and AFISMA would assume responsibility for the security operation and the fight against extremists. The UN would provide logistical support. The second option involved ‘rehatting’ AFISMA into a UN mission and adding additional troops and leadership to a strength of 11,200 troops and 1,440 police. Given the residual threat, the UN suggested adding a “parallel force” to operate in Mali (and potentially in the region) in order to conduct major combat and counter-terrorism operations and provide specialist support beyond the scope of the United Nations mandate and capacity.<sup>52</sup> Option two, the preferred choice of the UNSC, reflected the evolution of the use of force for the UN. The UN authorized a similar ‘Intervening Brigade’ option that same month for MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>53</sup> The resulting UNSC resolution 2100 authorized MINUSMA on 25 April 2013, specifically identifying the French as the intervening force.<sup>54</sup>

ECOWAS planned a force to function as they had employed force in the past, as a semi-skilled conventional force made up of different units with unique specialties centered on a loose headquarters. The concepts behind the ESF and ASF focused on

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<sup>52</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2013)*, 14–5.

<sup>53</sup> UNSCR 2098, dated 28 Mar 2013, authorized a special 3,000 strong ‘UN Intervening Brigade,’ made up of forces from South Africa, Tanzania, and Malawi, and tasked it to conduct offensive operations to neutralize armed groups with or without DRC troops. The target of this force was the rebel group M23, operating with the support of Rwanda. M23 had repeatedly threatened civilians and the UN monitors, and in August 2011 they captured the eastern Congo city of Goma despite the UN mission there. The Intervening Brigade involved African nations willing to engage in close combat, and were a major contributor to the political solution and disbanding of M23 in 2013. For more information, see <http://www.theinternational.org/articles/480-the-uns-new-force-redefines-interventi> (accessed 30 March 2014).

<sup>54</sup> Paragraph 18 provides authority to France to continue operations in support of MINUSMA to intervene when they are under imminent and serious threat. UN Security Council Resolution 2100. 25 April 2013. 12-24771(E). [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusma/documents/mali%20\\_2100\\_E\\_.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusma/documents/mali%20_2100_E_.pdf) (accessed 30 March 2014)

fielding a response force to respond to a crisis, but different nation's militaries had varying degrees of experience and methods for dealing with non-state insurgencies. For example, Nigerian tactics in their north against Boko Haram showed a brutality they claimed necessary to stop the spread and support to terrorists, but those same tactics applied during a regional mission supported by the international community would sully the force and implicate all players as supporting potential human rights abusers. Other nations may be much closer in ethnicity, religion, or history to the rebel groups, coloring their tactics and their perception of the problem. Niger's experience with Tuareg separatists vary from the experience of Togo and Ghana. ECOWAS' headquarters also represented a weak area for its ability to respond to an insurgency. The headquarters had trouble with OPSEC, had very limited communications capabilities, and demonstrated loose control over disparate forces. Commanders and staffs relied on cell phones and other unsecure means to coordinate on a daily basis, but had no ability to relay information when operating in an austere area.<sup>55</sup> Deploying a loosely controlled, disparate force with varying experience into a dynamic environment to reduce the threat was a risky plan from the beginning, and its delayed implementation reflected the lack of confidence most had in its success.

The international response to generate the conditions for an improved political situation in Mali required the creation of a credible, cohesive, and capable force able to achieve the elements of the UN mandate. Success required more than the capabilities resident in ECOWAS member states, and political delays and a dynamic and spiraling situation on the ground brought French and Chadian forces as well as the support of the broader international community. A mix of French, ECOWAS, and EU forces combined with the help of the U.S. and UN to generate a force able to fulfill the demands of the mandate. The integrated force sought to alleviate the Malian government of the extremist threat, train the MDSF, and provide the space necessary to establish elections and a broader political dialogue with the Tuareg. Troop strength mattered to ensure a sufficient presence, both to reduce risk to forces and to ensure the protection of the population. The AFISMA deployment allowed ECOWAS the opportunity to test their planning, logistics,

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<sup>55</sup> CDR Sutton served in the AFISMA Headquarters and shared his first-hand experiences. Interview. CDR Sutton. March 12, 2014.

and operations, and to come to terms with the limitations inherent in the reality of the ESF. While the response was not as designed, the positive result provided lessons learned for ECOWAS to improve their capacity to respond in the future. The inability of ECOWAS to respond to the crisis in a timely manner with a force able to operate in the area, in sufficient numbers, and with support for the duration serves as a negative development for contemporary African peace operations.

### **Coordinated Outside Support**

From its inception, questions about resources and sustainment plagued international security planners. For the Malians, it had been the underlying cause of the March coup. ECOWAS understood its members did not have the ability to support a long-term contingency operation, and they understood Mali's domestic problems well enough to comprehend that the conflict would not be a quick one. Security Council deliberations emphasized the operation should be funded through voluntary bilateral donor contributions, while the AU and ECOWAS wanted assurances that their forces would receive services from a U.N.-funded logistics support package paid for from general assessed UN funds.<sup>56</sup> News reports at the time cited estimates that the operation would cost \$200-500 million in AFISMA's first year.<sup>57</sup> ECOWAS presented figures at the AU donor conference in January 2013, stating the requirement for \$461 million in immediate funds for 5550 troops, while a full complement of 8,000 soldiers required \$959 million.<sup>58</sup> By the start of operations, the AU and ECOWAS received pledges of \$455 million in addition to in-kind contributions in training, logistics, weapons and fuel. African nations contributed 23% of the total amount.<sup>59</sup> As operations started, financial pledges only covered half of the total financial resources required for the increased

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<sup>56</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2013)*, 12.

<sup>57</sup> Arieff, *Crisis in Mali*, 11.

<sup>58</sup> Mehari Taddele Maru, *African-Led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA): Military ahead of Politics* (Al Jazeera Center for Studies, February 14, 2013), [http://studies.aljazeera.net/ResourceGallery/media/Documents/2013/2/14/2013214835996734AFISMA\\_MilitaryaheadofPolitics.pdf](http://studies.aljazeera.net/ResourceGallery/media/Documents/2013/2/14/2013214835996734AFISMA_MilitaryaheadofPolitics.pdf). (accessed 30 March 2014)

<sup>59</sup> Maru, *African-Led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA): Military ahead of Politics*; Solomon A. Dersso, "Annual Review of the African Union Peace and Security Council 2013/2014" (Institute for Security Studies, 2014), 64.

commitment of troops, while troop-contributing countries satisfied over two thirds of their pledges.<sup>60</sup>

The funding of AFISMA exposes the lack of coordination and political fighting at all levels that served to minimize the force's effectiveness and relevance to the conflict. First, the crisis exposed the rift between the subregional institutions and the AU, where the subregionals felt the AU PSC unable and unwilling to support them when needed but are always ready to offer advice. ECOWAS negotiated their own deals with the EU and the U.S., and used the AU to help coordinate outside support.<sup>61</sup> The AU locked itself in a battle with the UN, where both dictated terms and requirements to the other. The result was three different trust funds to provide support to AFISMA set up by the UN, the AU, and the EU with ECOWAS. Control over money, forces, and the political effort was never fully resolved until the establishment of MINUSMA, at which time the UN took control of all three functions. The political conflict was a causal factor in the lack of leadership demonstrated by the AU PSC and ECOWAS for the AFISMA force.

With funding scarce, the other major limitation was an insufficient logistics arm at ECOWAS and the AU from which to manage the funds and ensure supplies met troops in the field.<sup>62</sup> Responding quickly to crises demanded a political willingness to deploy troops, but the infrastructure available to ensure they receive the resources necessary to sustain the fight. During the planning stage, the UN called for AFISMA to deploy troops that were self-sufficient for 90-days, yet the ECOWAS strategic operational framework only identified 10-days of self-sufficiency.<sup>63</sup> UN reports identified that the gap in sustainment, involving food, fuel, and water for the force, would require external support.<sup>64</sup> Most of the UN's reticence to provide logistical support hinged on security of UN staff, although securing general assessed funds for yet another peacekeeping operation was a difficult task. In a letter to the Security Council on 20 January, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon agreed to develop plans for the UN to sustain operations, but

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<sup>60</sup> Dersso, "Annual Review of the African Union Peace and Security Council 2013/2014," 65–7.

<sup>61</sup> ECOWAS sought to maintain control of forces and the overall political coordination as it was their leadership engaged in negotiations. The AU PSC should have paid for the operation given their endorsement, and they did cover some of the costs from the AU's general assembly assessments. Dersso, "Annual Review of the African Union Peace and Security Council 2013/2014," 64–7.

<sup>62</sup> Dersso, "Annual Review of the African Union Peace and Security Council 2013/2014," 97.

<sup>63</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2012)*, 15–6.

<sup>64</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali (2012)*, 16.

warned the Security Council against approving UN logistical support for combat phases of operations in Mali.<sup>65</sup> He cited concerns that the provision of logistical support to military forces engaged in an offensive operation could negatively affect the safety of UN civilian staff working in the region.

The debate over resources resembled another conflict not typical of UN Chapter VII peacekeeping operations, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In 2007, the AU applied its mandate to authorize a regional force of African militaries to enter Somalia and remove Al-Shabaab. The UN supported this action with a political office and authorization of the AU mission, but they did not initially offer material support to the operation.<sup>66</sup> Instead, the U.S. and the EU worked via the AU to provide the logistical support and troop stipends necessary to sustain the operation. The mixture of UN political assistance, western logistical support, and pledged troops and funds presented a more responsive capability freed from the time, expense, and politics of a wider UN effort, but lacked some of the controls inherent in a UN operation. The “AMISOM Model” of hybrid support to regional forces for the sake of expediency, as a matter of policy, contains hazards to all involved, most of which to the soldiers mandated to deploy with their funding and support in question as the mission evolves. In short, it represents a ‘pickup game’ allowing regional institutions like the AU to authorize forces it has no capacity to support.<sup>67</sup> While this paper will not discuss the issues surrounding AMISOM, the hybrid model employed to support regional forces prior to UN engagement is an important precedent that played a critical role in the deployment and support of the AFISMA force.<sup>68</sup> Many parallels can be drawn between the situations in

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<sup>65</sup> Letter dated 20 January 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council. 4. [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2013/37](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2013/37) (accessed 30 March 2014)

<sup>66</sup> For the full list of UNSC Resolutions on AMISOM, see <http://amisom-au.org/key-documents/United-nations-security-council-resolutions/> (accessed 26 Mar 2014)

<sup>67</sup> For more on this topic, see the interview with Dr. Paul Williams, <http://web.peaceops.com/archives/2264> (accessed 26 Mar 2014)

