CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL COLLECTIVE SECURITY: ECONOMIC
COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS) STANDBY
FORCE: A CASE STUDY

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14. ABSTRACT

Disputes and civil wars, with the attendant breakdown of law and order, and dire consequences for peace, security, and development, continue to plague the continent of Africa. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional grouping of sixteen West African countries founded on May 28, 1975, to promote cooperation and integration through the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, foster relations among member states, and to contribute to the progress and development of the African continent. Convinced that economic progress could not be achieved unless the conditions for security were assured in all member states of the Community, ECOWAS expanded its mission to include security responsibilities. ECOWAS member states established ECOMOG to deal with the insecurity that followed the collapse of the state structure in the Republic of Liberia in 1990. The force has since controlled several conflicts in the West African sub-region.

To adapt to the changes that had taken place within the Community since its formation, and based on its experience in Liberia, the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in May 1993 requested a review of the ECOWAS Treaty. A revised Treaty was endorsed and adopted by the Authority in Cotonou, Benin, in July 1993. Member States undertook to cooperate with the Community in establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of conflicts. This undertaking culminated in the signing, in Togo, on 10 December 1999, of the Protocol on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. Among other things, the Protocol calls for the establishment of a military force known as the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). The force is designed to meet the security needs of the sub-region. Although, ECOWAS has demonstrated the willingness and capability to restore peace in the sub-region, it needs to overcome numerous challenges in its quest for collective security. This research is therefore intended to make strategic and operational recommendations on how best ECOWAS can deal with the challenges of employing the ESF to support regional collective security. The major recommendations are that ECOWAS member states must be more committed to funding ESF's operations, and that ECOWAS must introduce a training and evaluation unit that would cater for training standardization and evaluation of all troops serving in the ESF.

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ABSTRACT

CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL COLLECTIVE SECURITY: ECONOMIIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS) STANDBY FORCE: A CASE STUDY, by Major Miftah O. Ibrahim, 70 pages.

Disputes and civil wars, with the attendant breakdown of law and order, and dire consequences for peace, security, and development, continue to plague the continent of Africa. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional grouping of sixteen West African countries founded on May 28, 1975, to promote cooperation and integration through the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, foster relations among member states, and to contribute to the progress and development of the African continent. Convinced that economic progress could not be achieved unless the conditions for security were assured in all member states of the Community, ECOWAS expanded its mission to include security responsibilities. ECOWAS member states established ECOMOG to deal with the insecurity that followed the collapse of the state structure in the Republic of Liberia in 1990. The force has since controlled several conflicts in the West African sub-region.

To adapt to the changes that had taken place within the Community since its formation, and based on its experience in Liberia, the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in May 1993 requested a review of the ECOWAS Treaty. A revised Treaty was endorsed and adopted by the Authority in Cotonou, Benin, in July 1993. Member States undertook to cooperate with the Community in establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of conflicts. This undertaking culminated in the signing, in Togo, on 10 December 1999, of the Protocol on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. Among other things, the Protocol calls for the establishment of a military force known as the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). The force is designed to meet the security needs of the sub-region. Although, ECOWAS has demonstrated the willingness and capability to restore peace in the sub-region, it needs to overcome numerous challenges in its quest for collective security. This research is therefore intended to make strategic and operational recommendations on how best ECOWAS can deal with the challenges of employing the ESF to support regional collective security. The major recommendations are that ECOWAS member states must be more committed to funding ESF's operations, and that ECOWAS must introduce a training and evaluation unit that would cater for training standardization and evaluation of all troops serving in the ESF.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS

ACOTA African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance

ACSS African Center for Strategic Studies

ADSP African Defense and Security Policy

APRM African Peer Review Mechanism

AU African Union

BMATT British Military Advisory and Training Team

CEWS Continental Early Warning System

ECCAS Economic Community of Central African States

ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States

ECOMOG ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group

ESF ECOWAS Standby Force

IGAD Intergovernmental Authority on Development

IMET International Military Education and Training

JCET Joint/Combined Exchange Team

MAD Mutual Assistance on Defence

MB Main Brigade

MSC Mediation and Security Council

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NEPAD New Partnership for African Development

