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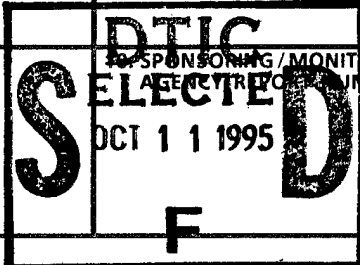
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This study begins by tracing the causes of ethnic conflicts in Africa. By examining the theories of democracy and conflict resolution, the study seeks to establish conditions required for the resolution of ethnic conflicts. The study primarily seeks to confirm if democracy can resolve ethnic conflicts in Africa. It uses case studies of the democratic country of Ghana for the reseearch. By comparing ethnic conflicts in the two countries, the study seeks to establish the conditions that led to the resolution of the recent ethnic conflict in Ghana. Additionally, this comparison is to determine whether the existence of similar conditions in Liberia can lead to the resolution of ethnic conflict in that country and other countries in Africa. The study concludes that the establishment of a democratic government in Liberia can resolve the ethnic conflict in that country. It also concludes that the establishment of democratic governments in Africa can resolve the ethnic conflicts in Africa.

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ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

DANIEL K. MISHIO, MAJ, GHANA

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
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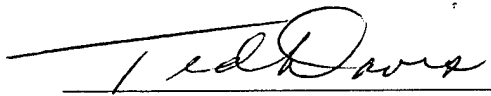Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.
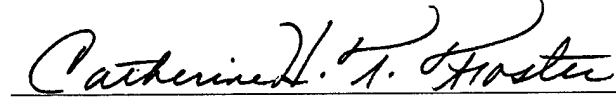
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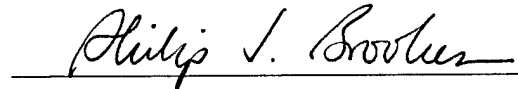Thesis Title: Ethnic Conflicts in Africa

Approved by:

_____ , Thesis Committee Chairman
Lieutenant Colonel Ted E. Davis II, M.S.

_____ , Member
Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Shaw, B.A.

_____ , Member, Consulting Faculty
Colonel Catherine H.T. Foster, Ph.D.

Accepted this 2nd day of June 1995 by:

_____ , Director, Graduate Degree
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Philip J. Brookes, Ph. D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the
student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other
governmental agency. (Reference to this study should include the
foregoing statement.)

ii

ABSTRACT

ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN AFRICA by MAJ Daniel K. Mishio, Ghana, 105
    pages.

This study begins by tracing the causes of ethnic conflicts in Africa.
By examining the theories of democracy and conflict resolution, the study
seeks to establish conditions required for the resolution of ethnic
conflicts. The study primarily seeks to confirm if democracy can resolve
ethnic conflicts in Africa. It uses case studies of the democratic country
of Ghana and Liberia for the research. By comparing ethnic conflicts in
the two countries, the study seeks to establish the conditions that led to
the resolution of the recent ethnic conflict in Ghana. Additionaly, this
comparison is to determine whether the existence of similar conditions in
Liberia can lead to the resolution of the ethnic conflict in that country
and other countries in Africa. The study concludes that the establishment
of a democratic government in Liberia can resolve the ethnic conflict in
that country. It also concludes that the establishment of democratic
governments in Africa can resolve the ethnic conflicts in Africa.

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I would also like to convey my sincere appreciation to my thesis committee for the wisdom, tolerance and guidance; in particular, to Lieutenant Colonel Ted Davis. Their efforts exceeded my expectations. At a time I trudged on, widening my scope to a proportion that would have taken me several years to complete, they kept me focussed on the very essentials. They helped me to narrow my scope to enable me complete my study on schedule. Particularly, they exhibited a thorough knowledge and experience in handling an inexperienced researcher in the person of the author.

Each of the members of the committee contributed some unique quality to this study. Colonel Davis, with his vast knowledge of African affairs, pointed out many errors I made in the content of my study. However, I am wholly responsible for any errors of fact or judgement I made in the study. Colonel Catherine Forster exhibited thorough knowledge of the English language and in research methodology. She was most helpful in the correction of ambiguities that initially characterized my study. Lieutenant Colonel Bob Shaw, my Academic Councilor and Evaluator, was instrumental in my decision undertake

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Can democracy resolve ethnic conflicts in Africa? This question
has become important in the light of increasing ethnic violence on the
African continent and the need for a workable and lasting solution to
ethnic conflicts. "Ethnic Conflicts in Africa" seeks to address that
question because the problem has existed for centuries but modern
society is concerned with global peace and stability. In ancient
nations of Africa, powerful ethnic groups dominated weaker ones and
sometimes absorbed them as was the case of the Ashantis and Dagombas in
Ghana. Most of these ethnic groups initially existed as kingdoms before
the 15th century. These conquests were seldom questioned except by
other equally powerful groups which felt their security threatened by
the moves. Today, with all ethnic groups now living together in
independent nation-states, the expansionist ideas and tendencies of
ethnic groups threaten the stability of the countries in particular and
the African continent as a whole.

In Liberia, the genocide that ensued after the death of
President Samuel Doe in 1990 was mostly a result of ethnic groups like
the Gios and Manos attempting to accede to political power which the
Khrans had dominated for a decade. Similarly, the death of some 500,000
people in the Rwanda ethnic conflict in early 1994, resulted from the
desire of the Hutus to eliminate all Tutsis and assume political power

1

in the country. The story of the ethnic conflict between the Dagombas and Konkombas in northern Ghana in February 1994, however, turned out differently. Despite the fact that 2,000 people (including women and children) were massacred within two weeks over subregional political recognition, the genocide was quickly brought under control by the democratic government in the country. The government emphasized the need for ethnic groups to resolve their differences without resorting to violence and bloodshed. It was, however, the parliament that gave the authority for the deployment of the military which stopped the violence.

As demonstrated in Ghana, the need for ethnic groups to live together in an atmosphere of tolerance, mutual recognition, and peace requires a working political system that would not only check aggression of ethnic communities but would also guarantee the rights of all the ethnic groups. The groups would have to be confident that the political system could resolve their grievances without their resorting to confrontation or violence. This brings us back to the primary question: "Can democracy resolve ethnic conflicts in Africa?" In order to answer this question it is necessary to answer a secondary question. "What are the causes of ethnic conflicts in Africa?"

Ethnic conflicts in Africa have many causes. One cause has been attributed to the arbitrary boundaries drawn in Africa during the scramble for Africa by Belgium, France, Portugal, Great Britain, and Germany in 1879. These demarcations did not take boundaries of the different ethnic communities of Africa into account and resulted in the ethnic groups being dispersed in different countries, sometimes with

linguistic differences. Their desire to re-unite as an ethnic entity can easily cause international boundary conflicts. Examples of some ethnic groups split by political boundaries include the Ewes in English-speaking Ghana and French-speaking Togo, Akans in Ghana, and French-speaking Cote d'Ivoire and Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda and Burundi.

A second cause of ethnic conflicts has been attributed to political domination by one ethnic group over another. Sometimes the problem of domination is attributed to out-moded customs which emphasize superiority of particular ethnic groups over others. In Ghana, for instance, ethnic groups like the Ashantis, Ewes, Dagombas, and Gas have often emphasized their uniqueness and superiority. They still continue to talk about their old kingdoms which no longer exist. Some of them have occasionally made attempts to band together and isolate other ethnic groups. Similarly, the massacre of Tutsis in Rwanda were alleged to be a direct result of the desire by the Hutus to purge the country of "alien people" who had dominated them for too long.

Territorial claims are a third factor which have ignited ethnic conflicts. The northern Ghana conflict is a typical example. The Konkombas, mainly farmers, had been migrating to other parts of the country in search of more fertile farm lands due to the increase of their population and the degradation of their traditional agricultural areas. They also wanted the north eastern part of the northern region to be formerly declared a Konkomba property. This demand was unacceptable to the Dagomba land lords since it meant relinquishing ownership of the area specified. The reluctance of the Dagombas to relinquish ownership of the Konkomba lands was one of the causes of the

3

Dagomba/Konkomba conflict in February 1994.

Fourthly, ignorance or lack of non-violent means of resolving conflicts on the African continent, and indeed, some other parts of the world, has catalyzed ethnic violence. It could be thought that in this modern age when peaceful co-existence is clearly the desire of most nations, humans would not resort to violence and carnage of unimaginable proportions to resolve their differences but that is what the world has witnessed in places like Liberia, Rwanda, and Ghana. This can only be partly attributed to ignorance of less violent methods of resolving conflicts or, at best, to the desire of using violence as the only means of resolving conflicts.

A third question becomes relevant at this stage; what other means are available for resolving ethnic conflicts? A traditional method of resolving ethnic conflicts in Africa in the past has been to resort to arbitration by other neutral ethnic leaders. For example, the chief of the Ashanti ethnic group in southern Ghana would attempt to resolve the conflict between the Dagombas and Konkombas. In modern Africa, however, the government in the independent states cannot sit idly by while traditional ethnic groups struggle to solve ethnic problems. The government would lose credibility. Therefore, it would see it as a responsibility to resolve the conflict although the government might include a neutral ethnic leader in the arbitration process. That was the process used in Ghana to set the stage for further deliberations after the military intervened to halt the genocide. The situation is different when the conflict results in a civil war as it happened in Rwanda and Liberia. The neutral body in

4

such a case could be a third country, a sub-regional group of countries or an international organization. In the case of Liberia, it was the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which intervened in 1991. The United Nations also found it necessary to intervene in the Rwanda conflict in 1994.

Although the intervention of the international groups have stopped the carnage and restored relative calm in the Liberia and Rwanda, it cannot be said that the conflicts are resolved. There are still threats by Hutus in refugee camps in Zaire that they will fight the Tutsis in the future to take control of government which they say is rightfully theirs. With sporadic fighting still occurring in Liberia, the future of that country is also so uncertain that it is difficult to predict what will happen if the warring factions fail to come to a compromise on the representation in government. Even in Ghana where democracy is said to be working, the Konkombas have threatened that, unless the government resolves the conflict to their satisfaction, they will still attack the Dagombas in future. A fourth question then arises: under what conditions should an ethnic conflict be considered resolved?

In order to resolve a conflict between ethnic groups with competing demands, sacrifices are required from the warring factions to reach a compromise. When the factions in the conflict even agree to make the sacrifices at a negotiating table, there is still no guarantee that hostilities will end. An agreement to halt hostilities is, at least, a starting point. When this is backed by a cessation of open hostilities, progress can be said to have been made but the conflict

5

cannot be considered resolved. To consider the conflict resolved at that stage is debatable. Some conditions in the form of assumptions will have to be made in the study to limit any possible arguments on conflict resolution.