<sup>68</sup> The AMISOM model represents an unofficial division of labor to supplant traditional UN support packages when the UN is unable or unwilling to dedicate resources. The U.S., via the State Department and Title 22 authority, contracts to provide fuel, food, water, and mobility support to forces, while the EU dedicates funds for troop stipends via the African Peace Facility (APF) and the AU. In Somalia, this arrangement lasted from 2007 to 2009, at which point the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) was established via UNSCR 1863 to begin delivering a logistics capacity support package. For more information on UNSOA, see <http://unpos.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=9731&language=en-US> (accessed 26 Mar 2014). Background information provided by the professionals in the Bureau of African Affairs, Office of Regional and Security Affairs, US Department of State (interviewed 27 January 2014)

Mali in 2012 and Somalia in 2007, and the planning for AFISMA certainly was informed by the stagnation of the AMISOM mission and the complexities of the security structures established for its support.<sup>69</sup>

The U.S. and the EU brokered a deal to support AFISMA similar to the AMISOM hybrid model. The U.S. would contract for logistical support to African units and the EU would provide stipends for soldiers assigned to AFISMA. The U.S. State Department contracted with PAE Corporation to deliver equipment, food, fuel, and water to units stationed in Mali.<sup>70</sup> Direct contracting of services proved more inexpensive and faster than working through traditional UN avenues, and for the U.S. it provided an ability to control costs and measure performance versus a UN system where the U.S. simply pays 28% of the total general assessed funds without control of the process.<sup>71</sup> The EU works directly with the AU to help develop the APSA, funding troop stipends through the African Peace Fund and administered by the AU.<sup>72</sup> Another example of external support is the U.S./ECOWAS dual-owned equipment depot in Freetown, Sierra Leone, used to warehouse materiel delivered to ECOMOG peacekeeping forces during the 1990s and 2000s.<sup>73</sup> The facility is dual owned by the U.S. and ECOWAS, and provides a location where maintenance, storage, and deployment of trucks and other equipment can occur on the continent. The depot provided vehicles to get the AFISMA force started and time for outside support to purchase and deliver additional security vehicles. External support mitigated the limitations of the AFISMA plan and helped bring the force up to a standard across the different national militaries. Coordination of donor support fell to military planners or to the donors themselves while political disagreements limited the role of institutional leadership.

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<sup>69</sup> For more information, Cecilia Hull Wiklund presents a short overview of the policy challenges. Cecilia Hull Wiklund, *AMISOM - A Model for a Peace Operation in Mali?* Studies in African Security (FOI: Peace Operations Project, March 2013), 1–2, [http://www.foi.se/Global/V%C3%A5r%20kunskap/S%C3%A4kerhetspolitiska%20studier/Afrika/Hull%20Wiklund,%20AMISOM%20Model%20for%20Mali,%20FOI%20Memo%204393\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.foi.se/Global/V%C3%A5r%20kunskap/S%C3%A4kerhetspolitiska%20studier/Afrika/Hull%20Wiklund,%20AMISOM%20Model%20for%20Mali,%20FOI%20Memo%204393_ENG.pdf). (accessed 26 Mar 2014)

<sup>70</sup> Tom Callahan, “Logistics Support to the African-Led International Support Mission in Mali.,” *Stability Operations Magazine* 8, no. 5 (April 3, 2013): 25–27.

<sup>71</sup> Interview. Michael Bittrick, Director, Office of Regional Security, Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State. 26 January 2014.

<sup>72</sup> Interview. Michael Bittrick, State Department. AF/RSA. 26 January 2014.

<sup>73</sup> From Interviews with Michael Bittrick, Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. State Department. January 26, 2014. Also, more can be read in the following: Callahan, “Logistics Support to the African-Led International Support Mission in Mali.”

The significant amount of outside assistance providing sustenance, stipends, training, and other enabling support reduced the viability of the ECOWAS/AU response as an independent force.<sup>74</sup> From the earliest planning stages, the extremely limited ability of West African states to project military force meant donors would have to provide airlift, surveillance, equipment, and training of donor forces.<sup>75</sup> Regional and subregional institutions have the responsibility to provide for the forces that deploy in their name, and in the case of the AU it is required per the PSC protocol.<sup>76</sup> External support can circumvent that responsibility, creating a donor dependency. For some states, peacekeeping missions can be a viable source of external revenue and a way to maintain trained and equipped military forces when domestic budgets will not support the same. External support of regional operations divorces the pain of resourcing a military force from the political process, removing a major incentive for regional institutions and their membership to seek political resolutions. Donor support for a force can create a market for peacekeepers in a troubled zone, creating an incentive to maintain the force in country and perpetuate the operation's status quo.

### **Effectiveness of Forces**

The purpose of the ECOWAS force was to generate enough stability for the Malians and the UN to take over. While the ultimate responsibility for the situation in Mali lay with the Malians, the general understanding was that the UN would eventually play a role to help rebuild its institutions and alleviate the humanitarian crisis. Without security and a peace agreement established, the UN could not develop a legitimate presence. The regional solution from the start was an intermediate option to generate the conditions for a political agreement and provide the military force necessary to push back the extremist groups. The situation in the south represented a more familiar problem, but the challenge for ECOWAS was whether the region could defeat radical extremist fighters willing to fight conventionally and as an insurgency in the north.

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<sup>74</sup> This is a common problem as noted by Dersso and the ISS. He points to a lack of political willingness to support these initiatives as a failure of the entire structure Dersso, "Annual Review of the African Union Peace and Security Council 2013/2014," 96.

<sup>75</sup> Arieff, *Crisis in Mali*, 11.

<sup>76</sup> Dersso, "Annual Review of the African Union Peace and Security Council 2013/2014," 64.

Unlike previous ECOWAS peacekeeping operations, AFISMA did not have a dominant member nation willing to dedicate resources and troops to the task. This lack of leadership concerned many interested parties about the efficacy of the use of regional forces given the difficulty experienced by the MDSF in the north, and NATO forces operating in Afghanistan. First, if AFISMA deployed and failed to make gains it could embolden regional extremist groups to believe that they can operate with impunity in weak states while diminishing the confidence members had in ECOWAS institutions. With Niger experiencing similar conditions with their Tuareg population and Nigeria working to counter Boko Haram in their north, any weakness in regional security structures could destabilize governing structures. Algeria had been a major actor working to remove the AQIM threat in Mali before the coup and it did not want France or ECOWAS to get involved in counter-terrorism operations.<sup>77</sup> Second, if ECOWAS could not adequately resource, sustain, and develop their force then the rebel groups could simply wait them out, work around them, or buy them off. Graft and corruption plagued previous African peacekeeping missions and earned some nations, like Nigeria, a bad name. Third, the AFISMA force could inherit the animosities those in the north felt toward the black Malians, placing them in jeopardy of hurting their legitimacy as an institution. Language, culture, and climate differences could exacerbate the force's ability to work with the people. Awareness would prove important to generate intelligence, as the combat operation would shift to counter terrorism.

The departure of Nigeria represents another significant challenge to the efficacy of the force. From the start Nigeria was a willing participant and deployed a force of over one thousand infantry, specialty troops, and leadership for the headquarters. As in previous ECOWAS interventions, Nigeria held the preponderance of forces and retained leadership of the force and overall military command of the force, a position held by Major General Abdul-Kadir Shehu. Historically, Nigeria assumed the role as leader of the political and military missions and provided the bulk of resources and forces. Nigerian forces patrolled the relatively safe environs just north of Bamako in Segou, and unlike previous interventions, they did not get the bulk of the operations. Nigeria took a lesser

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<sup>77</sup> Tobias Koepf, *France and the Fight against Terrorism in the Sahel: The History of a Difficult Leadership Role*, Note de l'IFRI, IFRI Sub-Saharan Africa Program (Institut Francais des relations Internationales (IFRI), June 2013), 22, ifri.org.

role with AFISMA because of the increasing counter-terrorism operations against Boko Haram.<sup>78</sup> In July 2013, the need for experienced troops at home required most of the 1,200 contingent to return.<sup>79</sup> Some speculated the return coincided with the transition of command to Dutch leadership with the transition to MINUSMA at the end of June, but sources state that the domestic requirements trumped peacekeeping operations.<sup>80</sup> The use of regional forces consisting of member militaries means those members can recall their forces when larger priorities or domestic politics demand, presenting planners and political leaders with a difficult challenge. Engaging in long-term counterinsurgency without knowing if your forces will agree to sustain the fight reduces its coercive power, emboldens the insurgents, and weakens the legitimacy of the intervention. Even the French, who proved successful in their counterinsurgency operations, stated publicly that they intended to leave and hand off operations.

As the Afghan proverb states, “you have the watch, we have the time;” the Tuareg understand the long-term struggle for control of the north involves defeating extremists, maintaining secular nationalism, and building a lasting political agreement with Bamako. AFISMA, and later MINUSMA, with the help of the French can help the Tuareg and the Malian government develop services to gain the support of the population and return the rule of constitutional law to the region. In the short run, regional forces must be better prepared to respond quickly and with forces prepared to deal with the crisis as it is, not as they want it to be, if it is to be remotely effective. The AU and ECOWAS must identify and understand the implications of regional events on member state populations by engaging their early warning mechanisms and providing forces willing and capable to stay through their mandate. If ECOWAS can facilitate this kind of force, it would serve as a deterrent for member states who don’t want regional forces operating in their territory and for rebel groups who see poorly governed and secured areas as fertile ground. As subregional capabilities grow, it is incumbent on the AU to coordinate

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<sup>78</sup> Matt Freear and Cedric de Coning, “Lessons from the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) for Peace Operations in Mali,” *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2, no. 2 (June 12, 2013): 12.

<sup>79</sup> Reuters wire. 19 July 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/19/us-nigeria-un-mali-idUSBRE96IOPA20130719> (accessed 30 March 2014)

<sup>80</sup> Interview. Sutton. 12 Mar 2014.

subregional efforts similarly to how subregionals coordinate member efforts. Domestic politics and bureaucratic infighting makes this nearly impossible in the near to mid-term.

### **Conclusion**

AFISMA's deployment to Mali in 2013 was not a clean affair, but represented the political will of ECOWAS and the AU with the support of the UN, the US, and the EU. ECOWAS was unable to produce a regional response to the crisis in response to requests from the interim Malian government or as authorized by their membership, the AU, and the UNSC. Political and logistical coordination led to deployment delays, so when armed Islamic groups pushed south of the Niger River France filled the gap and took a strong leadership role. French involvement generated the space necessary to separate the extremist groups from their control of the north so that the MNLA and the south could work toward a political agreement. After the initial push ended in February 2014, French and African forces found themselves engaged in an asymmetric counter-insurgency that continues today. France, ECOWAS, and the AU encouraged a larger UN role, with the goal to shift AFISMA to a UN-managed mission. While AFISMA troops were a part of the stabilizing operation in the south and the north, their limited capability did not allow them to take a greater role. The EU and France took responsibility for the two main elements of the UN mandate, train the Malian military and engage extremist forces in the north. The African units provided an "African face" to the broader stability operation, mixing the legitimacy of regional experience with the speed and capacity of France and the EU.

ECOWAS focused on generating a force that was legitimate and respectful of Malian sovereignty, but not one that proved cohesive, coordinated with external support, or entirely effective in generating a political solution independent of outside forces and institutions. The ESF is not a long-term counterinsurgency force, but neither are many conventional militaries. Even the French, well versed in the counterinsurgency mission, continue to engage elements in the north 15 months later. While they may not have an effective response, not getting involved is the bigger risk for ECOWAS. It is in their member's interest not to allow sanctuary for extremist groups, and they could not entertain an independent Tuareg state. AFISMA set about the task of preserving what

gains the French made, with a focus on the eventual transition to the UN. The goal involved creating space for the new government to work, generate pressure on the rebels to join in that government, and eliminate the irreconcilable elements. In this regard, AFISMA proved to be of some success.

Coordinating external support to mitigate the logistical limitations required the establishment of a 'hybrid model' similar to the arrangement used in Somalia to provide food, fuel, and water to African forces. As the AU and ECOWAS fought over political control of the mission, both sides pushed the UN to assume the lead. The French assumed operational control of the mandated mission, and coordinated with AFISMA forces to support Operation Serval. For external actors assisting with training, equipping, sustaining, and transporting contributing countries forces, success involved the deployment and maintenance of capable forces. Without strong leadership or a desire to engage for the resolution of a political settlement, AFISMA suffered from donor dependence from start to finish. Once the UN assumed operations, political and military operations fell under the same operational structure with the resources necessary to ensure the force remained viable through the time stated in their mandate. Additionally, AFISMA and UN support of the MDSF and Malian government assumption of control in the north served as a disincentive to resolve the conflict; peacekeeping dollars and additional forces proved an economic benefit to one of Africa's poorest regions. Burden sharing in a multilateral mission quickly devolved into multi-level donor dependency.

Counter-terrorist and counterinsurgency operations over the last decade saw the evolution of new tools to rally forces in defense of sovereign actors and regional security. The ability for subregional and regional institutions to authorize and engage their forces independent of the UN provides flexibility and speed necessary to mitigate a dynamic situation. The coordination of external actor support mitigates the weaknesses of these regional responses and encourages speed, allowing smaller forces to engage before instability and human rights abuses conflagrates the violence beyond the political conflict. The UN's recent authorization of the use of force through proxies is another tool, providing a mechanism to coerce rebel groups to accept and honor political agreements to end conflict. Subregional forces may be asked to be the initial response in a conflict, or could become this proxy force under the umbrella of UN legitimacy and

logistics. While the AU and ECOWAS may have failed to execute their response to the crisis in Mali effectively, and some questions can be asked as to the effectiveness of regional responses to long-term counterinsurgency, the events of 2012 and 2013 furthered the development of international, post-Westphalian mechanisms to respond to a more dangerous world.



## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

This chapter assesses the two previous cases to identify patterns of behavior and barriers to the successful employment of regional forces. The question to answer prior to analysis is ‘why these two cases?’ The first ECOMOG intervention in Liberia is a foundational case because it is the first use of force by a subregional community and best captures the political and military realities of the post-Cold War world. The longevity and operational variance, adaptations within the institution, and complexity of the conflict offer many lessons. Most important, ECOMOG offers an example of a regional response led by a dominant state and without a strong UN or external support network. For the second case, while there are several ECOWAS interventions to choose from, the recent intervention in Mali presents a similar political situation to Liberia but a significantly different response. Evolving from the lessons of regional and international peacekeeping in the 1990s, the intervention in Mali demonstrates UN, AU, and ECOWAS peacemaking trends and the implementation of security protocols without a dominant lead state, as well as limitations in the relationships between the three institutions. Both cases were interventions of choice suffering from similar operational challenges, and both involved a failure of governance with violent conflict emanating from socio-economic, political, ethnic, and generational exclusion of a subset of the population.<sup>1</sup> While other cases would add a variety of circumstance to assist association and test potential theories at work, the two cases are paradigmatic examples of two different applications of subregional military operations at two distinct points in time. A comparison of the two will help illuminate the character and nature of the regional response.

At the heart of this paper is the question of legitimacy. What makes a regional force legitimate, who determines it, why is it important, how do they maintain it, and is a regional force legitimate if it is dependent on external support? Legitimacy is the fulcrum upon which institutions rest, determining the utility and cost of its function. It is not easily gained, nor kept, but is a vital ingredient for institutions seeking to improve the

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<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Kwesi Aning, “The Challenge of Civil Wars to Multilateral Interventions – UN, ECOWAS, and Complex Political Emergencies in West Africa: A Critical Analysis.,” *African & Asian Studies* 4, no. 1/2 (February 2005): 4.

conditions for a political resolution to a conflict of which they are not a part. Without it, an institution has no standing or credibility, loses its high ground and endangers its intervening military forces. Securing the legitimacy, and with it the viability, of African regional security responses is a chief concern for policymakers. Legitimacy as a variable of operations is dependent and interrelated to the four independent variables presented as subquestions: how the institution manages member sovereignty, the cohesion and viability of the regional force, its association with outside forces, and the efficacy of its force. The analysis will explore four relationships at work within ECOWAS: Self versus common interests, ad hoc versus established forces, internal versus external support, and independent versus integrated solutions. To address these relationships and answer the questions, this chapter will first explore the utility of institutions, and then assess the evolution of the four questions between the two cases. Finally, filtering these findings for specific regional context will see if any patterns might extend beyond West Africa. The identification of patterns in the application of regional forces in West Africa and beyond can directly assist U.S. policymakers' efforts to improve the legitimacy and efficacy of "African solutions."

### **The Function of Regional Institutions**

West Africa is a complex subregion and the actions of ECOWAS seem to follow a capricious reasoning and ad hoc methodology.<sup>2</sup> Some view ECOWAS much like other institutions, as a tool of strong states to further their interests and reduce their cost to do so.<sup>3</sup> A cursory review of Nigeria's involvement in Liberia supports this realist critique, and the lack of a dominant interest within the region doomed the AFISMA intervention to

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<sup>2</sup> While ECOWAS began as a mechanism to solidify Nigeria's hegemonic power against French influence, its behavior since its inception changes based on the needs of its membership, the state of the subregion, and the resources at its disposal. Its actions can differ from its protocols and decisions, but reflects the interests of its membership despite its principles and protocols. For more information, see Adebajo's work on the history and use of ECOWAS. Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa*, 30–9.

<sup>3</sup> Mearshimer says states in the system create and shape institutions so that they can maintain, if not increase, their own share of world power. John J Mearshimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 364; Tavares furthers this point with analysis of SADC and ECOWAS interventions. His broad analysis of Nigerian interests in Liberia and predominance in ECOMOG leads him to conclude that it was their interests at work in ECOMOG, not regional consensus concerning order maintenance. Tavares, "The Participation of SADC and ECOWAS in Military Operations: The Weight of National Interests in Decision-Making.," 146, 166–7.

irrelevancy behind a strong French interest.<sup>4</sup> States play a powerful role within institutions, and without their energy, interest, and resources, regimes and norms quickly reduce to meetings and empty talk. If institutions are mere apologists for their hegemons, then where does their legitimacy originate? As threats to stability expand outward from weak states and less from an undeterred strong state, then how do institutions work if a hegemon has little interest? An appreciation of the utility and behavior of institutions will help shape the analysis of the two cases.

Barry Buzan identifies the African state system as possessing a post-Westphalian, post-modern structure where traditional behavior of states shift toward a dependence on communal institutions through which states mitigate political, economic, and security risks.<sup>5</sup> This behavior is not unique to Africa; U.S. preference for military coalitions and the growth in size and prominence of NATO, the EU, the G8, and the Arab League reveal the centripetal force drawing states toward common action. Motivations range from burden-sharing to legitimacy-building, trading unconstrained interest for pluralistic goals and operating within multilateral norms.<sup>6</sup> The success and expansion of multilateral institutions since 1945 and 1991 respectively speak to their utility, which is to constrain the power of strong states and generate political and economic stability between states.<sup>7</sup> Robert Keohane describes the benefits of international regimes: they alter the information available to governments and the opportunities open to them; enforce commitments made to support such institutions at the expense of reputation; and facilitate cooperation by reducing uncertainty.<sup>8</sup> Instead of depending on power relations to bind states within the institution, states choose to comply based on their commitment to agreements and to

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<sup>4</sup> Many authors fail to adequately assess Nigeria's role in the decisions to intervene in Liberia, painting ECOMOG as a false front for Nigerian ambitions.

<sup>5</sup> Buzan, *Regions and Powers*, 222.

<sup>6</sup> Finnemore captures the evolution of the use of force from a tool of states to one applied through multilateral forums because they are more legitimate. Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*, 17–23; G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 266.

<sup>7</sup> Ikenberry, *After Victory*, 266, 273.

<sup>8</sup> Keohane describes the importance of regimes and their ability to lower costs to doing business internationally by improving legal liability and mutual compliance, lowering transaction costs, reducing uncertainty and improving information, reducing asymmetries in informational relationships, reducing potential moral hazards, and correcting for irresponsible behavior. Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, 1st Princeton classic ed, A Princeton Classic Edition (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005), 88–97.

avoid the costs of non-compliance. Keohane points out that cooperation is not antithetical to hegemonic force; it provides a hegemon a more efficient way to influence allies and partners than relying on military power.<sup>9</sup> Institutions lower the cost of international relations, encourage cooperation and lower, but do not completely remove, uncertainty, revealing both the appeal of ECOWAS to the poor states of West Africa and the potential for non-optimal outcomes.

A common perception of multilateral intervention is that it reflects a collective will, reducing the influence of individual self-interest that often discredits the unilateral actions of states. Yet individual interest is a critical element for institutions. As Aristotle states, men “journey together with a view to particular advantage,” and stay together for the sake of general advantage.<sup>10</sup> Self-interest determines the scope of a state's involvement, but the reasons a group stays together can often be economically and politically complex. Strong states can influence the group's goals, methods, and outcomes, but group dynamics intertwine strong and weak states into mutually beneficial relationships. Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* avers that groups working to create a collective good, in this case security, suffer from non-optimal economic outcomes where states paying a larger portion of the costs will bear a disproportionate share of the burden.<sup>11</sup> Small states naturally exploit the economic strength and interest of large states, but for large states value maximization may not be the only motivating factor.<sup>12</sup> Where Olson discusses the social incentives of cooperative action, Alexander Wendt introduces the social construction of material interest and the distribution of ideas that compels the system.<sup>13</sup> The prestige and legitimacy gained through common action disproportionately benefits the large state, which is perceived as virtuously exercising individual power for collective benefit. The large state may also value the idea of the group and wish it to succeed despite the costs.

West African nations agreed to employ ECOWAS as a mechanism to address security crises in Liberia and Mali as a community instead of responding unilaterally or

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<sup>9</sup> Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 40.