The resolution of ethnic conflicts presupposes that a system, whether internal or international, will be in place to enforce the agreement. That is a dilemma which will continue to confront the national or international intervening body tasked to enforce the agreement. The logical solution is to have a credible and efficient political system in place to forestall similar conflicts in the future. A fourth question then arises: What political system should be put in place to forestall future ethnic conflicts? To answer this question is to attempt to argue the merits and demerits of different political systems that will work in Africa. Currently, Rwanda has a government which it says is democratic. Liberia is also working on establishing an interim democratic government which will provide for a fair representation of all interest ethnic groups. In effect, the countries in conflict are expressing a desire to establish a democratic system of government. This brings us back to the primary question: can democracy resolve ethnic conflicts in Africa? This is the question that this thesis seeks to answer.

Assumptions

To limit the scope of this research, some assumptions will be made at this stage. The first is that ethnic conflicts are likely to start or recur elsewhere on the African continent in future. This

assumption is based on the trends in the past in Rwanda, Ghana and Nigeria. As far back as January 1994, <u>Jane's Defence Weekly</u> also predicted a continuation of "tribalism" in Africa.[1] The resurgence of ethnic conflicts in Rwanda, Liberia, and Ghana in the latter part of 1994 validates this prediction.

To research all political systems and recommend one type which is suitable for Africa will shift emphasis from the research question to the merits and demerits of different political systems. There are, however, indicators which should narrow the scope. First of all, many African countries are still striving to identify a democratic system that will suit them. No country has been identified in this research to desire any other political system apart from democracy. Secondly, judging from the discussion and arguments that are necessary to produce a plausible recommendation of any political system for Africa, any attempt to recommend one particular political system will entail a separate study. By the expressions of African countries in general, and especially those countries suffering from ethnic conflicts, to adopt democratic systems of governments, a second assumption can be made at this stage. The assumption is that African countries intend to establish democratic governments.

Definitions

For clarity, a few definitions within the context of this research will be made. The first, and perhaps most controversial, is the definition of "democracy." As Ross Harrison explains in his book entitled <u>Democracy</u>, the word itself has very different interpretations

7

in varied political systems today. He explains that from the time of the ancient Greeks who first claimed to establish democratic systems of government, the word "democracy" has gone through so many interpretations. To attempt to provide a universal definition that is acceptable to all schools of thought is, therefore, almost an impossible task. Ross Harrison sees "democracy" as a system in which "the people rule themselves."[2]

Carole Pateman, in her book entitled <u>Participation and Democratic Theory</u>, supports Schumpeter's "classical doctrine" on "democracy." He cites Schumpeter's definition as "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which the individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."[3]

Carole Pateman, however, expresses the relevance of "stability in the political system" which is discussed in the recent works of Berelson, Dahl, Sartori and Eckstein, and emphasizes the need for a participatory government in which the people are truly represented.[4] These definitions are very relevant in the African context as the countries are not only searching for a democratic system, but a stable political system. In this research paper, therefore, "democracy" will apply to a stable system of government in which all people, including ethnic groups, are represented through elections.

One other term that needs to be defined is "ethnic conflict." Donald Horowitz explains that it is a term that has been used differently by writers. Most of these, however, embody the "myth of collective ancestry which usually carries with it traits believed to be

innate." He accepts Enid Schildkrout's definition as being more encompassing. This gives the "minimal definition of an ethnic unit" as "the idea of common provenance, recruitment primarily through kinship, and a notion of distinctiveness whether or not this consists of a unique inventory of cultural traits."[5] To this definition, Donald Horowitz added a "minimal scale requirement, so that ethnic membership transcends the range of face-to-face interactions, as recognized kinship need not." He, therefore, states that "ethnicity easily embraces groups differentiated by color, language and religion; it covers 'tribes', 'races', 'nationalities' and castes."[6] Michael Brown defines "ethnic conflict" as "a dispute about important political, economic, social, cultural, or territorial issues between two or more ethnic communities."[7] Michael Brown's definition emphasizes the fundamental problems that have catalyzed ethnic conflicts in Africa. It is, therefore, appropriate for this research and will be used as the definition of "ethnic conflict."

"Colonial Powers" is a term that will be used to describe European countries which colonized African countries. Specifically, they will apply to Belgium, France, Portugal, Great Britain, and Germany.

"Americo-Liberians" is a term that will refer to American freed slaves in Liberia. These were the slaves who were sent to Liberia from the USA and will include their descendants.

Limitations

Many countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo are sensitive to ethnic issues and, therefore, restrict the release of information that is considered inflammatory. However, there is adequate general information that can still be used to analyze ethnic conflicts to help find solutions.

It is believed that research is currently being undertaken to find solutions to the Rwandan and Liberian conflicts. Some publications of such studies may not be available. These studies will not be considered.

Delimitations

In the research, it is necessary to establish a time-frame because African ethnic groups, in general, have historical backgrounds dating several hundred years. To attempt to cover all remote causes will be virtually impossible. Therefore, the research will cover the last fifty years. The reason is that most African countries gained their independence within that period. It was only after independence that expansionist desires of ethnic groups became unacceptable since that meant either violating international territorial boundaries or internal arrangements within the countries. However, mention will be made of earlier historical cases only when it is necessary.

The research will also preclude the merits and demerits of the different democratic systems available in the world today. Rather than concentrate on which type of democratic system or model is best for resolving ethnic conflicts, the research will be concerned with the

10

pillars or principles that make democracy work. This delimitation is based on the fact that different democratic models have been tried by African countries without success. The blame for the failure has been on the implementation rather than the model. For example, Ghana tried the Westminster system from 1957 to 1981 but this did not prevent coups. Out of nine of the governments that were formed in Ghana from the time of independence in 1957, five were military. Similarly, the military coups in Nigeria from 1960 to date have occurred despite the adoption of the federal democratic system by all civilian governments.

In order to limit the scope of this research, the paper will be limited to the ethnic conflicts in Liberia and Ghana. The main reason is that all ethnic conflicts have occurred because of grievances that were not resolved in those countries. A few countries like Rwanda, Ghana and Liberia are the countries that have suffered from ethnic conflicts of the most violent type in recent times. While the ethnic conflict in Ghana was brought under control in four weeks and resolved by December 1994, the conflict in Liberia, like many other ethnic conflicts in Africa, continues to defy all attempts at an acceptable solution and resolution. By researching on the Ghana and Liberia conflicts, a recommendation can be made for resolution of future conflicts in Africa.

It is necessary to mention that violence is not the only measure of conflict. Some conflicts could be non-violent for a long time and may, or may not, turn into violence and anarchy as was experienced in Liberia and Rwanda. It is usually when a non-violent conflict turns into anarchy or genocide that the world is alarmed. In this research,

all ethnic conflicts will be considered potentially violent and will preclude discussions on the violent or non-violent nature of the conflict.

Siginificance of the Study

Efforts of the world community have been directed towards the preservation of peace in every country and region in the world with the intention of making the world a safer place for mankind. The loss of lives of the aged, women and children, in particular, is the concern of the world community because it violates human rights. It is also morally wrong and contradicts international rules which differentiate combatants from non-combatants. Unfortunately, the noncombatants have been the victims of ethnic conflicts. Hutus in Rwanda for instance believed that they could wipe out the Tutsi ethnic group by killing the women and children who constituted the future generation of the Tutsis. Most of the Tutsis who survived the genocide fled into neighboring countries. Similarly, many people fled from Liberia into Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone to escape the genocide in their country.

The refugee problem created by ethnic conflicts in Rwanda and Liberia have had severe repercussions on both the countries involved and the international community. First, refugee flight has ruined the social and cultural lives of the people. The future of the children of those nations is uncertain. The adoption of democratic systems can possibly ensure a stable government and provide a more peaceful way of resolving indigenous ethnic problems. Secondly, the countries involved

12

have lost their valuable human resources. The countries which accepted the refugees have also had their domestic problems aggravated as they tried to accommodate and provide refugees with health care. Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, for example, had to accommodate, feed, and provide health facilities for refugees from Liberia. These have been estimated to cost millions of dollars. With a democratic system in place, the human resources of the countries can be preserved, and other nations will be spared the burden of using their meager resources for refugees.

Due to the refugee problem and heavy expenditure on peacekeeping operations in Liberia, the Ghanaian head of state expressed his concern over the prolonged conflict in Liberia. At the 17th summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Abuja (the capital of Nigeria) on the 5th and 6th of August 1994, the current chairman, President Jerry John Rawlings of Ghana aired Ghana's concern on the unending conflict in Liberia. He threatened to withdraw Ghanaian troops from the peace-keeping operations in Liberia due to the large financial drain of the operation on the economy of the country.[8]

One significant problem that has been of primary concern to African nations is the adverse effect that ethnic conflicts are likely to have on the culture of tolerance of future generations. Young children have been turned into combatants and taught to kill without question. This is likely to affect their perception of violence in society in the future. Having been trained to commit genocide, it is unlikely that they will exercise restraint in future conflicts. Their perception of the value of life will most likely be affected. This is a problem that future generations may be saddled with. A solution to

ethnic conflicts will enable the Africans to preserve that culture of peace and tolerance that is characteristic of the continent.

One major problem is the economic stagnation in most countries that have experienced ethnic conflicts in Africa. Some conflicts have virtually destroyed all social amenities, infrastructure, and the economic base. The power and water stations in Monrovia, the Liberian capital, were destroyed in the heat of the conflict. To date these facilities are not fully restored in most parts of the country. The death of thousands of young children due to diseases like cholera and dysentery could have been prevented or reduced if potable water was available.

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have also indicated that the pursuance of democratic reforms by needy countries is a prerequisite for obtaining their loans. Most African countries are in dire need of capital. They could easily qualify by adopting democratic reforms. Also, budgetary allocations that have been used for humanitarian assistance in Rwanda, Liberia, and Ghana by the UN and concerned developed nations like the USA, France, and Great Britain are huge and could have been used to promote development in areas, such as health, education, and protection of the environment in developing countries.

By researching the ethnic problem in Africa, more knowledge can be gained on the underlying causes and the repercussions of ethnic conflicts in Africa. Militarily, the understanding of the ethnic situation will provide future intervention troops with an insight into the environment of ethnic conflicts on the African continent. Nothing,

however, could be more important than adding a possible solution to the ethnic problem in Africa.

ENDNOTES

[1]The prediction on the continuation of "tribalism" in Africa, from the Sahara to the Southern Ocean in Jane's Defence Weekly, has been vindicated by the Ghana and Rwanda ethnic conflicts which occurred in early 1995.

[2]For more information on this subject see Ross Harrison, Democracy, 7.

[3]See Carole Pateman, Participation and Democracy, 4-5.

[4]Ibid., 10.

[5]Horowitz, 52.