<sup>10</sup> Aristotle's Ethics, viii.9.1160a (note 3, Olson). Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 6.

<sup>11</sup> Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, 43–4, 60.

<sup>12</sup> Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, 60.

<sup>13</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 67 (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 135–7.

waiting for outside assistance that may or may not appear. Nigeria had the option to respond to Doe's request for assistance, as France did in Mali, but instead saw Liberia as an opportunity for ECOWAS to exercise its subregional responsibility.<sup>14</sup> While Nigeria had specific self-interests driving its involvement, the states nearest Liberia needed Nigeria to join the intervention.<sup>15</sup> The institution never had a common will and could not determine even if it sought to intervene for humanitarian or security reasons.<sup>16</sup> The issue divided ECOWAS, and each of the five members of ECOMOG had specific reasons for joining and staying. Nigeria sought validation, leadership, and legacy while the other states sought security, but they shared a common interest in that none could afford to lose the conflict.

For interventions seen as a potential violation of sovereignty, multilateralism extends legitimacy even when states have a clear *causus belli*.<sup>17</sup> The regional institution adds a normative value to the intervention and takes responsibility for it, broadening the appeal of the operation for domestic, regional, and international audiences. This does not mean that every coalition of states is credible, or their actions *de facto* legitimate. The general prohibition against intervention in the affairs of a sovereign state is fundamental to the UN Charter, with the Security Council holding the ability to authorize intervention and delegate that authority to a regional agent.<sup>18</sup> Organizations like ECOWAS can make common security agreements and mutual defense pacts between members, but as evident in the Liberia case the use of that pact to justify an intervention in another member state can be of questionable legality. Part of the success of the operation depends in part on the legal basis of the intervention. The parties and the population can compromise an

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<sup>14</sup> Adebajo identifies the strong role Ghana played in the planning of ECOMOG, and refutes the argument that the intervention was a Nigerian *fait accompli*. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 51, 63.

<sup>15</sup> Nigeria saw itself as a regional power and responsible for its security and development. They have used terms similar to the Monroe Doctrine to explain their relationship, and sought to employ their new oil wealth and influence for the improvement of the region. Adebajo argues that Nigeria joined ECOMOG for three reasons: further the idea of Pax Nigeriana; General Babangida's self-image and desire for legacy; and the aspirations of the Nigerian military to prove its worth. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 44–50.

<sup>16</sup> The Francophone states rejected the ECOMOG intervention and actively worked against it. Ghana and Nigeria differed on the mission and approach. Sierra Leone and Gambia operated independently and did not follow assignments. Nigeria claimed the intervention was for humanitarian reasons, but also pushed the regional security angle which motivated more states to stay engaged.

<sup>17</sup> Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*, 134.

<sup>18</sup> UN Charter, Articles 2(4), 39-42, and 52.

institution by deciding the intervention is illegal or illegitimate, raising the cost to achieve its mandate significantly.<sup>19</sup>

African institutions created to improve economic integration have had their responsibilities expanded to address the internal security matters of their members, appreciating the capacity of conflict to escalate humanitarian and political crises and create instability outside of an affected state. The strength of subregional institutions lay in this focus on peace and security; each state wants to improve its economic development, strengthen access to the common market, and increase its attractiveness to foreign support, but instability limits that potential. Subregional interventions reflect the self-interest of its members and their willingness to seek a favorable political outcome in conflict states and improve long-term stability in the adjoining region.<sup>20</sup> Legitimacy derives from internal and external sources: internally, the solidarity of the group, the subjugation of the dominant power, and established norms build institutional legitimacy; externally, direct authorization or even tacit approval from the UN and broader international community strengthen the legal basis of the intervention.

To expand further analysis on the role of legitimacy in regional institutions, the chapter will focus next on the four sub-questions structuring the two cases. Understanding the behavior and motivation of regional institutions helps to validate common perceptions of their value.

### **Operational Legitimacy and Member Sovereignty**

As the previous section examined the utility of institutions as a mechanism to develop a legitimate and credible regional response to a crisis, the first sub-question asks how ECOWAS members ensure the legitimacy of their operations and manage sovereignty issues when intervening in an afflicted state. This is, of course, a difficult

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<sup>19</sup> W. Ofuately-Kodjoe makes the point that legitimacy is paramount for the success of an intervention. He analyzes ECOMOG and sees this as its first lesson. Ricardo René Laremont, ed., *The Causes of War and the Consequences of Peacekeeping in Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002), 138–9.

<sup>20</sup> Olson's "Theory of Groups and Organizations" identifies that small groups (which he cites as around 6 vs a large group averaging 15) may provide themselves with a collective good simply because of the attraction of the collective good to the individual member. This supersedes the economic realities of non-pareto optimal outcomes of working in groups, but also may reflect motivations other than value maximization such as prestige or ideology. Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, 2, 8, 36, 54.

challenge and subject to differing perspectives and interpretations. How the institution relates to the affected state determines how it maintains the legitimacy of its operations. As detailed earlier, legitimacy improves the acceptance of an intervention force by the parties to the conflict, the population that it intends to secure, and the broader international community. Legitimacy is a vital element for the institution to create the conditions for a political resolution to the conflict, and serves as a force multiplier reducing the time, forces, and cost necessary to maintain the operation. Credibility earns the institution a seat at the table and the right to speak to, and sometimes for, each side to reach a political accommodation. Respecting the sovereignty of the affected state portends the inevitability of a political outcome and resurgence of the state, its population, and its position within the regional community.

The behavior of the organization speaks louder than its mandates. Large organizations like the UN and the AU can exhibit unitary characteristics and act on desires independent of their membership, confusing the interests of the institution with their member states. Smaller organizations with a less robust secretariat may be less prone to its own bureaucratic sentiency, with its small group dynamics able to cater to a consensus of membership and limit a supranational agenda. The behavior, motivations, and priorities of subregional institutions reflect the will of its members, with some of those members exerting stronger influence on the institution's agenda. This section will explore two points reached from the cases: first, internal versus external motivations produce different regional interventions and potential outcomes; and second, regional organizations place a higher priority on the maintenance of stability than assuring self-determination within member states. The points explore how institutional motivations and priorities affect the perception of legitimacy.

## **Motivations**

As crises unfold, the motivation transforming regional concern into regional action highlights the interests at work. Members within a regional institution may agree that 'something must be done,' but those members must have an interest if they are to dedicate resources. Institutions are comprised of states and norms shaping their interaction, and the motivation to act derives either internally from members or externally

by outside actors or events creating the impetus to respond. The difference between the desire to respond and the response exposes motivations, and depending on the variance can reduce the social benefits gained and the credibility of the group.

The ECOMOG intervention is an example of a regional institution acting based on internal motivations, namely the interrelation of interests between the members of the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC). The SMC cited ECOWAS mutual defense protocols and determined Taylor's rebellion to be engineered and supported actively from the outside, warranting an intervention despite the protests of Francophone members. All states in the region wanted to solve the humanitarian crises emanating from the conflict, but differed on the intervention's mandate. State leaders' personal relationships heavily influenced the conflict and split the region. Despite this split, Nigeria's willingness to put forward the bulk of the resources and leadership afforded the other interested nations the opportunity to join.<sup>21</sup> After the death of Doe and the replacement of Ghanaian General Quainoo, Nigeria assumed command of ECOMOG and solidified the perception that ECOMOG was but a Nigerian hegemonic tool. The disagreement over whether ECOWAS could authorize ECOMOG reduced its credibility and provided Taylor the political room to reject the interim government and further his claim to the presidency. Once the ECOWAS members agreed to a common resolution to the conflict, its standing improved internationally and among the parties to the conflict. Internal, self-generated motivations to act require consensus on its legality and prudence if the institution is to retain its credibility. If the response reflects the shared interests of the region, then there is a greater chance that the parties to the conflict will accept the intervention and enter into a political dialogue.

When institutions have no interests or its members are unwilling to dedicate resources to respond then there is a chance their motivation will come from an outside source. A regional player's unwillingness to act might expose their conflict of interest, much like Cote D'Ivoire's protestation of ECOMOG. In addition, the afflicted state, itself a member of ECOWAS, might not want an intervention on their soil as seen in the Mali case. The politics of subregional organizations center on rallying support to causes

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<sup>21</sup> Nigeria eventually provided 75 percent of the troops and 90 percent of the funding for ECOMOG. Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 48.

affecting the region's security and development, but as discussed member states are interested in supporting their interests before helping to achieve common goals. Individual and competing interests may constrict a region, and it may require outside pressure or attention to move a state off a position.

External motivations are those variables that force an institution to respond when it lacks internal motivation to do so. UN and international interest, regional pressure, economic costs of instability, and major changes in the security environment can force an institution to act. In Mali, several UNSC resolutions highlighted the degenerating security situation in the north and the AU paid close attention to developments. While ECOWAS worked toward an eventual intervention, French involvement against emboldened extremists immediately rallied ECOWAS and the AU to employ the AFISMA force despite insufficient preparation. Had France not intervened, the international community would have had to entice ECOWAS and the AU to go to the aid of Mali with aid and logistical support. This bargaining may have been the original plan, but historical animosities against French involvement in West Africa proved a powerful motivator. The opposite can also be true, as with Liberia the lack of external interest reminded the subregion that it might be the only option to ending the crisis. In both cases the region responded when it was in their interest, whether out of shame of their inaction or out of fear that no one else will intervene. Neither adds to the institution's legitimacy, and an institution forced into action has a difficult time convincing the parties that it has their interests at heart.

### **Priorities**

Determining how a region will intervene is a crucial task for policymakers, as a region's priorities may not be the same as the international community's. Once motivated to act, what a region agrees to do might not be what it actually attempts. Adjoining states may not be willing to sacrifice their soldiers and resources for a cause they are not committed to, or they may be inclined to deliver results more favorable to their domestic politics. A political conflict in a state with a weak government may involve a disaffected population seeking greater representation or self-determination. The region may not support its cause, choosing instead to support the government's position for the sake of

maintaining security. Worse, the region could join the state in disparaging the group as “terrorists” or “criminals,” reducing the legitimacy of their cause and their rights as combatants.<sup>22</sup> While the international community may support the rights of the dissident group, if the region prioritizes stability over equality then it will reflect in its intervention. This is not different from the priorities of strong states. Powerful states have always intervened to promote an order or to protect a status quo that suits them.<sup>23</sup> One of the most claimed reasons to intervene in another state’s affairs is that such action will promote or protect international order.<sup>24</sup> Human rights and self-determination are important to many, but unless a conflict expands to threaten the region’s stability then the conflict will often remain an ‘internal matter.’

The rampant human rights abuses and expansion of displaced persons resulting from the Liberian civil war certainly caught the attention of the region, and Nigeria made the case that to not assist would be an embarrassment. Taylor made the case that his rebellion against Doe was an internal matter, and the Francophone states believed Taylor had the right to remove Doe for cause. Taylor’s NPFL represented a destabilizing force able to export rebellion, but the indirect involvement of Libya drew the most concern. The humanitarian crisis required a regional response, but by itself was not enough of a reason to enter the conflict. ECOWAS’ sensitivity to outside influence, be it Libyan, French, or British, reflected its priority position over human rights as a common cause to rally an intervention.

ECOWAS demonstrated that given certain circumstances the subregion should intervene in the affairs of a sovereign country. Where the OAU’s non-interference policy placed a higher priority on sovereignty in principle, ECOWAS understood that fragile states unable to maintain their monopoly on violence, protect their population, or control their territory may abdicate their sovereign rights. ECOWAS prioritized regional security over the rights of the state, and saw internal instability as a threat.

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<sup>22</sup> The goal of the dissident group is to internationalize the conflict and secure their right to self-determination – earning themselves a legal status, international recognition and support, earning protections from the norms of international armed conflict afforded to combatants by the Geneva Convention. The goal of the state is to delegitimize the dissident group to maintain their moral authority. H. McCoubrey, *International Organizations and Civil Wars* (Aldershot, Hants, Eng. ; Brookfield, Vt., USA: Dartmouth Pub. Co, 1995), 64.

<sup>23</sup> Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*, 85.

<sup>24</sup> Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*, 85.

ECOWAS protocols gave it the authority to engage in the affairs of weak states, certainly seen in Liberia but best represented by ECOWAS' diplomatic and military intervention to solve the Malian crisis in 2013. ECOWAS did not support the MNLA's independence claim, desiring a political resolution that retained the unity of Mali. An independent Azawad presented a threat to the region much like Kurdistan in the Levant; the Tuareg extended into many of the Sahelian states and to legitimize their independence might invite similar actions from neighboring Tuareg populations. The Malian coup increased the complexity of the political situation, but ECOWAS disregarded the CNDRE's *de facto* authority to establish an interim government, sanctioning the junta to comply with their outside interference. In Mali, ECOWAS acted to maintain constitutional order, establish governmental control, re-integrate the MNLA, and remove the extremist threat, but their solutions failed to answer the Tuareg's political grievances. ECOWAS prioritized a resolution to the political crisis in Bamako, keeping with member desires to improve on the status quo between and within states in the subregion.

Over the decades, ECOWAS improved its protocols and mechanisms to respond to crises, accounting for the potential of internal instability to threaten the region. While the sovereignty of the affected state is important to retain, ECOWAS prioritizes constitutional order over *de facto* rule. A preference for democracies does not signal a loyalty to liberal institutionalism; ECOWAS pursues policies that reduce the incentives for violent political change to improve stability and protects the incumbent governments. Their diplomatic and military responses work to diffuse conflicts before they expand in scale while coordinating international concern into resources and pressure on the parties. Securing the legal standing of an intervention is important but not necessary; the region will respond if a situation threatens the security of its members and will find ways to offset any negative implications. ECOWAS learned many lessons from its experience with ECOMOG, chiefly that interventions are expensive, especially if the force loses its legitimacy, and they are not a practical tool to satisfy the ambition of its members. They also learned to appreciate that conflict can consume a region, spreading to nearby nations regardless of their support for a particular side. The subregional institution can help to coordinate interests, integrate the response, and mitigate the potential expansion of the

conflict. Regional responses focused primarily on stability may not be more legitimate than other options, and the examples presented identify how motivations and priorities communicate interest and can cost the region its legitimacy and credibility.

### **Cohesive and Viable Force**

The goal for African regional and subregional institutions is to develop a military force capable of capitalizing on the institution's legitimacy to generate the conditions for a political solution. Whether the intervention consists of an ad hoc collection of pledged forces or an established regional security force, how the institution raises, trains, mobilizes, commands, and sustains that force will directly affect its ability to achieve its mandate. History shows that even a well-trained and equipped force may not be viable in certain circumstances. The purpose of the force is to coerce the conflicting parties to accept a cease-fire and negotiate their political grievances diplomatically, then keep the peace and ensure all sides comply with the agreement. A coercive force is credible and competent, capable of holding both parties accountable for their actions. The intent of peace enforcement and subsequent peacekeeping is to reduce the security dilemma driving each side to maintain a high state of readiness, thereby decreasing the potential to restart the conflict. Achieving these goals via an outside intervention is a difficult challenge, one that few get right.

This section explores barriers to developing a cohesive force further to arrive at two points. First, insufficient preparation for regional intervention and a lack of integration reduced the viability of the force. Second, ECOWAS states' inability to sustain their troops can lead to foreign dependency, an increase in corruption, and may encourage the use of surrogates.

### **Coherence**

In both cases, the force ECOWAS presented was inadequate for the task. The mandate did not fit the conflict's political reality, leading ECOWAS to generate a force intended to achieve the mission it wanted to do instead of the mission necessary to meet the political objectives. ECOMOG's force was comprised of units the five states could

afford to contribute, and once fighting started with the NPFL Ghana and Nigeria committed several thousand more troops to the fight. AFISMA also experienced an expansion of its end strength after January meetings at the AU after the MDSF proved to be an unreliable element of their intervention plan. Both plans carried assumptions of the capabilities of the parties that led to weaknesses in the ECOWAS response.

Even if the force strength is sufficient, integrated multinational operations are hard. For poor nations working to develop the capabilities of their own forces, aggregating together their national forces to fight as a cohesive operational force requires years of training and experience that did not exist in 1990 and only existed on paper in 2013. The 1981 ECOWAS Protocol discussed an Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC) to carry out the security requirements within the region and the AU PSC build on this concept with the Africa Standby Force (ASF) and the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). In practice, these concepts suffered from member's resource constraints, a lack of interoperability and training, and insufficient capabilities such as mobility, aviation, intelligence, and logistics. AFISMA was the first use of the ESF concept, and its inability to deploy in a timely fashion highlighted to ECOWAS and the AU that materializing the concept requires more than just political will.

In addition, command and control proved to be a major limitation in both cases. States deployed units capable of operating on their own but ECOWAS did not have radios or the capability to coordinate the actions of each unit to make operational gains based on an understanding of the battlespace. ECOMOG's lack of intelligence on Taylor's 1992 "Operation Octopus" is evidence of this failure of communications, resulting in massive fatalities and nearly the fall of Monrovia.<sup>25</sup> By 2013, AFISMA developed work-arounds to minimize equipment limitations, using personal cell phones to coordinate movements and operational objectives.<sup>26</sup> The AFISMA headquarters suffered from a lack of operational security generally, hindering intelligence sharing between Operation Serval and AFISMA. The ability to integrate into the broader operational picture relegated AFISMA to rearguard actions. Command and control, like

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<sup>25</sup> Maru, *African-Led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA): Military ahead of Politics*, 109–110; Aboagye, *ECOMOG*, 105–6.

<sup>26</sup> Interview. CDR Sutton.

end strength and interoperability, is a vital component to creating a cohesive and viable intervening force.

## **Logistics**

The issue of logistical sustainment presents a fundamental challenge to the concept of regional interventions. A military force is coercive in a peace enforcement role if it is capable of sustaining pressure against the warring parties and raising the cost of resistance to a point where a political resolution becomes the more rational choice. Time is the critical component, and the common perception is that regional forces are easier and cheaper to support and more interested in maintaining pressure over the long term to achieve a favorable result.

In the cases presented, ECOWAS member states did not provide for their soldiers in a manner sufficient to achieve their mandate. The ECOMOG experience proved to ECOWAS the importance of a reliable logistics chain, and the reticence to engage AFISMA in 2012 demonstrated that they understood not to deploy a force without a means to support it. The ECOMOG case presents a foundational study on the economics of intervention and the potential outcomes if a region fails to provide for their forces in intervention. Left to fend for themselves units will do so on the local economy, increasing the potential for corruption, lowering morale, and spoiling the population's perception of the force. ECOWAS sought to alleviate their sustainment problems through outside assistance from the U.S. and the UN, creating a catch-22. ECOMOG's negative behavior and lack of operational gains repelled U.S. assistance, but without that assistance, ECOWAS believed it could not improve the situation. This highlights the importance of the political rapprochement between Taylor and Nigeria's Abacha, which changed the strategic situation, improved the credibility of the force, and allowed foreign assistance.

Additionally, a force without the means to accomplish their mission will find an economically viable solution, namely the use of inexpensive surrogates to accumulate additional forces to create pressure against the parties. ECOMOG's use of surrogates to pursue Taylor in the countryside worked, but soon became an unaccountable political force that would spoil peace agreements. Similarly, AFISMA planning demonstrated the economic appeal of surrogates, as they hoped to use MDSF troops and the secular MNLA

forces to pressure extremists groups. Employing these groups added complexity to the planning process and cost ECOWAS its time and political cohesion. Legitimacy often dissipates once delegated; UN authority extended to the AU and ECOWAS but did not extend to a local proxy, yet the actions of a supported proxy stain the credibility of all associated institutions. Corruption and surrogate use complicate the intervention and rob it of its legitimacy. An ill-supported force is not viable, cannot be counted on to achieve its goals, and lacks credibility as a mechanism to reduce the security dilemma.

When called to, a regional force should be a force ready, capable, and willing to engage quickly to reduce a crisis before misunderstandings and violence escalate it beyond the original grievance. This is the purpose of the ASF, and recent adaptations of the AU plan look to create a smaller force that is able to make small and important gains by being more easily generated, trained, and deployed, with sufficient support.<sup>27</sup> An “African force” reduces the biases and perceptions attributed to subregional forces while retaining an “African face” to the response. Ad hoc interventions allow flexibility in scale and responsiveness, as those states interested in responding will do so quickly, but the response represents the interests of its members and can be seen as illegal or illegitimate. Established forces prepared to respond to developing crises, on the other hand, have the potential to eliminate the interest issue as they represent the desires of the AU PSC. An African response force remains a common dream since independence, but political conflicts and mistrust limit its creation. The recent events in Mali demonstrated to the AU the importance of a capable and responsive standing force and the significance of a logistical capacity within the institution. USAFRICOM and the U.S. Department of State continue to work with the AU and other institutions to improve indigenous operational and logistical capacity while improving the ability of regional states to work together to solve common problems. For the near term, generating and sustaining a regional force

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<sup>27</sup> The African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) is the current iteration of the AU ASPA attempt to find a credible military force capable of responding to the desires of the AU PSC. Kim Helfrich, “AU Working towards African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC),” *Defenseweb.com*, August 1, 2013, [http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=31411%3Aau-working-towards-african-capacity-for-immediate-response-to-crises-acirc&catid=56%3ADiplomacy+&+Peace&Itemid=111](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=31411%3Aau-working-towards-african-capacity-for-immediate-response-to-crises-acirc&catid=56%3ADiplomacy+&+Peace&Itemid=111) (accessed 18 May 2014).

independent of outside assistance and capable of achieving broad goals will remain a difficult task.