[6]Ibid., 55.

[7]Michael Brown, 5.

[8]President Rawlings later accepted to delay the withdrawal of Ghanaian troops for six more months.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research will begin by examining the nature of "democracy."
Some literature on the theory of democracy will be discussed initially
to ascertain whether it provides any basis for consideration as a means
for resolving ethnic conflicts. Specifically, Ross Harrison's theory on
democracy which deals with the foundations of democracy will be analyzed
first. His arguments for the universal acceptance of democracy as a
viable political system will be reviewed to establish its
justification. Second, Donald Horowitz's theory of democracy will be
discussed and his assertions analyzed. The analysis will aim at
verifying the viability of democratic systems in ethnically divided
societies. The paper will then discuss the principles which make
democracy function effectively. The purpose of discussing these
principles is most vital to the research. First, by establishing that
"democracy" is a viable political option in ethnically divided
societies, African countries would have some justification in adopting
that political option. Second, the research seeks to establish the
feasibility of "democracy" as a political choice for the resolution of
ethnic conflicts in African countries. Establishing the feasibility of
"democracy" as a political option will serve as a foundation for
answering the primary research question: "can democracy resolve ethnic
conflicts in Africa?"

17

The discussion of democratic theory should, also, yield basic factors that prevent ethnic conflicts from starting or, in a worst case, from escalating to a point where it results in genocide. These factors, among others, should deal with impartiality, power sharing, recognition of individual rights, stability, recognition of minority rights, procedures for addressing grievances and equality of status which usually constitute the demands of warring ethnic factions. In effect, the factors in a democratic system that prevent conflicts from starting or escalating would be addressing the second and third research questions. These include: "what are the causes of ethnic conflicts in Africa" and "what other means are available for resolving ethnic conflicts." A problem arises when "democracy" does not fully address those questions. In that situation, alternative measures or mechanisms may have to be found to address the short comings and will, therefore, serve as a basis for recommending further research.

Problems noted in the adoption of a democratic system in ethnically divided nations do not necessarily imply that democracy will not work. Rather, the implication could be that problems may be encountered during the implementation of the democratic system. Most western democratic governments like the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the United States have gone through political upheavals, some of which have been racially, religiously or economically inspired. These, however, did not break the political system down. All that has been required is to address the causes. A note will, therefore, be made of examples from developed democracies that might have found solutions to some of the difficult or conflicting issues that have direct impact on

democratic systems. In this regard, measures that have been used by some democratic countries in western Europe to prevent or regulate conflicts will be cited as examples of additional measures that can be instituted by African countries as conflict prevention measures.

Having determined the principles that make democracy effective as a political system, the paper will discuss conflict resolution theory. This discussion is to determine the principles that contribute to effective resolution of ethnic conflicts. In this endeavor, Eric Nordlinger's Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies will serve as a basis for outlining the principles. Since effective conflict resolution practices would normally seek to address the grievances of the warring factions, conflict resolution theory will be expected to provide answers to the causes of ethnic conflicts. Specifically, the theory should provide solutions to problems such as impartiality, power sharing, recognition of individual and conflict group rights and grievances which constitute the reasons for the conflicts. Donald Rothchild's recommendation of a governmental system which seeks to resolve internal conflicts will be analyzed to establish its validity. At this stage, some similarities and differences between the principles of democracy and conflict resolution are expected to emerge. The similarities will serve as a theoretical basis for resolving ethnic conflicts. Disparities in the principles on the other hand will have to be assessed to determine the severity of their impact on conflicts. Most importantly, it will be necessary to determine whether any alternative solutions exist to nullify the differences. These alternative solutions can then be additional recommendations for the resolution of conflicts.

A historical review of the Liberia and Ghana ethnic conflicts in Africa will be undertaken to determine the remote and immediate causes of those conflicts. For the historical review of the Liberian conflict, Sesay's book entitled The Liberian Crises and ECOMOG: A bold attempt at Regional Peace Keeping will be used to highlight the remote and immediate causes of the conflict. Regional Organizations and the Resolution of Internal Conflict: The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia by Ofuatey-Kodjoe will provide details on the impacts of external efforts in the resolution of the Liberian ethnic conflict. In general, the review of the ethnic conflict in Liberia from the arrival of American freed slaves in the country to the military overthrow of the last Americo-Liberian president will establish the remote factors of the ethnic conflict in that country. The period of rule of Master Sergeant Doe, who took over the reigns of government, will establish the grievances of ethnic groups which contributed to the Liberian ethnic conflict.

A similar historical review will be done on Ghana. The remote causes of the ethnic conflict in Ghana will be traced from the period of the partition of the African continent. Naomi Charzan's paper entitled Ghana: Problems of Governance and the Emergence of Civil Society will serve as reference material. This is to establish whether the boundary demarcation had any impact on the ethnic groups in general. The historical review from the time of independence to 1994 will also elucidate other factors which could have contributed to ethnic conflicts in Ghana. The conflicts and current grievances of the warring factions will then be evaluated with the aim of establishing the issues involved.

At this stage, the data will be analyzed to establish, first of all, if measures and conditions indicated in the conflict resolution theory were applied in the Dagomba\Konkomba ethnic conflict in Ghana. It will also be necessary to establish whether the northern Ghana conflict has been resolved. Secondly, a comparison will be made on the similarities of the Liberia and Ghana ethnic conflicts to determine the issues involved in both conflicts. Thirdly, a determination will be made on why the measures worked in Ghana and whether the measures applied in Ghana can be used to resolve the ethnic conflict in Liberia.

At this stage, the existing democratic conditions that made the conflict resolution process in Ghana possible will be analyzed to determine whether the existence of similar conditions in Liberia can resolve the ethnic conflict in that country. Conclusions can then be drawn and recommendations made on the resolution of conflicts in Africa.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

In his book entitled "Democracy", Ross Harrison discusses the merits of democracy. He cites Rousseau and Madison as people who supported different versions of democracy. According to Harrison, even Marx supported another kind of democracy except that he did not want any movement to use the word "democratic."[1] Harrison argues that democracy is almost universally accepted to be of value in the modern world. He questions, however, whether the universal acceptance is justified. In order to answer this question, Ross Harrison examines the foundations of democracy. He explains that the sources of democracy could be either in "everyday moral judgment" or in the "general and theoretical expressions of official ethics, political philosophy or value theory." He emphasizes that in the first category, the "ultimate value derives from what is of good to human beings." This deals with promoting human happiness or welfare. In the second category, he provides an acceptable explanation that because "people are thought to possess inalienable moral value as individuals," they are ascribed rights.

Individual rights verses group rights however present a problem. Ross Harrison explains that when people, in exercising their collective rights decide to have a "state", then the "state" can be taken to "respect those rights which were freely exercised in its formation."[2] He argues that history proves that just as there are advantages of a

22

"pluralist culture, there are also defects." He states further that the majority of the human race from the time of the ancient Greeks until now approve of the democratic system. The main difference is in its form and the trade-offs involved. The question here is how much should an individual sacrifice for the sake of the collective good? The rights of individuals then become a subject for discussion. Ross Harrison states that "autonomy" constitutes the rights of people "to have freedom" and "control of their lives." Therefore where "collective rights" are exercised in a "state", there is need for equality and impartiality. He also emphasizes the need for welfare. The state should be concerned with the needs of the citizens. Since the rights of the individuals are assumed by the state, it has the responsibility to provide for the well-being of the citizens. Ross Harrison also explains that, in order for democracy to succeed, "knowledge" is also essential. He points out that knowledge about what is right or wrong is universal, but expertise in various fields are limited to only some individuals. For example, the construction of a bridge demands the knowledge of an expert in that field. Similarly, war fighting demands skills. It is those who have been successful in these fields, or could have been successful if their knowledge was used, who would be entrusted with the responsibility of undertaking such ventures. This refers to the election of representatives. It is the experts in the political arena who are most suitable for elections into the positions of leadership. In effect, democracy should provide for liberty, equality, welfare and knowledge. These are the pillars that Ross Harrison sees as the "foundations" of "democracy." Although he explains that democracy is in fashion today,

that should not be the only reason why democracy is considered good. It
is the benefits of democracy and the national stability that have
characterized western democratic governments that give credence to the
value of a democratic system.[3]

Donald L. Horowitz sees democracy in severely divided societies
as an exceptional case. In his book entitled Ethnic Groups in Conflict,
he explains that democracy is workable in ethnically divided societies
contrary to the assertions of authors like John Stuart Mill that
democracy is "next to impossible in a country made up of different
nationalities."[4] He points out that ethnicity tends to manifest itself
in party politics. There is historical tendency for political party
affiliation to be based on ethnic allegiance but governments cannot be
formed by ethnic parties alone. To gain majority seats, ethnic groups
may go into coalitions. These are the problems in multi-party politics
in an ethnically divided society. In order to solve this problem, a
country like Nigeria adopted a system which sought a balance of ethnic
groups in governmental appointments.[5] The main difficulty is that,
sometimes, the solution comes too late when disagreement over power-
sharing has already resulted in conflict. Donald L. Horowitz states
that the solution is in "apt design and good timing" by policy makers.[6]

Donald Rothchild took it a step further to recommend a system of
government that could end internal conflicts. In his article entitled
"An Interactive Model for State-Ethnic Relations" he argues that
responsiveness of the state to the demands of the disadvantaged could
ease a negotiation process during conflicts. He suggests that in
ethnically divided societies, "cabinet appointments, civil service

24

recruitment and regional allocations" should be based on the relative numbers of the ethnic groups. This emphasizes equity in the society. He explains that leaders can work out compromised formulas for proportional allocation of appointments. Similarly, a compromise can be worked out to bridge the gap between the "relatively advantaged and relatively disadvantaged on such basic questions as subregional needs versus derivation (extraction)." He uses an example from Ghana where ethnic groups were proportionally allocated civil service appointments in 1972. He also cites Nigeria and Kenya as examples of countries that used proportionality principle in the mid-1970s to achieve fairness in the expenditure on roads, health, and education among the countries' subregions.[7]

Eric Nordlinger emphasizes similar conditions for "peace" in an ethnically divided society in his book entitled <u>Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies</u>. In his theory he cites six conflict-regulating practices which have been employed for successful regulation of conflicts. These include "a stable coalition, the proportionality principle, depoliticization, the mutual veto, compromise, and concessions." He emphasizes that group leaders play a vital role in conflict regulation. Their desire to end the conflict is very important. He points out that "conflict-group leaders who adhere to conciliatory attitudes tend to engage in regulatory efforts far more readily than those who do not."[8] The conditions he outlined, combined with conciliatory attitudes of ethnic group leaders should then form an important part of conflict regulation or resolution.

In his theory on conflict resolution, Luis Alberto Padilla

supports this stand and explains that there are "three indispensable conflict-producing elements: the actor, the incompatibles, and the actions or behavior of the actors." The first element, "actors", are the individuals in society. The second, "Incompatibility", refers to the "impossibility of simultaneously satisfying two parties seeking the same resources." He explains that, for this type of situation, there must be at least one solution that the parties are not aware of. He adds that the solution may be "better perceived by outside observers, especially when the incompatibles are latent or hidden." "Behavior", which is the third, deals with the actions of the actors. Luis Alberto Padilla explains that the actors in any conflict operate in a conscious manner with the aim of securing specific objectives. Linking these three, he indicates the inter-relationship of the elements in conflict. Incompatibilities, whether perceived or real, can lead to the formation of conflictive actors and behavior. Consequently, conflictive behavior can lead to the taking up of arms which results in "militarization of social relationships." He cites El Salvador and Nicaragua as countries in which all these elements were at play but these were regulated by a group of central American countries including Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Panama. The conflict resolution process was the regional approach in which decisions of the central American presidents in the town of Esquipulas were adopted. The meeting, known as "Esquipulas II peace process", was named Arias Peace Plan. Luis Alberto Padilla explains that the mediation of the presidents obtained a remarkable success in preparing the way for an autonomous negotiation of central American countries and contributed decisively to stopping direct US

26

military intervention in Nicaragua.[9]

An article in the 24-30 October 1994 edition of the West Africa magazine entitled <u>African Conflicts: Searching for Solutions</u> reviews the conflicts in Africa and suggests solutions to the conflicts on the continent. It points out that the media drew world attention to the devastating effects of conflicts in Somalia, Liberia, Angola, Mozambique, and Rwanda. The article wondered which country with a potential for conflict in Africa was going to be next. It cites Nigeria, Zaire, and Togo as examples of potential conflict countries. The article states that "the response of the world community, including the so-called 'big powers' of the G7, the UN, OAU, and international humanitarian organizations, has been inadequate in terms of taking positive steps towards conflict resolution."[10] The article notes that all that these bodies have been able to do is to mobilize relief funds, food, clothing, and other items which help to deal with the immediate problems of war-affected people.

The article suggests that preventive measures in potential conflict countries will cost far less in monetary terms and will save human lives, the environment and the economies of those countries in conflict. It proposes two ways of resolving conflicts in Africa. First, conditions should be created for "discussion and peace-making efforts." These conditions should allow the warring parties to make compromises, adjust their positions, and find a political "common denominator" to resolve their problems.[11] Second, "Africans and people of African descent or those involved in conflict resolution in Africa will need the political will" to delve deep into the root causes of

conflicts such as religion, ethnic and political problems. The article suggests that an African approach to conflict resolution, buttressed by other conventional approaches and experiences of conflict resolution, needs to be pursued. It points out that there is "something African about Africa that can never be European, Asian or American."[12] The article notes that two London-based institutions are involved in research aimed at providing the bases for African initiatives in conflict prevention and resolution. These institutions include Africa Research and Information Bureau (ARIB) and the Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA). The article notes that ARIB and IFAA are of the strong view that non-governmental organizations can play a meaningful role in creating stable societies and they see the first steps as "facilitating peaceful conflict transformation." The two institutions have therefore proposed a major international conference to be held in Africa in 1995. The main issues the conference will focus on include "history of warfare in Africa, the intricate relationship between development (poverty) and conflict, the proliferation of arms and armament, and traditional conflict prevention and resolution on the continent." Other issues will include the plight of refugees and displaced women and children, Africa-specific mediation and negotiation techniques, and the formation of an all-Africa negotiation and mediation team to be dispatched whenever deemed necessary to conflict areas to help in the resolution of active conflicts and the prevention of potential conflict situations."[13]

ENDNOTES

[1] Ross Harrison explains that Rousseau's point on wants, like Hegel and Marx, are not taken by expressed ideas. People may be mistaken about their real interests. Freedom is not only achieving what is desired but in achieving what is wanted. Ross Harrison, 9.

[2] Ibid., 132.

[3] Ibid., 233.

[4] Horowitz cited Nkrumah and Obote who dismantled political parties in the 1960s and ended up with one party governments. Horowitz, 681.

[5] Nigeria adopted the American system which included an elected president, a two house national assembly and separation of powers. A president, however, had to have a minimum of 25% votes in all the ethnically divided states. Horowitz, 635-638.

[6] Ibid., 684.

[7] Donald Rothchild, 196.

[8] Eric Nordlinger, 118.

[9] Luis Alberto Padilla, 150.

[10] The article notes that UNHCR spent $1 billion on refugees in 1992. The article notes that 25% of that amount could have been enough for preventive diplomacy. 24-30 October edition of West Africa magazine, 1823.

[11] The article does not give any suggestions on how the conditions can be established to bring warring factions to a negotiating table.

[12] There are different traditional methods of resolving conflicts in Africa. One procedure used in West African countries is the mediation by neutral traditional leaders or neutral ethnic group leaders.

[13] It is not known whether the conference has been held or not. The conference will definitely contribute to finding solutions to conflicts in Africa.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES PART I-THE LIBERIAN CONFLICT

In his book entitled The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG, Amadu Sesay traces the Liberian conflict which claimed so many lives and destroyed the infrastructure of Liberia to the lack of democracy. When a handful of freed American slaves colonized Liberia in 1822, under the auspices of the American Colonization Society, the natives on the land at that time, including ethnic groups such as the Khrans, Gios, and the Mandingoes were quickly dominated. The freed slaves, commonly referred to as Americo-Liberians, succeeded in this domination through wars in their bid to pacify and subjugate the natives to their rule and authority. As described by Sesay, "it was a clear example of 'black-on-black' domination or imperialism."[1]

Sesay explains that, as at 1980, Americo-Liberians were estimated at 5% of the total 1.8 million Liberians yet they controlled political and economic power in the country almost to the exclusion of the majority of the citizens of that country. He indicates that, before Master Sergeant Doe's coup of April 12, 1980, none of the 19 presidents who had ruled the country was an indigenous Liberian. Amadu Sesay quotes records to show that 11 of the 19 presidents were actually born in the United States of America. Consequently, they paid very little attention to the sensibilities of the indigenous Liberians with regard to their laws, customs and religious beliefs. He emphasizes that there

30

were separate laws for the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous citizens in Monrovia (the capital of Liberia), and the coastal areas (Montserrado County) before 1946.[2]

Sesay cites President Tubman as the only president who tried to narrow the gap between the indigenous people and the Americo-Liberians in 1944. The Liberian elite at that time came from the estimated top 300 Americo-Liberian families. This was less than 2% of the total population of 1.8 million Liberians in 1980. To worsen this climate of domination, all the vital vehicles for political participation and expression of dissent in the country including the press, radio, and television were strictly controlled. Amadu Sesay discusses the government's elaborate network of security agencies comprising the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Special Security Service (SSS) and the most powerful of all, the National Intelligence, and Security Service (NISS), which were introduced to provide security for the Government. These organizations unleashed terror on actual or perceived enemies of the government amongst the indigenous Liberians to a point that all opposition was stifled and the country virtually became a police state. Although the Liberian constitution made provision for citizens numbering 300 or more to form political parties, it was only those who were co-opted into the government's True Whig Party (TWP) or political parties which sided with the government could survive. Amadu Sesay explains that, in practice, only one opposition party called the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) was formed in 1975 and allowed to register in 1979. This party was led by Baccus Mathews. In effect, the TWP stayed in power from 1878 to 1980 making Liberia the oldest one

31

party state in Africa. He asserts that the desire to raise the level of political consciousness among the indigenous Liberians and subsequently put power in the hands of majority of Liberians through non-violent means led to the formation of the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA). This organization was led by Dr. Togba-Na Tipoteh, Dr. Amos Sawyerr and Dew Mason. The organization, together with a sister organization formed with the aim of working on the rural population for the same objectives did not achieve much. The minority Americo-Liberians still grew richer while the indigenous citizens barely managed to survive. Average daily income for the indigenous citizens who were mainly unskilled or semi-skilled, for example, was $1.50 in 1977. Amadu Sesay indicates that the inequalities were so glaring that former American Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, described the country in 1976 as a "depressing, appalling slum" during a state visit.[3]

Sesay explains that the strong resentment by the indigenous ethnic groups led to the coup of 1980. The coup was catalyzed by the increase in the price of rice from $22 to $30 by the government. Sesay points out that there was unity of purpose at this stage since the ethnic groups as a whole suffered the subjugation. The assumption of power by Master Sergeant Doe, who led the take-over, initially brought relief to the indigenous people. For once, they believed they had one of their indigenous people as the head of state. Their expectations were dashed when Doe filled the top ranking positions of the military and government with members of his Khran ethnic group.[4] This state of affairs created bitterness among the people.

Sesay notes that in 1984 the hopes and aspirations of the other
ethnic groups was rekindled following the adoption of a new constitution
by referendum on 3 July. Doe rigged the elections and won in the
October 1985 elections. One Thomas Quiwonkpa from the Gio ethnic group
attempted to over-throw Doe on 12 November, 1985 but failed. He was
captured and killed on the orders of Doe. The abortive coup led to a
mass killing of the Gios and Manos in the Nimba county by the Khrans.
Amadu Sesay estimates that some 5,000 people, including women and
children died in the massacre.[5] Charles Taylor, a close associate of
Quiwonkpa, fled Liberia and later resurfaced in Nimba county on December
24, 1989. With a handful of men, and recruits from the Gio and Mano
ethnic groups, Charles Taylor launched an attack against security posts.
Within six months, his warring faction called the National Patriotic
Front of Liberia (NPFL) captured seventy five percent of the country.
Sesay indicates that no one was spared in the massacres that ensued
during the fighting. "Traders, journalists, and nurses from West
African states were abducted and killed by rebels as far back as
September 1990."[6] However, it was Prince Yeduo Johnson's break-away
faction from the NPFL which captured and killed Doe on 24 August, 1990.
The faction of Prince Yeduo Johnson from the Gio ethnic group had its
forces and support from the Gio, Mano, Sarpo, Gbandi and Kru ethnic
groups. This faction was called Independent National Patriotic Front of
Liberia (INPFL) and comprised about 3,000 fighters equipped with assault
rifles, machine guns and recoilless propelled grenade launchers (RPGs).
This faction shared the NPFL aspiration of ridding Liberia of the
authoritarian and brutal rule of President Doe.[7]

From the time of the death of President Doe, the situation changed

dramatically with all ethnic groups aligning themselves to different

warring factions. The Gios and Manoes aligned themselves with the NPFL

whiles the Khrans and Mandingoes, who principally constituted the Armed

Forces of Liberia (AFL) remained loyal to what was left of Doe's

government. Each ethnic group tried to annihilate the other. It was at

this stage that world attention was drawn to the Liberian genocide. On

one occasion, the AFL opened fire on people, believed to be Gios and

Manoes, who had taken refuge in Saint Peters Lutheran Church in

Monrovia. Six hundred people, mostly women and children, were killed.