### **Coordinated Outside Support**

Financing and general support for interventions can come from either internal or external sources. Internal support means the institution's member states or their common activity funds the operation. External support is everything else: donations and direct support provided either bilaterally to member states or directly to the institution, funds passed through trust funds to finance specific portions of an operation, all the way up to direct UN logistical support. As the previous sections identified, multilateral interventions are difficult and expensive operations few nations or subregional communities can afford alone. Internally supported operations may appear simplest to facilitate, but ECOMOG demonstrates how chronic underfunding creates strategic problems. The AFISMA mission provides a similar cautionary tale for external support where the subregional or regional institution wastes time and energy lobbying others for support to the neglect of their own capacity. No intervention is completely supported internally or externally, but an isolated analysis of the extremes captures institutional behavior to better understand the experiences in the two cases.

This paper's central question hinges on the question of external support, hinting that an institution dependent on external funding may not be legitimate. This is not a 'purist' line of argument, where any outside support damns the institution as a proxy of the donor. Instead, this study of institutional interest correlates the source of support with the ability for an institution to achieve its political goals. As the examples demonstrate, there is no right answer. Internal donors can hold an intervention hostage, and external actors can issue demands and shape the mission to fit outside interests. Both can threaten the legitimacy of the intervention and shape the functionality of the institution. The two cases present examples of differing support sources with dissimilar institutional behavior and political outcomes. This section will explore two points: first, internal support creates the potential for irrational outcomes; second, external support weakens the effectiveness of institutions they intend to help, creating operational dependency and worse, creating a market for instability and peacekeeping.

## **Internal Support**

Institutions considered unitary actors act rationally by maximizing their value and investing only what is necessary to generate a political solution. Since that value is unknown during the planning stage, the level of funding reflects the resources available to the institution. Poor institutions create cheap plans out of necessity, expanded only when a member has the resources and the will to support a broader adventure. On the ground, the intervening force will favor options that resolve the conflict quickly, reducing costs and the chance of an expensive occupation. The institution prioritizes stability over more long-term political solutions because that may be all that it can afford. Depending on the source of the group's motivation, it may be all that is necessary. A stalemate creates a market for economic alternatives for all parties. This is the goal of peace enforcement, to reduce the economic incentive to continue fighting. If the parties continue to fight despite the stalemate, then the institution will seek other means to stop the fighting, or will reassess the political goals.

Institutions are not unitary actors though, and may not be rational. As detailed earlier, they consist of the specific interests of their members and may be motivated beyond economic benefits. The example of Nigeria within ECOMOG highlights the irrationality of hegemons acting within a group. Where the other regional members sought a political resolution and a return to stability at a reasonable price, Nigeria could afford to pursue a more ideologically driven agenda. They dedicated resources to deny Taylor the presidential mansion and expanded ECOMOG's missions from ending the humanitarian conflict to a personal fight against the NPFL. Once Ghana's Jerry Rawlings assumed the ECOWAS chairmanship in 1994 and the Babangida regime ended in Nigeria, ECOWAS no longer had a personal conflict with Taylor and the leaders could find a more reasonable path forward.

Individual members value maximize, as Nigeria committed as many resources as they felt necessary to remove Taylor as a threat. When ECOMOG reached a stalemate, Nigeria encouraged the use of cheap surrogate groups to threaten Taylor to negotiate. When ECOWAS pushed back against Nigerian demands, Nigeria threatened to stop funding the operation. With little outside support for the first few years, the ECOMOG

example demonstrates how competing individual interests can mutate an institution to behave irrationally. The perception of irrationality exposed Nigerian interests at work and cost ECOMOG the legitimacy Nigeria sought in the first place.

### **External Support**

The UN, EU, AU, and nations such as the U.S., France, and the United Kingdom all have an interest in improving peace and security in West Africa, but their interests can be destabilizing and confuse the economics of interventions. On the surface, supporting African institutions to improve their ability to deploy and maintain their forces is an efficient use of foreign support. If every nation contributes in such a way, then coordinating their support and interests becomes a challenge. The Mali case teaches that external support weakens the effectiveness of institutions by creating operational dependency and satisficing behavior. Worse yet, external aid can create a market for instability and peacekeeping.

The UN created a peacekeeping industry in Africa in the 1990's and 2000's, employing thousands of African national forces in missions across the continent and setting a high bar for support. Despite setbacks in Liberia, Somalia, and Rwanda, UN peacekeeping grew as Cold War animosities lessened and concerns for human rights increased. UN logistical support and high UN wages created a premium that many African states associated with peacekeeping, adding to its prestige. Poor nations could contribute forces to a UN mission and receive upwards of a \$1,000 a month per peacekeeper, to include training and some equipment, and donor nations could share the cost of expensive equipment by committing it to a UN mission. Additionally, peacekeeping involved low-skill police work that most African militaries could perform. Small nations earned prestige in international fora for their contributions to achieve UNSC mandates, and found a way to pay and train their military forces without a financial burden. The disparity between UN and African-led operations was evident to all in Liberia, where ECOMOG soldiers lacked pay, equipment, and basic supplies while the UNOMIL observers earned high stipends and had the best equipment.

Between the UN and the subregional institution, the AU and its APSA add an additional level of collaboration to coordinate the actions of African subregions and

better represent the continent internationally. The AU PSC issues mandates similar to the UNSC but it lacks resources to support operations. The AU's attempt to build legitimacy is constrained by its lack of resources and logistics network, leaving it dependent on external donations to satisfy what member contributions cannot. Nations committing to AU-authorized peacekeeping missions must rely on their own supply networks to support troops in the field, limiting involvement only to those nations willing and capable to do so. The EU and the U.S. "hybrid model" helped fix this disparity for AMISOM, but the AU's dependence on foreign sources disconnected its political desires from the means to achieve them. The UN has similar problems with member reticence to commit general assessed funds, but coordination with the UNSC limits potential overextension.

The AFISMA mission is a manifestation of the current conflict of external interests and demonstrates the economic behaviors created. First, the promise and precedent of external support encouraged ECOWAS and the AU to agree to a plan even though it did not have the resources to support it. The AU sought UN approval and a logistical package to sustain it, and the U.S. and EU agreed to assist if the UN would not. The security environment prevented the UN from engaging directly, but Mali's deep structural problems ensured that the UN would have to engage if the security situation improved. The ECOWAS plan intended to help the MDSF improve security to a point where the UN could take over, even though the UN did not want to engage another peacekeeping mission. The promise of external support and UN management relieved ECOWAS and the AU from the potential burden of long-term sustainment, further incentivizing quick stability over stalemate and political resolution. External support leads African institutions to *satisfice*, meaning they ration resources and search for an acceptable outcome versus maximizing their value.<sup>28</sup> Where ECOWAS had to dedicate scarce resources and generate political capital to solve the Liberian civil war, in Mali they merely had to create the conditions for the UN to take over – conveniently achieved by the French. The region achieved its stability goal via an economic alternative, and member interests shifted to take advantage of the benefits of an externally supported operation.

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<sup>28</sup> Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 112.

Finally, external support provides an expedient for regional institutions seeking to deliver stability, often in the poorest areas in the continent. The influx of aid drastically changes the economies of these affected areas, raising prices and encouraging destabilizing behavior to maintain focus and investment. Stable operations and stable budgets benefit the local population and the troop contributors, delivering services that the affected state's government cannot or will not. UN operations remove the instability driving the need for political change; disincentivizing those governments to improve disparities. This phenomenon accompanied the shift from AFISMA to MINUSMA in northern Mali: as the UN mission strengthens to mitigate the extremist insurgency, the UN may become the caretaker of the north while Bamako and the Tuareg continue to fight over representation. This 'peacekeeping economy' also occurred in Liberia after the election, where former warlords sought lucrative contracts to help ECOMOG and UNOMIL with DDR operations.

A regional intervention's legitimacy builds from the source of its funding. Internal support may provide dominant contributing states greater say in actions of the intervention. The conflict of member interests can separate with stated goals and produce seemingly irrational outcomes that threaten the group's credibility. Rational economic decision making encourages an internally-funded intervention to resolve the conflict through peacemaking, peacekeeping, and a quick return to constitutional government so to avoid a protracted conflict. The rise of externally supported regional interventions changes the incentive structure, shifting the goal from ending the conflict to 're-hatting' the operation. The insufficient AFISMA plan reflected a lack of strong internal interest and built on assumptions that the international community would support it. If the French had not taken a dominant role, the international community would have had to step in to help create the conditions for the UN to assume responsibility. ECOWAS certainly wanted this to occur in Liberia in 1990, but strong Nigerian interests stepped in when the international community demurred. Looking forward, dependency is a two-edged sword: African institutions seek to achieve their political goals using internal forces and external resources, and external donors incentive this policy and commit themselves and the UN to more African missions.

## Effectiveness of Forces

The previous questions establish the complexity regional institutions face trying to maintain their legitimacy while achieving their security goals. Institutions must manage motivations, priorities, and sovereignty, build and sustain a cohesive fighting force, and balance outcomes and economic incentives. The similarities and differences in the two cases helped to distinguish patterns to regional interventions, but one last question remains. Is it an effective method of responding to the conflict? Many point to the lack of alternatives in Liberia and the outcome in Somalia in the 1990s and draw the conclusion that had ECOWAS not intervened then a similar warlordism would have consumed the country. Similarly, the security situation in Mali in 2013 limited UN involvement and France eagerly sought an alternate solution to Operation Serval evolving into a long-term security mission in northern Mali. In both cases, ECOWAS provided a 'missing link' in the spectrum of international interventions. What special properties did it leverage?

International policymakers tend to associate cultural and ethno-political competencies to regional states by their proximity to the issue. A common perception is that regional involvement in an intervention will yield a more efficient result. This perception has a convenient logic and drives international policymakers toward agency, but the cases demonstrate the challenges regional institutions face generating a capable force and achieving political results. ECOWAS experienced several barriers to success rooted in its regional bias. In addition, ECOWAS' independence allows it certain strategic benefits that it loses as a part of a large, integrated response. Leveraging the institution's legitimacy to act, ECOWAS engages to create a favorable security outcome and the stability necessary for the UN to step in. These interventions attempt to comply with the UN principles of peacekeeping, but competing regional and member interests and a complex and dangerous security environment often compel ECOWAS to choose a side. The role of the dominant state is a common theme in this paper, and their involvement or lack of interest can determine how an institution will engage and for what purpose. Institutions can choose a more independent approach to maintain flexibility and speed, or they can integrate into a broader international response to benefit from greater

capabilities and resources. Exploring these ideas, this section makes the final two points. First, regional forces may not have special knowledge but their relation to the conflict can carry negative stereotypes and positive associations. Second, independent regional responses are more effective but are more precarious.