Sesay estimates that over 200,000 lives, including women and children,

lost their lives in the conflict. He also estimates that 375,000 people

fled the country into Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Nigeria, and

Ghana. The United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO)

described the situation as "horrendous", saying that the city of

Monrovia was in ruins and there was no food or health care.[8] It was the

intervention of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring

Group (ECOMOG) which halted the genocide. The initiative to send troops

to Liberia was taken by the West African heads of state at their

thirteenth meeting in Banjul, Gambia, from 28 to 30 May, 1990.[9] With

the cessation of hostilities, the warring factions, apart from the NPFL,

agreed to settle the conflict at a negotiating table. Charles Taylor of

the NPFL felt that he still had the chance of capturing the rest of the

country and becoming head of state. He later accepted the negotiation

option and since then the ethnic war has reduced to occasional

skirmishes.

34

Sesay recounts the role of west African sub region, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations (UN). He said the initiative of the heads of state of the Economic Committee of West African States (ECOWAS) was supported by the UN and a special envoy, Trevor Gordon Summers, was assigned to the country in late 1993. The OAU also announced the expansion of ECOMOG to include other African countries in late 1993. Following this announcement, a 750 man contingent from Tanzania and a company of 150 soldiers were deployed in Liberia to assist in the peace operations.[10]

Sesay notes that the initial preoccupation of the Heads of State of the West African countries was the evacuation of innocent civilians. An ECOWAS peace plan that was adopted by the ECOWAS Standing Committee on 7 August, 1990 called for complete cease fire, ECOWAS monitoring of the cease fire, the establishment of a broad-based interim government acceptable to all people of Liberia and the holding of general and presidential elections within twelve months. The peace plan also made provision for the observation of the elections by ECOWAS and other international bodies to ensure that the elections are free and fair.[11]

Sesay concludes that the ECOWAS initiative made a significant difference in the Liberian conflict and saving innocent lives. He emphasizes that the deployment of ECOMOG troops facilitated the release of thousands of refugees trapped in the conflict areas and the pacification of Monrovia made it possible for food and medicine to be sent to Liberia. Most important of all, the force helped to restore some form of normalcy to Liberia.[12]

Ofuatey-Kodjoe examines the right of external forces to intervene in Liberia. He explains that there are plausible arguments against external intervention in the internal affairs of nations. These arguments are based on the "traditional notion that intervention in the internal affairs of states is a violation of international law."[13] He emphasizes that it is generally accepted that the UN has the right to intervene in the internal affairs of states because of its responsibilities and rights under Chapter VII, and Article 25 of the Charter. He speaks of an emerging body of scholarly opinion which emphasize the legitimacy of intervention in situations of gross violation of human rights.[14] However, he explains that the involvement of the UN in such conflicts could be problematic. This is because the UN may be preoccupied so much with other issues that it may not pay attention to any other outbreaks of domestic or international conflicts. Additionally, it may be difficult to achieve a consensus in the Security Council or General Assembly. For these reasons, a regional organization which is more interested in the conflict may put in the necessary effort required to resolve the conflict. Ofuatey-Kodjoe explains that this was the case with ECOWAS. However, he emphasizes that it was the appeal made to Nigeria and Togo by Doe on 7 May 1990, that led to the ECOWAS intervention.

Ofuatey-Kodjoe traces the immediate cause of the Liberian ethnic conflict to Doe's unsuccessful attempt to transform his military dictatorship into an "elected" dictatorship. He speaks of the pressure on Doe by the United States and various groups in Liberia to return the country to civilian rule barely one year after the coup of 1980 which

36

brought him to power. The calls for the return to civilian rule went unheeded. Offuatey-Kodjoe explains that before the coup, ethnic animosity had developed over the years from 1847 when the freed American slaves first came to Liberia. The Americo-Liberian oligarchy had systematically developed a strategy of creating enmity between the sixteen ethnic groups so that there was no initial concerted effort by the ethnic groups. The ethnic groups were used to brutalize each other. This was to account for the inter-ethnic animosity later.[15] Ofuatey-kodjoe, however, notes that the Americo-Liberians were also classified as an ethnic group by the other ethnic groups on account of their historical origin. Therefore, the overthrow of the Americo-Liberian oligarchy was seen as an end to the domination of the other ethnic groups by the Americo-Liberian "ethnic" group. The clamor for the return to civilian rule after Doe's coup was also to prevent the continued domination of the country by another ethnic group.

Ofuatey-Kodjoe demonstrates the primacy of the ethnic factor in the Liberian conflict. Doe was perceived by the other ethnic groups to be ruling the country for the benefit of his Khran ethnic group just as the Americo-Liberian presidents were ruling for the benefit of the "Americo-Liberian ethnic group." In order to consolidate his power and eliminate any opposition, Doe's "government embarked on a campaign of terror" against the Gios and Manos in Nimba County. This campaign of terror was initiated because of the unsuccessful coup attempt of a native from Nimba County called General Quiwonkpa in November 1985. Ofuatey-Kodjoe explains that the effects of this were twofold. Charles Taylor and his deputy, Prince Johnson (a Gio from Nimba County)

37

initiated their invasion from Cote d'Ivoire through Nimba county where
they had most of their support and built their core commando units.
Secondly, the initial wrath of the Taylor rebellion was directed at
Doe's Khran ethnic group and their Mandingo allies. Ofuatey-Kodjoe
indicates that "all combatants routinely engaged in indiscriminate
killing, abuse of civilians and ethnically based executions."

Ofuatey-Kodjoe also indicates that some external factors
contributed to the conflict in Liberia. He cites the United States as
the most important factor. He explains that the United States did not
give any indication of supporting Doe in the event of hostilities and,
therefore, gave encouragement to Charles Taylor to launch his invasion.
Doe on his part had a belief that the United States would support him in
the event of an invasion as it had done in the past and, therefore,
weakened his reaction. He also cited the UN as another external factor
that influenced the Liberian conflict. When Secretary-General Perez de
Cuellar attempted to draw the attention of the Security Council to the
Liberian situation on 28 May 1990, based on the report of his special
representative James Jonah's report, the effort was blocked by the
African members of the Security Council. Again, France, Belgium, Spain,
and Italy called for a meeting on 31 July 1990 to discuss the Liberian
crisis with its attendant human rights violations and refugee problems.
This step was also unsuccessful. Even the presentation of the ECOWAS
Peace Plan to the Security Council on 8 August 1990, in accordance with
Article 54 of the UN Charter, did not help. The UN declined to adopt a
resolution on the issue. Ofuatey-Kodjoe points out that, despite
several calls for UN intervention in Liberia, UN role was only limited

38

to the coordination of humanitarian relief, sending representatives to observe the situation in Liberia and to attend negotiations. It was not until 7 November 1992, when the Security Council expanded its role in the conflict by adopting Resolution 788 (imposing an arms embargo on Liberia) that the UN took action. The only decisive action the UN took was cooperating with OAU and ECOWAS in negotiating the Cotonou Agreement following which the UN adopted Resolution 866 (1993) on 22 September 1993. This resolution established the UN Observer Mission to Liberia (UNOMIL) to work with the OAU and ECOWAS in the implementation of the Cotonou Accords. Ofuatey Kodjoe suggests that the UN pre-occupation in the Gulf War, conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and Somalia at that time accounted for the UN's inaction in the Liberian conflict. He adds that the UN did not consider the Liberian problem as serious a threat to international peace and security as the other conflicts mentioned. Ofuatey-Kodjoe also states that the Nigerian determination to keep the Liberian problem out of the UN so that it could be able to have more control over the intervention was also a reason for the UN inaction. He supports this contention with developments in the conflict. Ofuatey-Kodjoe mentions that as early as 1990, President Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire presented a proposal to Perez de Cuellar asking for the replacement of ECOMOG troops by UN forces. Charles Taylor has also consistently declared that he will permit disarmament only by UN forces or some international body other than the Nigeria-dominated ECOMOG troops. He states that it was due to the increased UN participation in the Liberian peace process that the Cotonou Agreement was finally signed.

Ofuatey-Kodjoe explains that the unwillingness of the UN to play a leading role left only the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as the next body that had the responsibility to intervene in the conflict. Unfortunately, the OAU lacked the resources and political will to intervene. He suggests that the OAU's failure to intervene must have also been reinforced by its recent failure in the Chadian conflict. This contributed to the total involvement of ECOWAS.

Ofuatey-Kodjoe cited regional factors which contributed to the Liberian conflict. Nigeria gave support to Doe, strengthening him in his resolve to fight. The Nigerian support was for four reasons. First, President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria was a personal friend to Doe and wanted to keep him in power. Second, 700 to 1,000 Nigerians had been massacred in the Nigerian Embassy in Monrovia on 8 August 1990 by Charles Taylor's NPFL forces. It was also evident that the NPFL were targeting Nigerians. Third, Nigeria wanted to establish itself as the most influential power in Sub-Saharan Africa and, especially, in the West African subregion. Fourth, Nigeria wanted to eliminate the influence of external powers in accordance with its foreign policy of maintaining order within the West African sub-region. Therefore, it wanted to prevent Libya, France, and the United States from determining the outcome of the conflict.[16]

Charles Taylor actually received support from Libya and Bourkina Fasso. Ofuatey-Kodjoe indicates that some of the combatant forces of Charles Taylor were from Bourkina Fasso and Libya not only trained NPFL forces but also armed and equipped Charles Taylor. Cote d'Ivoire was also involved. It allowed free passage of Charles Taylor's forces and

logistics through its territory to launch attacks into Liberia. Ofuatey-Kodjoe explains that President Houphouet-Boigny seems to have been interested in the overthrow of Doe because of the death of his son-in-law during Doe's coup.[17]