### **Regional Competency**

The success of the force depends on many factors, but two critical pieces are intelligence of the combatants and knowledge of the population and terrain. Sun Tzu famously identifies both as fundamental principles of success.<sup>29</sup> The common perception ascribed to military forces from within the subregion is that local forces know their region best. Regional proximity is a relative concept though; West Africa is the size of the United States, and associating a special knowledge to members of the same region is similar to the belief that Texans know best how to solve a civil war in Tennessee. Worse, the regional force may believe it understands the conflict and succumbs to hubris and cognitive bias, as was the case with ECOMOG. ECOWAS failed to comprehend the Liberian conflict or the unique characteristics of its landscape and made incorrect assumptions driving poor policy outcomes. Ghana believed the mere sight of ECOMOG would turn the stomachs of the civilian militias, and the regional force would compel both sides to a cease-fire. This proved false, and as ECOMOG found itself and its equipment stuck in the swamps around Monrovia they had to turn to surrogates for information, costing them what remained of their impartiality. Similarly, the AFISMA force did not comprehend the capabilities and desires of the northern extremists, who surprised the region as they drove into southern Mali. This lack of understanding proved a factor later when AFISMA had trouble responding to a brewing Islamic insurgency in the north.

Regional forces might not have any special knowledge, but they often carry a stigma or stereotype for the local population who sees the force for their nationality, race, religion, or tribe. While regional forces may be more adept culturally to integrate and

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<sup>29</sup> Sun Tzu identifies terrain as one of the five fundamental factors to be appraised. And he is famously quoted: “Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.” Sun Tzu, *The Illustrated Art of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 91–3, 125.

support the local population, stereotypes and prejudices can exacerbate grievances and hurt the perception of legitimacy. This certainly was the case with ECOMOG, where the people of Monrovia lost faith in the motives of the intervention due to the behavior of its Nigerian troops. AFISMA forces in Mali also suffered from their association with the government in Bamako, lessening their effectiveness with the more Arab Tuareg in the north. Regional troops can assist with the growth of ideology-driven conflict between Muslim and Christian or Anamist groups, where the population may be more likely to trust one nation's troops to get them to safety. The recent role African peacekeepers played in the Central African Republic assisting with the displacement of its Muslim population during recent fighting is a great example of regional competency at work.<sup>30</sup> Both cases demonstrated that ECOWAS had no special preparation for handling the parties to the conflict or operating in the unique terrain, and that their proximity reduced the perception of their impartiality as peacekeepers.

### **Independence**

Previous points address the interests at work to engage a force, but not what motivates that force once it is engaged in the conflict. Independent operations allow an organization to pursue its own priorities and the interests of its members, and it means the group owns success and failure. This simple concept addresses a critical incentive driving an independent institution: their reticence to fail publicly. Without the crutch of external support or the potential to “rehat” the mission under the UN, the region must turn to its own devices to achieve its goals and resolve the conflict.

ECOMOG was an independent operation for its first few years, driven internally by Nigerian interests and resources. Against Taylor, ECOMOG faced a strategic foe that fought regional forces regionally. ECOWAS sought consensus amongst the warlords on a cease-fire and a path towards disarmament and elections, but Taylor acted as a regional spoiler who supported surrogate groups in neighboring countries to prove ECOMOG could not contain the conflict. Without the UN or U.S. to help pressure Taylor's business

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<sup>30</sup> Al-Jazeera.com, African troops help Muslims flee CAR, 12 April 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/04/african-troops-help-muslims-flee-car-201441213742873612.html> (accessed 1 May 2014).

interests, ECOMOG could only offer a stalemate and deny him the chance to take the presidency by force. Not limited by external principles, mandates, or demands, Nigeria and ECOWAS could employ economic alternatives, to include shifting policy and using surrogates, to find a resolution. ECOWAS owned the conflict and saw it as their responsibility to resolve it, unlike UNOMIL who had a limited mandate only to observe. This level of ownership risk yields results, but is far more precarious than integrating operations into a larger effort.

AFIMSA was an independent plan until early January and the start of Operation Serval. Inaction signaled a lack of strong interest to deal with the extremist problem, either because most states felt it was an internal matter or because they feared stirring up extremist attacks against their countries or unsettling their Muslim populations. Algeria hoped to keep France and ECOWAS out of Mali in order to retain its own independence as it dealt with the extremist groups. Once Serval started, AU and UN oversight minimized the options ECOWAS had to pressure an agreement, so they ceded most of the operation's responsibility to the French and the EU and awaited the inevitability of the UN transition. France saw their mission as a counter-terrorism operation and left the political resolution to the regional institutions. The interdependence of ECOWAS with outside forces like France and later the UN added constraints and restraints that minimized its options, reduced its responsibility, and allowed internal interests to favor stable peacekeeping over the hard work of political agreements.

Regional forces both suffer and benefit from proximity to the conflict. The interest originates from their exposure, which provides a powerful motivator to set conditions to resolve the conflict. Proximity may not give regional forces special knowledge, but it can color the perception of the force. There is no evolution on this issue, as it is a simple concept of ownership and interest. What has changed over time are the number of outside actors willing to engage with ECOWAS to solve West African problems. The more players engaged in supporting ECOWAS, the less interest there is to solve the problem. Independence is a scary prospect for the international community; they have the resources and the willingness to provide help. What is most important is to determine what will adequately resolve the conflict, which is a political agreement and

sufficient and effective military pressure to enforce it. Left alone, ECOWAS will improve their ability to create stability in the region and require less outside support.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter analyzed the case studies using the four subquestions as independent variables to address the regional intervention's legitimacy, cohesiveness, support, and effectiveness. From the cases, research exposed a series of opposing factors at work within the regional institution that shape its behavior and efficacy: self versus common interests, ad hoc versus established forces, internal versus external support, and independent versus integrated solutions. Exploring these factors using political, economic, and group theory, the cases revealed several thoughts related to the legitimacy and efficacy of regional institutions.

Institutions are subject to the interests of their strong member but are not their tools; norms, shared interests, and mutual benefit tie regional states together. Subregional interventions reflect the self-interest of the members and their willingness to invest in a favorable political outcome. This is not unique to Africa, but the variety and proximity of weak and strong states lends itself to post-Westphalian concepts of regional cooperation. Legitimacy is the characteristic that grants utility to these institutions, originating from the solidarity of the group and international approval. The perception of this legitimacy determines the cost and success of the institution's stability operation. Perception cues on motivation and priorities apparent in an intuitions' actions. Internal and external motivations reveal the self-interests of states within the institution that may expose ulterior motives, and regardless of any stated mandate, the region will always prioritize security above humanitarian causes or self-determination.

Looking at the preparation and presentation of forces, ECOWAS proved how difficult preparing a cohesive and viable intervention force can be. Neither ad hoc or established forces proved better prepared to respond, and limited logistical capacity reduced the morale and efficacy of the force, producing foreign dependency, increased corruption, and the search for economic alternatives like the use of surrogates. Supporting the force also challenges the perception of legitimacy and rationality, as internal support

coming from member states allows individual interests to drive operations beyond what the group may determine to be a maximum value to achieve the stated mandate. Coordinating support from external sources like the UN and external actors weakens the effectiveness of institutions they intend to help, creating operational dependency and worse, creating a market for instability and peacekeeping. As Mali demonstrated, increasing attention and a willingness to assist the subregion reduces its independence and flexibility to find solutions capable of resolving a conflict.

These factors point to a policy preference for independent operations over large integrated affairs, despite the fact that regional troops may be no more informed on how to achieve results and hamstrung by ethnic and regional stigmas. Supporting these operations demands a delicate balance. Leveraging subregional interest and legitimacy may produce stability but not total compliance with the humanitarian desires of the international community. Alternatively, integrated international responses reduce the effectiveness of the intervention, creating satisficing behavior from a subregion who is now motivated to pass responsibility to the UN and maintain the flow of concern and resources of the outside world to support some of the poorest regions in the world.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

As the United States looks increasingly to Africa for solutions to ‘African problems,’ it is important to appreciate the merits of an ‘African solution:’ what it looks like, how it functions, and if it is effective. This paper analyzes how African leaders use subregional institutions to establish and maintain legitimate military interventions capable of responding to, and solving, security crises on the continent. Looking specifically at West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has a long and varied history responding regionally to common security challenges. Two operational cases demonstrate a range of factors and outcomes, and offer insights for review. The 1990 ECOMOG intervention in Liberia and the 2013 AFISMA operation in Mali represented two similar situations with different responses and results. In both cases, ECOWAS leveraged their legitimacy to help resolve internal political conflicts by setting the conditions for a stable and secure political solution, but interests and structural limitations reduced their effectiveness.

Despite the increased number of subregional protocols, regional institutions, and external interests established between the two conflicts, ECOWAS was less prepared and effective in Mali. They had a force and a plan, but when Islamic extremists drove south across the Niger River it was the French who stopped their advance. That fact compelled the central research question, “What barriers prevent ECOWAS from fielding a regional security response force to address security problems independent of outside forces like the UN and traditional western nations?” ECOWAS had been successful in the past in their response to the Liberian civil war, which was an independent action by necessity. Isolating causal factors required an understanding of institutions and a comparison of the context surrounding both interventions to see if the problems were specific to the conflict or structural within the institution or region.

While West Africa has some unique political and cultural drivers of conflict, ECOWAS understood and managed these old animosities since the 1980s. The subregion is a collection of 15 diverse states with drastic differences in wealth, economies, culture, militaries, governing capacity, and political interests, so ECOWAS provides a central point to aggregate member state resources and interests. Improving economic integration

and spurring development, members expanded ECOWAS' responsibilities to address the internal security matters of its members, appreciating the capacity of conflict to escalate humanitarian and political crises and create political and economic instability outside of an affected state. ECOWAS protocols establish norms and mechanisms to manage change, and the common vision and unity of purpose give it legitimacy as a representative institution. The UN recognizes and depends on regional and subregional institutions to represent their regions, delegating authority to respond in certain cases. These external and internal sources of authority give ECOWAS legitimacy as an agent of the region.

States join institutions because it is in their interest to do so. Institutions are subject to the interests of their strong member but are not their tools; institutions have a normative value that governs the relationship between weak and strong states. Legitimacy is the characteristic that grants utility to institutions, and the perception of legitimacy determines the cost and success of the institution's stability operation. An intervention has many judges with different perspectives, most important of which is the domestic population of the afflicted state. This population, along with the conflicting parties, decides whether to accept the legitimacy of the interveners and use their presence as a stabilizing force to reduce the need for violence. If not, then the intervention force uses its legitimate power to apply significant military, political, economic, and informational power against the parties, raising the cost of continued conflict to a point above the cost of a political settlement. If the intervening force cannot apply the suitable pressure, then it will seek economic alternatives to resolving the conflict. States use institutions to lower the cost of achieving their goals, but those goals are muddled and savings less evident as larger institutions engage.