Ofuatey-Kodjoe explains that from the time of intervention by ECOMOG troops on 25 August 1990, ECOWAS tried to maintain neutrality by creating the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) with Dr. Amos Sawyer as interim president and Bishop Ronald Diggs as vice president on 30 August 1990 in Banjul, Gambia. ECOWAS decided to leave out both Doe and Charles Taylor to maintain this neutrality. Ofuatey-Kodjoe indicates that four contenders for power had to be dealt with by ECOMOG from the beginning of 1991. The first was Charles Taylor's NPFL, mainly from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups from Nimba County, which controlled 12 of the 13 counties in Liberia. This constituted 90% of Liberian territory. Charles Taylor formed a 24-member interim government with his headquarters in Gbarnga in Bong County and had control of all the wealth in Liberia including timber, minerals and rubber. He had an estimated force of 3,000. Ofuatey-Kodjoe states that some of these forces were believed to be dissidents from Nigeria, Gambia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone who hoped to eventually gain support from NPFL in similar insurrections in their countries. The remnants of Doe's Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) constituted the second force. This force, made up of mainly the Khran and Mandingo ethnic groups, was headed by Brigadier General David Nimley who was also acting president after the death of Doe. The AFL had dwindled down to 1,000 from its original estimated strength of 7,800 and was located in the presidential mansion. The

third force was Prince Johnson's Independent Patriotic Front of Liberia
(INPFL), a break-away faction from Charles Taylor's NPFL. The INPFL,
with an estimated strength of 400 to 600, was located a small military
base in Caldwell, a few miles to the south-west of Monrovia. This
force, like the NPFL, was mainly made up of combatants from the Gio and
Mano ethnic groups from Nimba County. The fourth warring faction which
surfaced in the Liberian conflict on 29 May 1991, was the United
Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO). ULIMO was a
merger of three anti-Taylor groups founded in Conakry, the capital of
Guinea, on 29 May 1991. The groups include the Liberian Peace Council
(LPC) headed by George Boley, former advisor to President Doe, the
Liberian United Defense Force headed by General Albert Karpeh, an ex-
functionary in the Doe government, and the Movement for the Redemption
of Liberian Moslems headed by Alhaji Kromah, Doe's former Minister of
Information. Ofuatey-Kodjoe states that ULIMO's forces, estimated at
3,000, is generally believed to comprise members of Doe's Khran ethnic
group and former officials of Doe's government. The main objective of
ULIMO is to avenge the deaths of some 10,000 muslims who were supposed
to have been killed by Charles Taylor.[18]

Ofuatey-Kodjoe discusses the efforts made by ECOWAS to resolve
the Liberian conflict. With all these warring factions competing for
supremacy, ECOWAS was under great pressure to resolve the conflict
through mediation. It, therefore, engaged in a number of diplomatic
efforts. Three conferences were held between November 1990 and March
1991. These included conferences in Bamako (27 November 1990), Lome (12
February 1991) and Monrovia (15 March 1991). Ofuatey-Kodjoe states that

all these conferences were unsuccessful because Charles Taylor wanted an interim governing council established with himself as the interim president.

To resolve the stalemate, ECOWAS shifted its strategy from using the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC), which was dominated by Nigeria and the anglophone countries, to a francophone-dominated committee of five countries comprising Ghana, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Togo, and Cote d'Ivoire. This was called the Committee of Five. The committee was headed by President Houphouet-Boigny. This change in ECOWAS strategy appeared to be achieving some success when Charles Taylor and Amos Sawyer embraced each other at the first of four meetings chaired by President Houphouet-Boigny in Yamousoukro, Cote d'Ivoire. At this conference, Charles Taylor and Amos Sawyer agreed to disarm, hold elections and work together for peace. The optimism generated was, however, short-lived. Two subsequent conferences, Yamousoukro II (29-30 July) and Yamousoukro III (16-17 September), both failed. After this, ECOWAS decided to break the stalemate by adopting a compromised solution. The Committee of Five held a conference, Yamousoukro IV, on 30 October 1991. It was hoped that a compromised solution would be met with representatives of Charles Taylor and Amos Sawyer. Fortunately, an agreement was reached. The main points included disarmament of all combatants within 60 days under the supervision of ECOMOG, establishment of a demilitarized zone between all forces and along the Sierra Leone/Liberia border separating NPFL and ULIMO forces, and the appointment of a special electoral commission to prepare for national elections to be held under international supervision within six months.

Two other points in the agreement included the joint appointment of an interim supreme court and the opening of all roads. This agreement, like many other agreements did not work. This was mainly because Charles Taylor emphasized that he would not disarm his troops while ULIMO was still active. Charles Taylor also felt that the Nigeria-dominated ECOMOG was not neutral in the conflict.[19] Ofuatey-Kodjoe indicates that the Liberian situation deteriorated after this. All other warring factions joined ECOMOG in a campaign against NPFL following an attack by NPFL forces on ECOMOG troops who were tasked to disarm the combatants near Bremeville on 15 October 1992. The UN also endorsed Yamousoukro IV agreement and condemned the attack of ECOMOG troops by NPFL. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 866 (1993) on 22 September 1993 and after this, UNOMIL was established with military, medical, engineering, communication, transportation and electoral components. UNOMIL had responsibilities, amongst other supervisory tasks, to investigate and report violations of the cease fire, monitor the compliance of the arms embargo, demobilization of combatants, and train ECOMOG engineers in mine clearance.

Ofuatey-Kodjoe states that an agreement which was reached in Geneva on 17 July 1993 and ratified in Cotonou on 25 July 1993, was a result of joint diplomatic efforts by UN, OAU, and ECOWAS. The agreement was between IGNU, ULIMO and NPFL. He also states that the NPFL had suffered so much casualties that Charles Taylor accepted the agreement. The agreement led to the formation of the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG). However, the disarmament and encampment of combatants have still not been accomplished. Ofuatey-Kodjoe states

44

that the agreement was not fully implemented because of disagreements on the sharing of ministerial appointments. This was resolved on 4 November 1993 when a formula for sharing the ministerial appointments was endorsed by the warring factions. On 7 January, a contingent of African troops from Uganda, as part of an expanded ECOMOG force arrived in Liberia. Ofuatey-Kodjoe states that the swearing-in of LNTG on 7 March 1994 brought the peace process back on track. LNTG had a mandate to govern the country and prepare for presidential and general elections on 7 September, 1994.[20]

Ofuatey-Kodjoe indicates that ECOMOG had 16 battalions by July 1994. Even though the cease fire is still not complete, ECOMOG is still conducting reconnaissance missions to verify compliance with the agreements and proceed with the disarmament. The UN Security Council also continues to extend the 303 member UNOMIL every six months. Ofuatey-Kodjoe concludes that it is necessary to address the animosities of Liberia's multi-ethnic society. He points out that the Liberian conflict was largely due to the ethnic animosities that continue to plague the Liberian society. He questions whether it would be possible to arrive at a satisfactory settlement without considering the peculiar historical and societal aspects of such societies. Ofuatey-Kodjoe also questions the legal basis of the ECOMOG intervention despite the carnage and spill-over to neighboring countries. He states that the existence of an ECOWAS defense pact could provide support for the legality of ECOMOG intervention but the legitimacy was eroded by the fact that the government of Liberia did not request the assistance of the organization. Ofuatey-Kodjoe states that "enforcement action should

only be undertaken to support mediation efforts." He emphasizes that it is important for ECOWAS to be modest in its attempt to force a political solution. He states that "the process of democratization is extremely difficult even under the most salutary conditions, and that attempts to impose it from the outside without a sophisticated understanding of the politico-cultural conditions in the society may have disastrous consequences."[21]

This statement was re-emphasized by President Jerry John Rawlings, the current ECOWAS chairman, in his discussions with former United States President Jimmy Carter in Accra, Ghana on 28 March 1995 on the Liberian conflict. President Rawlings pointed out that the peace in Liberia could be achieved in Liberia primarily by the Liberian people themselves. He noted that the active participation by the factional leaders was vital to the success of peace talks. The two leaders summarized the conditions for the successful resolution of the Liberian conflict. These included the establishment of a government acceptable to the warring factions, disarmament of the warring factions and cessation of hostilities. They noted that there could be no military solution to the conflict. The were very concerned about the inflow of arms to the warring factions from neighboring countries. Mr. Carter assured President Rawlings that he would do all he could to obtain external assistance for the ECOMOG force.[22]

As at 12 March 1995, it was reported that a five-man transitional presidency had been inaugurated as the State Council. ECOMOG had also established collection centers for the disarmament of the warring factions as part of the peace pact that was signed in 1994

to end the conflict. It is expected that the elections scheduled for September 1995 will finally end the conflict.[23]

Endnotes

[1]Amadu Sesay, 30.

[2]Ibid., 32.

[3]Ibid., 37.

[4]The sensitive positions in government and the armed forces were occupied by Khrans and Mandingoes. Amadu Sesay, 75.

[5]Ibid., 75.

[6]The embassy buildings of Nigeria and Guinea were invaded and ransacked by rebels. The factions involved have not been fully identified. The US Navy, however, evacuated most foreign nationals and diplomatic staff in August 1990 before the ransacking.

[7]President Doe's death was alleged to have been master-minded by the INPFL. The truth is still not known. Amadu Sesay, 129.

[8]Ibid., 76.

[9]At least ten other attempts have been made by ECOWAS to resolve the conflict. The most recent was a negotiating conference in Ghana in December, 1994.

[10]There are eight countries participating in ECOMOG operations at this time.

[11]The ECOWAS peace plan has been endorsed by the UN.

[12]Ibid., 89.

[13]Ofuatey-Kodjoe emphasizes the growing concern of the ethnic conflicts. However, his article is concerned with the role of external peace-keeping forces. International Peacekeeping, Volume I, 261.

[14]Ibid., 262.

[15]The 16 Liberian ethnic groups include Bassa, Dei, Gbandi, Gio (Dahn), Glebo, Gola, Kissi, Kpelle, Khran (Wee), Kru, Kuwaa (Belle), Loma, Mano (Ma), Mandingo (Manding), Mende, and Vai. 264.

[16]Charles Taylor's forces were mainly from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups.

[17]Doe organized the death of President Tolbert and jailed his son Adolphus Tolbert. He was later found dead in jail.

[18]Ibid., 276.

[19]ECOWAS held the meeting in the winter home of Houphouet Boigny in Geneva on 6 April 1992. NPFL held its own meeting in Gbanga on 21 April 1992 and accepted the terms of the Geneva agreement.

[20]Ibid., 280.

[21]Ibid., 297.

[22]The visit by former President Jimmy Carter to Ghana was to discuss how the Liberian conflict could be resolved. The visit was also aimed at estimating the support required by ECOMOG. Lack of finance and logistics have been ECOMOG's biggest problems. 29 March 1995 issue of the Ghanaian Times, 1.