The research question's focus on the relationship between the regional institution's chance of success and its external support implies a negative correlation, and the cases chosen support this impression. Given the focus on legitimacy, logic would imply that international assistance creates more legitimacy and improves the odds of a speedy political resolution. To help address this question, four subquestions addressed independent variables associated with a regional intervention force, focusing on how institutions generate legitimate operations, how they generate and support a cohesive and

viable military force, how they coordinate external support for that force, and what characteristics makes the force effective. From the cases, research exposed a series of opposing factors at work within the regional institution that shape its behavior and efficacy: self versus common interests, ad hoc versus established forces, internal versus external support, and independent versus integrated solutions. Exploring these factors using political, economic, and group theory, the cases revealed several thoughts related to the legitimacy and efficacy of regional institutions.

ECOMOG represents the foundation for all subregional research, significant for its duration, result, and independence. It represented the motivations of its dominate states who favored using ECOMOG to create stability despite the objections of the Francophone states. The international community tacitly approved the intervention, but the questionable mandate, dominance of Nigeria, and focus on the NPFL cost ECOMOG its impartiality and raised the cost of the intervention. ECOWAS had not suitably prepared to support the ad hoc force for a long operation, and the international community's unwillingness to get involved left Nigeria to shoulder the burden of its ambition. ECOMOG created a stalemate against Taylor's forces, but poor morale and an inability to make operational gains forced it to seek economic alternatives to resolve the conflict. ECOMOG employed surrogate groups to pressure the NPFL, and Nigeria pursued political rapprochement with Taylor.

The experience of ECOWAS in Liberia is important to this study because the institution intervened out of internal motivations, independent of outside actors, and based on a priority to secure regional states from an escalation and emigration of the violence. It made mistakes and failed to maintain its legitimacy, costing it the opportunity for external support once peacemaking delivered an initial cease-fire. Nigerian interests clashed with other member states, creating the impression of institutional irrationality as ECOMOG pursued goals beyond its mandate to target the NPFL specifically. Without outside assistance or special knowledge of the conflict, ECOWAS faced its own limitations and came to terms with its own disunity so it could create the conditions for a political resolution. The length of the war changed the conflict from a militarized political conflict to a civil war amongst warlords fighting over control of Liberia's considerable resources. The use of surrogates to target Taylor's economic interests proved effective,

but in doing so ECOMOG created more armed groups with political ambitions. The ECOMOG intervention, while flawed and costly, proved effective because the ECOWAS member states had an interest to see it through and resolve the conflict. Critics point to the fact that Taylor achieved the same result despite seven years of destructive war, but supporters rightly claim that ECOMOG maintained enough stability to keep Liberia from following Somalia into warlordism and state failure.

The 2013 AFISMA mission is significant to this study for its timeliness and relationship with outside forces. From the beginning, the ECOWAS plan received support from the AU, the UN, and outside actors, calling for an end to the conflict and a force able to support the MDSF's effort to regain the territorial integrity of Mali. The Malian government on several occasions requested ECOWAS to intervene to help secure the north and reduce extremist sanctuaries taking root in the Tuareg areas. This 'intervention by invitation' solidified the legitimacy of the ECOWAS plan, but little action took place to put it in action.<sup>1</sup> ECOWAS planned to employ the ESF and its previously identified forces, but the institution lacked suitable logistical capacity to sustain that force. With ECOWAS forces preparing and international donors set to help, extremist battlefield gains forced action. The French initiated Operation Serval, forcing the AU to respond in support of the French. Both the French and the African forces understood that the UN would also get involved, but only after their forces established security. This created limited operational goals without addressing the subcutaneous political grievances destabilizing the north.

The integration of forces and disparity between the two military operations created responsibility problems, and external support created satisficing behavior. External developments shamed ECOWAS and the AU into action, increasing the cost of inaction beyond the political costs of intruding into what is Algeria's sphere of influence. Despite the region's proximity to the conflict and interest in maintaining security, responding against the Tuareg might have upset the stability of the region and escalated the conflict beyond the northern Mali. ECOWAS tried to separate the MNLA and Ansar Dine from the more extremist AQIM and MUJAO, but those political agreements

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<sup>1</sup> A term Bannelier and Christakis use throughout their journal article. Karine Bannelier and Theodore Christakis, "Under the UN Security Council's Watchful Eyes: Military Intervention by Invitation in the Malian Conflict," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 26, no. 04 (December 2013): 1.

suffered under the weight of the political struggle between Bamako and the Tuareg over autonomy. No dominant interest within ECOWAS demanded or contributed toward an internal solution; it was in the interest of Bamako, ECOWAS, and the AU for the UN to ‘rehat’ the mission as MINUSMA and extend its presence, services, and resources beyond AFISMA’s limited timeframe. With France able to use force against the extremist groups, MINUSMA’s purpose was to secure the north and rebuild the capacity of the MDSF, but the extremist insurgency and Malian government’s slow progress means the UN mission, and the effects of a ‘peacekeeping economy,’ may remain for some time.

ECOWAS faces a significant challenge and conflict of interest. On one side lay the freedom, prestige, and fear of independent initiative. On the other is the full faith and credit of an international community willing to take an active role in assisting resolving African conflicts. While this paper presents these as clear ‘either/or’ choices, it is never that stark. ECOMOG eventually benefited from external assistance, although it was not enough to correct the systemic problems firmly in place, and AFISMA retained independent action during its short time under its own command but failed to achieve many goals. Internal support limits available resources, and with it, operational options. Western militaries view this as a negative: more capabilities improve options and open up new methods to create pressure on the adversary. Regional forces by comparison represent the common will of the region and their lack of military capabilities require the institution to focus on diplomacy and long term bargaining, which ultimately will resolve a conflict. Sustainment from outside allows ECOWAS the opportunity to extend its military footprint and improve its coercive power, but reduces the economic incentives to resolve the conflict.

The two cases identify several structural limitations and barriers to the employment and maintenance of an independent and legitimate intervention force. Improving the logistical capacity of the institution to support a force sent to enforce its mandate strengthens the institution’s viability, decreases the chance of foreign dependency, and protects its legitimacy. Second, an inability to coordinate support from outside sources exposes inefficiencies and introduces economic choices that detract from an institution’s mandate. This is at the operational and strategic level, if African forces

are to integrate into a broader effort then that effort loses the benefits of regional self-interest. Maintaining the region's edge helps outside actors, like the U.S., to achieve their own policy objectives without becoming a party to the conflict and thus a part of the problem.

### **Recommendations**

As African regional institutions increase their willingness to engage in regional crises, it is important for policymakers to appreciate how those institutions resolve to engage their forces and how economic choice affects their strategic options. Military strength is important, but it is not sufficient to resolve an internal political dispute. In fact, it can exacerbate the problem and escalate the conflict well beyond the initial grievance. The expansion of Islamic fundamentalism and flow of extremist fighters from Libya and Afghanistan continue to fuel instability in the Sahel and into Sub-Saharan Africa, and the rise of illicit trade networks provides economic incentive for that instability. Individual states, especially poor states in West Africa, can only hope to do so much against the problem, so the regional institution provides a mechanism to network states and their response against the illicit networks. Just as ECOMOG learned in Liberia, political resolution came from economic pressure and regional coordination, but the ideological angle of some extremists groups reduce the effectiveness of negotiation. Enabling the regional institution to isolate the irreconcilable elements of the network and form agreements with others allows a way forward to achieve long-term stability.

The U.S. plays a leading role in assisting bilateral and regional efforts to isolate terror groups and reduce the function of illicit networks. The challenge for the U.S. and others is to understand the facts of the ground, both tactically and politically. The desire to support willing and capable partners must be balanced with U.S. interests to protect human rights and political freedom. Regional states prioritizing local stability may find it expedient to classify dissident groups as 'terrorists' or rebels as 'Al Qaeda' in an effort to secure outside funding and absolve themselves of any responsibility for responding to or creating the problem. As was the case in Liberia and Mali, conflicts are never cleanly attributable and often come from decades of past abuses. U.S. interest in defeating terrorism allows regional institutions and their member states to leverage their instability

for resources. Nigeria leverages their fight against Boko Haram and Somalia and Kenya use Al-Shabaab as justification for aid..

For afflicted states with much greater systemic failure, such as the Central African Republic (CAR), regional institutions are critical to responding quickly to stop atrocities, separate the parties, and address the conflict's causal factors. CAR also exposes the need for the AU to coordinate and provide services, as the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) is far less capable than ECOWAS to respond. Learning lessons from Mali, the AU can quickly resolve funding and logistical issues and coordinate the actions of individual states while it prepares a broader response. The current AU operation in CAR, the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA), is actively engaged in peace enforcement operations to achieve the goals of the AU PSC. The U.S. should continue to support the AU's effort as a means to improve their regional intervention capacity and as a mechanism to raise the capacity of the subregional institutions. Part of this support is financial, but also requires political support in the UN. Many on the UN feel the AU works too slowly, and that African solutions to African problems often cost "African lives."<sup>2</sup> While French and AU forces work to create stability in what many see as an unsolvable political situation, it will be the region, not the UN or external states, that will determine what a favorable political outcome looks like and how best to achieve it. Like Darfur and East DRC, sustained UN involvement will only extend the problem.

### **Further research**

This examination of ECOWAS is by no means sufficient, and requires additional casework to develop and test a more comprehensive list of principles concerning effectiveness of subregional forces. Specifically, the 2003 ECOMICI and ECOMOG interventions in Cote D'Ivoire and Liberia would be helpful to address ECOWAS' role in electoral peacekeeping.

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<sup>2</sup> Quote attributable to Philippe Boloignon, U.N. director of Human Rights Watch. Samuel Oakford, "Political Wrangling Stymies CAR Peacekeeping Force," *Inter Press Service*, accessed March 5, 2014, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/03/political-wrangling-stymies-car-peacekeeping-force/>(accessed 4 March 2014).

Additional research should examine the relationship between the UN and subregional bodies considering the evolution of the use of force in UN peacemaking. The Foreign Intervention Brigade in DRC and authorizing French operations in Mali goes beyond the normal principles of UN peacekeeping in an attempt to adapt the UN from a force that deters interstate war to a force that can better assist with intrastate conflict. Subregional institutions will be leveraged for their willingness to engage the forces of either side to achieve stability, and the UN will be closer associated with those actions based on these new events.

Looking within the member state, there is room for an interesting study on internal conflict and a state's calculus between solving problems "in-house" versus asking for outside assistance. Given the availability of resources, this speaks to the conflict of interest states may encounter classifying certain threats as terrorists and others as political opponents. Taking a different angle, another study could look at the 'Responsibility to Protect' norms, specifically how they influence subregional institutions. As international humanitarian norms get closer to the regimes they could target, how willing are smaller institutions willing to exercise this norm?

Lastly, a good study or an addition to previous work would be the economic effect of peacekeeping in post-conflict areas, specifically northern Mali. Better comprehension of the negative economic effects produced by external support can help throttle that support and develop smart policies focused on long-term growth and sustainment.

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