[23]The UN-supervised disarmament is reported to be part of the peace pact which was signed last year to conclude the conflict. Chronicle for 6-12 March from America on Line.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDIES PART II-KONKOMBA/DAGOMBA CONFLICT IN GHANA

In her historical review of Ghana, Naomi Chazan touches on the
various ethnic groups, each distinguished culturally, historically and
linguistically with identifiable symbols and norms of behavior. She
lists six linguistic groups in the country. These include the Akan-
speaking group constituting 41.1 percent of the population and located
in the forest and coastal areas of the southern portion of the country;
the Mole-Dagbani concentrated in the north and constituting 15.9
percent; Ewe in the east forming 13 percent; Ga-Adangbe located in the
Accra region forming 8.3 percent; and other smaller groups spread
throughout the country constituting the remaining 18.2 percent. Chazan
points out that the ethnic divisions in Ghana "are accompanied by those
of kinship, geography, custom, history, and administration." She
emphasizes that "households, local communities, lineages, and
chieftaincies are central frameworks in the daily life of Ghanaians,
73.4 percent of whom live in the rural areas."[1]

Chazan traces the historical effects of the multi-ethnic society
in Ghana. She states that ethnicity has always played a part in
Ghanaian politics. She cited the ethnic factor, combined with regional
and religious interests, which demanded attention during the 1954
elections organized to determine the "complexion of the government prior
to the transfer of power." This was before the independence of Ghana.

50

Chazan writes that the National Liberation Movement, which grew out of a coalition of cocoa farmers, traditional chiefs, and Asante young men called for a federal constitution which would adequately reflect the cultural diversity of the country. Similar calls were made by the Northern People's Party, the Togoland Congress, the Ga Shifimo Kpee and the Muslim Association Party. She points out that ethnic and cultural concerns, therefore, compounded already existing mass-elite divisions.[2] Chazan contends that due recognition should be given to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the nation for a democratic system to effectively function in Ghana. Although she discusses the ethnic problem within the context of other political factors such as the military, economic bankruptcy, mismanagement and the lack of democratic culture, she does not discuss the resolution of ethnic conflicts in the country.

A report submitted on the Konkomba/Dagomba conflict in the 28 February-6 March issue of West Africa magazine by Desmond Davies provides a more detailed account on the conflict. The report states that there was an early information from Yendi, the Dagomba capital, that the Konkombas living in the Dagomba traditional area were restive. The report indicates that the Northern Regional Minister, Lieutenant-Colonel Abdulai Ibrahim dismissed the information as baseless. His visit to Yendi, however, confirmed that the Dagomba Traditional Council had held several meetings to defuse the tension heightened by rumors of an imminent clash between the Konkombas and other ethnic groups including the Dagombas, Nanumbas and Gonjas. The report of Davies indicates that the regional minister's reaction was only to say that the rumor "must have emanated from a petition by the chief of Saboba and the

Konkomba Youth Association for the Saboba chief to be elevated to the

status of paramountcy." The regional minister was reported to have

assured his audience that the matter had been fully investigated and

that some people had misread the Konkombas' petition as a threat to wage

war to achieve their aim. He is reported to have added that there was

no danger to law and order. The report said that the minister pointed

out that if any party felt aggrieved by anything, there were lawful

procedures for remedy. He is reported to have further emphasized that

armed conflict was not the solution to chieftaincy disputes and urged

protagonists to resort to the courts for redress of their grievances.

However, the report of Davies indicates that the minister acknowledged

that the Konkomba claim was real because he pleaded with the Traditional

Council to consider the Konkomba request "dispassionately, objectively

and devoid of any sentiments." The report said the Minister advised the

Council that the important object of their discussions was to be a

commitment to achieving peace and tranquility in the Dagomba Traditional

area and the Northern Region as a whole.

The report indicates that Yana Yakubu Andani, Paramount Chief of

the Dagombas and President of the Council, assured the Minister that the

outcome of the discussion would result in a peaceful solution. The

report emphasized that the ethnic genocide which later occurred showed

that the Minister's trust in the Council was misplaced. Desmond Davies

expressed the view that, following the ethnic and chieftaincy disputes

that had beset the region from 1980, the council's assurance of a

peaceful settlement to the Konkomba request should not have been taken

at the face value. He points out that Konkombas and the other ethnic

52

groups living in the Northern Region have been traditional enemies. He traces the origin of the Konkombas to Togo and states that Konkombas in the region had always been viewed as aliens. For this reason, they had never been allowed to own land. He points out that land ownership and its attendant power could only be achieved through the paramount chieftaincy system. The request by the Konkombas for a paramountcy was, therefore, viewed as an attempt to claim the land on which they were living. Davies says the Konkombas argue that they have lived in the area long enough to warrant a paramountcy title. He said the Konkomba request was expectedly rebuffed by the traditional council despite the minister's plea for level-headedness.

Davies notes that a report by the Chronicle, a Ghanaian daily newspaper, on October 31, 1993 that the Konkombas were preparing for an armed conflict with the other ethnic groups was taken lightly. He said the paper pointed out that the Konkombas supported the government's National Democratic Congress party (NDC) in its bid to win the elections in return for a support in their chieftaincy claim. Davies says the government dismissed the newspaper report as a machination by the opposition to score political points. He notes that the government could have intervened earlier to stop the carnage that ensued if it had taken the newspaper report seriously. He concludes with an advice to the government to take similar reports seriously in the future.[3]

Another version of the story of the ethnic conflict was compiled from representatives of the Dagombas and Konkombas during a tour of the conflict areas by representatives of the Ghanaian news media. This version was discussed in Accra on 5 April 1994. A report, which was

written after the discussion, outlined the root causes of the conflict. It stated that the ethnic conflict between the Konkombas and Dagombas erupted on 3 February, 1994. The report traced the remote causes of the conflict to 1847 when the boundary separating Ghana and Togo was drawn. The boundary cut through the ethnic land of the Konkombas, leaving the majority of the ethnic community on the Togo side and the rest of them in Ghana territory. The report stated that the Dagombas claimed ownership of the entire land area of the Konkombas which was not disputed initially. Therefore, the Konkombas were considered settlers on Dagomba land. As the population of the Konkombas grew, many of them migrated south to other regions. The Konkombas, as settlers, paid homage to the paramount chief of the Dagombas called Yaa Naa.[4] The report emphasized that all through the years, the Konkombas have felt dissatisfied. They felt that they should own the land on which they lived. In addition, they also wanted their chief to be raised to the same status as the Yaa Naa due to the increase in their population. Their primary concern, however, was that the Dagombas viewed them as aliens and openly ridiculed them. The report stated that in August 1993, the chief of the Konkombas sent a petition to the Ghanaian president to grant their chiefs the status of paramount chief. This drew a note of protest from the Dagombas. The Dagombas argued that the Konkombas used the wrong channel in their requests to government. They explained that the Konkombas should have channeled the request through the Dagomba chief. The report emphasized that bitterness developed between the Dagombas and Konkombas following the Dagomba protest. While the Dagombas felt the Konkombas were attempting to claim their land

through subtle means, the Konkombas felt the Dagombas wanted to subjugate them. The report noted that the government promised to resolve the problem. While the government was studying the claims of both parties, conflict erupted between them.

The report narrated the immediate cause of the conflict. It said the conflict started when a Konkomba man got offended because another man from the Nanumba ethnic group slighted him when he was bargaining for a type of chicken called "guinea fowl."[5] The Konkomba man felt it was an insult to his ethnic group. The following morning, the Konkomba stalked the Dagomba man to his farm and killed him with a cutlass. A story spread that Konkombas were killing Nanumbas and this led to an open fight between Nanumbas and Konkombas. Some Dagombas, mistaken for Nanumbas, were killed by Konkombas during the fight. With the bitterness already simmering between them, it turned the conflict into an ethnic conflict between the Konkombas and Dagombas. Within one week, 236 people, including women and children, were killed by the Konkombas.[6]

The report said on 10 February, 1994, the Minister of Interior, Colonel Osei-Wusu (Retired), announced a state of emergency in parliament in accordance with the constitution. The state of emergency covered the northern region only. The military was sent into the conflict areas and within one week the conflict was reduced to isolated skirmishes in remote areas of the region. Most of the isolated skirmishes occurred in areas where the military was not deployed. The report noted that at the time of the military deployment, 1,000 people were estimated killed and 144 villages were destroyed. About 150,000

people fled into other regions in the southern part of Ghana and those close to the Ghana\Togo border fled into Togo. By this time, there were speculations that the Konkombas in Togo would cross the border to support their compatriots. This did not happen. The troops deployed in the conflict areas reported that there were no incursions. The report noted the financial cost of the conflict. The estimated cost was 3.6 billion cedis (approximately $3.6 million). This was required to resettle the 150,000 people who had been displaced by the conflict.[7]

The report pointed out that the Konkombas did not want to cease hostilities. It said the Konkomba explanation was that they had been dominated by the Dagombas for too long and wanted to prove to the Dagombas that they were not the underdogs. They also wanted their traditional chief to be raised to a higher status.[8] The report noted that the government immediately set up a commission called the Northern Conflict Permanent Negotiating Team (NCPNT) to mediate and recommend a settlement of the ethnic conflict. This commission was headed by Nana Doctor Obiri Yeboah, one of the chiefs in the southern part of Ghana. The representatives of the warring factions were called to the Ghanaian capital, Accra, where the President cautioned them to exercise restraint until the conflict was resolved.

The West Africa magazine of 15-21 August 1994 quoted a report from Ghana that parliament had revoked the state of emergency imposed on the seven districts in northern Ghana. It said the Interior Minister, retired Colonel E. M. Osei-Owusu, moved the motion for the lifting of the state of emergency on August 5. The report said the Interior Minister confirmed that life had returned to normal in the conflict

area. The minister said people were building their houses and farming was going on in earnest. The magazine further said the Interior Minister stated a number of actions the government was taking in the conflict areas. First, an estimated 150,000 people registered as displaced persons were to continue to have free food and medical care until the situation demanded otherwise. Second, a fully equipped police team had taken over from the military to maintain peace, law, and order. Third, two companies of the army had been positioned in Yendi and Salaga to form the nucleus of a permanent military presence in the country's north-east. The force was responsible for Bimbilla and Kpandai, and would be rapidly deployed to assist the police when needed. The magazine reported that the minister expressed concern that in some towns such as Yeb, Yendi, Bimbilla, and Salaga, the Konkombas were not allowed in the markets, thus forcing them to set up stalls somewhere else. The magazine said the minister acknowledged that in a situation where people had suffered tremendous loss, it would take some time for their bitterness to subside.[9]

The Ghanaian Times of 21 December 1994 reported the end of the conflict. It provided details of the conditions that led to the resolution of the conflict. The paper reported that on 20 December, 1994 the chairman of NCPNT announced that the conflict had been resolved after a negotiation between the representatives of the Dagombas and Konkombas. The warring factions had accepted the government's intervention in the conflict. They had also agreed to use dialogue and constitutional procedures to resolve their future grievances. The government has permanently deployed troops in the conflict areas to

continue to monitor the situation and prevent a resurgence of the conflict. The prompt deployment of troops within one week of the start of the northern Ghana conflict prevented further loss of innocent lives.[10]

The West Africa magazine of 28 November-4 December I994 reported a final warning by the government to halt future conflicts. The magazine quoted President Jerry Rawlings saying that the government would deal "ruthlessly with those who would start another ethnic conflict such as the one which rocked the north" earlier in the year. The magazine reported that the president issued the warning during a visit to the conflict areas in the Volta and Northern regions. It said the president emphasized that "the government would not stand idly by and allow any ethnic group to cause havoc." The magazine said the president cautioned those in the areas to "exercise restraint and maturity in the face of any provocative situations" they might find themselves in.[11]

The Ghanaian Times reported an action of the government in dealing with a similar ethnic conflict in the southern part of the country. The paper reported that two persons who were responsible for instigating ethnic violence between the natives of Banda Ahenkro and Kabrono which resulted in the death of Nana Boleme, the chief linguist of Kabrono were to be prosecuted in the Sunyani High Court on October 24, 1994. The paper reported that the dispute was over paramountcy in a part of the Brong Ahafo Region in southern Ghana. The conflict had claimed an undisclosed number of lives and property. The paper reported that the regional security council and police had acted promptly to halt

the carnage. The paper concluded that the contesting chiefs were summoned to a regional security council meeting where they pledged to lay down their arms and bring all hostilities to an end.[12]

In his description of conflict problems in Ghana to Mrs Christine Steward, Canadian Minister of State for Africa, Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, the Ghanaian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs explained that violence was not the Ghanaian way of resolving conflicts. The Ghanaian foreign minister summarized the conditions that led to the successful resolution of conflicts in Ghana. He said the warring factions had mutually accepted to halt hostilities. All grievances would be addressed through constitutional means. He noted that the Ghanaian military had been deployed in the conflict areas and a lot of weapons had been seized. He added that no weapons came from external sources in the conflicts. Dr. Chambas concluded that the Government was committed to strengthening peacekeeping in the subregion. For this reason, the Government was considering setting up training facilities for peacekeeping at the Ghana Military Academy and Training School.[13]

ENDNOTES

[1]Chazan, 94.

[2]Ibid., 96.

[3]The Yaa Naa is the paramount chief of all Dagomba lands. Paramount chiefs have custody of lands within their jurisdiction on behalf of the ethnic groups.

[4]The report said that Konkombas feel all major tribes marginalize them.

[5]The massacre of non-combatants, especially women, children and the aged drew world attention to the conflict in northern Ghana.

[6]The displaced people were located in army barracks in Tamale and refugee camps guarded by the military and police.

[7]The Konkombas argued that other minority ethnic groups like the Gonjas and Walas had paramount chiefs.

[8]West Africa, 15-21 August 1994, 1433.

[9]Ghanaian Times, 21 December, 1994, 1.

[10]West Africa, 28 November-4 December 1994, 2036.

[11]Ghanaian Times, 13 October, 1994, 1.

[12]Agreements were signed by the warring factions to halt hostilities. The agreement provides that future grievances will be channelled through the law courts.

[13]Ghanaian Times, 29 March, 1995, 1.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS

From the democratic theory discussed in chapter 3, a number of
issues emerge. First, from Ross Harrison, democracy is a good political
system which should be adopted by nation-states for efficient governance
of a country. However, it should possess basic pillars to be effective.
These pillars include liberty, equality, welfare, and knowledge.
Second, democracy is workable in ethnically divided societies as long as
the interests of the society as a whole are addressed. As explained by
Donald Rothchild, democratic governments are expected to be responsive
to the demands of all individuals, minority, and majority groups.

Conflict resolution theory also points out a number of factors
which should be considered for peace in ethnically divided societies.
Eric Nordlinger's six points for peaceful resolution of conflicts
emphasize stable coalition among groups, proportionality,
depolitization, the mutual veto, compromise, and concessions.
Particularly important, is the reconciliatory attitude required from
leaders in the conflict. This is often the problem. As demonstrated by
Luis Alberto Pabilla in the El Salvador and Nicaragua examples, a
positive attitude of the leaders in a conflict can be achieved from
concerned external bodies. However, external pressure will be necessary
to bring the parties in conflict to the negotiating table.

61

From the forgoing, a few similarities can be discerned between the democratic theory and conflict resolution theory. A working democracy is representative of individual and group rights and this is what effective conflict resolution seeks to achieve. As earlier indicated, conflict resolution seeks to address the interest of all the groups in conflict. Similarities also appear in the desired end state of democracy and conflict resolution. Democracy implies fairness to all groups in order to achieve peaceful co-existence of all individuals and groups just as conflict resolution aims at achieving peaceful co-existence among the conflict groups. The main difference between the two, perhaps, lies in the time frame within which the end states can be achieved. Whereas democracy ensures long term peace, conflict resolution ensures peace as long as the conditions which resolved the conflict remain in force. This disparity can be resolved when democracy replaces conflict resolution at a time hostilities cease and the parties accept a negotiated settlement. This implies that once peace has been achieved between two groups in conflict, whether temporally or permanently, a democratic system should be put in place to ensure that there is no resurgence of the conflict. In a worst case scenario where conflict between the groups begins again, at least, there will be an institutionalized system of addressing the grievances.

Applying this to the Ghana and Liberia ethnic conflicts, some measures can be applied. At the time of the Konkomba/Dagomba conflict in Ghana, a democratic government was in place. The government, therefore, employed the military, which was considered neutral by the warring factions, to halt the hostilities. It then applied the existing

democratic rules to address the grievances of the factions. The
military was also permanently deployed in the conflict areas to ensure
that hostilities did not assume the scale it did during the conflict.
Liberia, on the other hand, had a government which was party to the
conflict. The Armed Forces of Liberia was, therefore, not considered
neutral. The neutral force to halt the violence had to be an external
force. This was the reason for the deployment of ECOMOG.

The following table illustrates the conditions that existed in
Ghana and Liberia during the conflict in both countries:

	Ghana	Liberia
Government	Democratic	Ethnic
Judiciary	Independenty	None
Military	National	Ethnic
Warring Factions	Ethnic	Ethnic

For the conflict to be permanently resolved in Liberia, a
democratic government will be required. A government which will be
considered non-partisan will ensure that there is an institutionalized
procedure for the redress of grievances. A non-partisan government
force can also be deployed in conflict areas to replace ECOMOG and
ensure that hostilities do not reach the magnitude of the genocide
witnessed in the country. It is only when a democratic government is

functional in Liberia that the ethnic conflict would be said to have been resolved. Particularly, when ECOMOG's disarmament efforts succeed and the elections scheduled for September are successfully conducted, there will be reason to believe that the ethnic conflict is resolved. By this same token, African countries, like Rwanda, and Burundi, which are suffering from ethnic conflicts will have to establish democratic governments to ensure a permanent resolution of the conflicts.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Ethnic conflicts in Africa, like many other conflicts in the world, have been difficult to resolve in the past. However, with the combined efforts of the countries suffering from ethnic conflicts, researchers and the world community, a lasting solution can be found in "democracy."

It has been established that democracy is a viable political system for African countries. The desire of countries suffering from the conflicts has also been to establish democratic governments. Therefore, the choice of democracy as a political option is not disputed. However, a number of issues deserve consideration. First, preventive measures have to be used in potential conflict areas to avoid conflicts starting. Delving deep into ethnic grievances by governments, the use of internal and external mediators, and the assistance of the world community will help to prevent conflicts from starting. Second, effective conflict resolution methods will help to de-escalate or resolve ethnic conflicts. In this respect, the six points outlined by Eric Nordlinger for peaceful resolution of conflicts are vital. However, the six points, including stable coalition among conflict groups, proportionality, depolitization, mutual veto, compromise, and concessions, will not prevent a resumption of the conflicts in the future. A permanent solution is to establish a democratic political

65

system that will provide a credible and acceptable procedure for the redress of grievances.

As demonstrated in Ghana, the democratic government was seen as a neutral party in the Dagomba/Konkomba ethnic conflict. Therefore, the two parties to the conflict readily accepted the mediation efforts of the government. The military personnel who were deployed in the conflict area were also considered a neutral force and because of that the parties to the conflict readily accepted their presence and cooperated with them to end the conflict. Within two weeks the government and the military were able to bring the violent conflict under control. Eight months later, the conflict was resolved. Democracy can then be said to have been the solution to the ethnic conflict in Ghana.

The situation in Liberia was different. The government and the military were seen as parties to the conflict. Some countries like Libya and Burkina Fasso also aggravated the situation by assisting some warring factions with military resources and training. For those reasons, ECOMOG, which was seen as a neutral force, was deployed and generally accepted by all parties involved in the conflict. ECOWAS heads of state were also seen to be generally neutral in the Liberian conflict. As a result of this, the warring factions have cooperated to end the conflict. Although the genocide which initially characterized the Liberian conflict has stopped, the conflict cannot be said to have been resolved. It is only when the democratic government the warring factions are clamoring for has been established that the conflict would be said to have been resolved. Similarly, African countries need to

66

establish democratic governments to ensure ethnic conflicts do not occur or escalate to the level of carnage that has virtually destroyed some countries and astonished the world at large.

A number of measures would be required in dealing with conflicts on the African continent. First, preventive measures are required to ensure that ethnic conflicts do not start. It is necessary for African governments to delve into root causes of ethnic grievances and resolve them before they degenerate into violent conflicts. Where necessary, African governments should solicit external support in resolving the grievances. The solution could be material support from non-governmental agencies and the international community to satisfy the needs of some ethnic groups and prevent conflicts from starting. External institutions like the proposed all-Africa negotiation and mediation team could also assist to resolve ethnic grievances. However, African governments should appreciate the tragedy and magnitude of potential conflicts that have occurred elsewhere on the African continent and utilize the recommendations of research work of institutions like ARIB and IFAA for conflict prevention.

Second, when ethnic conflicts do begin, African governments should take immediate steps to prevent them from escalating. Where the authority of the government is challenged or when the government is an interested party to the conflict, the government should promptly solicit the help of the international community. This could be the UN, OAU or subregional groups like ECOWAS.

Third, African countries should endeavor to establish democratic systems. The democratic systems will provide credible and neutral

institutions for resolving ethnic grievances. The international community also has a part to play in the democratization of African countries. The international community should use diplomatic, economic and informational means to encourage African countries to establish democratic governments. They should stop assisting non-democratic governments. It is also very necessary that foreign nations stop training and supplying military equipment to ethnic groups in conflict. When these measures are taken and democratic governments are established, ethnic conflicts in Africa could be said to have been permanently resolved.

While this study focused on democracy as a viable option for resolving conflicts in Africa, there is a need for further research. For example, it is necessary to research into types of democratic governments that will be appropriate for various African countries. Further research is also required in alternative ways of resolving conflicts. These two areas of research could possibly enable Africa to find a permanent solution to its numerous conflicts and make Africa a stable continent.

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