OAU Organization of African Unity

OSCE Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PSC Peace and Security Council

PSI Peace and Security Initiative

RECAMP	*Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix* (Strengthening of African Peacekeeping Capabilities)
SADC	South African Development Cooperation
SMC	Standing Mediation Committee
TF	Task Force
UN	United Nations
US	United States

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Conflict is endemic in human societies. Regardless of its nature and form, it has a

dysfunctional and disruptive effect, particularly when it assumes a crisis dimension. The

attendant breakdown of law and order, destruction of lives and property, perpetration of

human rights abuses, and generation of refugees caused by conflicts transcend national

boundaries with dire consequences for peace, security, and development at national,

regional, and global levels. Thus governments and the international community are

engaged in developing strategies for resolving conflict through collective security

mechanisms.

The United Nations (UN) was founded as a collective security organization on

October 24, 1945. Born in an era of serious world conflict, the founding members of the

UN recognized the need for collective action in dealing with violent conflict in the

international system. As stated in Chapter 1, Article 1 of the UN Charter, the purposes

and principles of the UN are to:

> To maintain international peace and security, and to that end take effective
> collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for
> the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace, and to bring
> about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and
> international law, adjustments or settlements of international disputes or situations
> which might lead to breaches of [the] peace. (The United Nations 2007)

The founding members recognized the important role regional organizations can

play towards the maintenance of international security. The UN Charter introduced a

mechanism to control and to eliminate conflict through the reduction of the use of force

by states in international relations. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter provides that regional organizations "shall make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes" before referring such disputes to the United Nations Security Council (The United Nations 2007). Based on this provision, regional organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the African Union (AU), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have developed capabilities to manage conflict and disputes within their spheres of influence.

Africa has accounted for more conflicts in the post-cold war era than any other continent. Having lost the strategic significance it enjoyed during the cold war, Africa was abandoned by the West and left to deal by itself with the myriad of local conflicts (Dala 2007, 13). The disputes and civil wars that have plagued the continent particularly in Somalia, Liberia, the Congo, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Ivory Coast, Chad, and Sudan have made it imperative for the African Union to develop capacities for dealing with conflict.

The African Union adopted a decision to establish an African Standby Force (Rapid Reaction Peacekeeping Force) in February 2004 during its extraordinary session in Libya (Adedeji and Zabadi 2004, 20). This action reflected an African drive and effort towards collective continental security, which was informed by the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the African Defense and Security Policy (ADSP). The framework provides for a Peace and Security Council (PSC) for conflict prevention and a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) that provides an operational instrument for conflict prevention. Within this

arrangement, sub-regional organizations like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in East Africa, the South African Development Cooperation (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are to provide standby forces to strengthen the regional security architecture.

This study will focus on the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF), which covers the West African sub-region. ECOWAS is a sub-regional organization established on May 28, 1975. The primary purpose of the organization is to promote economic development of the sixteen West African member states through the integration of their economies, but civil wars, insurgencies, crime, and military coups have hobbled economic development. The wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Ivory Coast have particularly retarded the attainment of ECOWAS objectives.

The Liberian civil war broke out in December 1989, and had degenerated into a veritable mayhem by early 1990. To kick-start a mechanism for the management and resolution of the Liberian conflict, ECOWAS set up a five-member consultative group designated as the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) on 30 May 1990. It was this committee that decided on the establishment of the ECOWAS ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) at its meeting in Banjul, Gambia, on 6 and 7 August 1990. ECOMOG was empowered to restore law and order, and to create the necessary conditions for free and fair elections. It was also given the mandate to extend its stay in Liberia, if necessary, until an elected government was installed. ECOWAS justified the intervention on the basis of regional security, and response to the request of the then Liberian government.

To adapt to the changes that had taken place within the Community since its formation, and based on its experience in Liberia, the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in May 1993 requested a review of the ECOWAS Treaty. A revised Treaty was endorsed and adopted by the Authority in Cotonou, Benin, in July 1993. The provision for regional security; which mandated Member States to work to consolidate and maintain peace, stability and security within the region was enshrined in Article 58 of the revised Treaty. In pursuit of these objectives, Member States undertook to cooperate with the Community in establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of conflicts. This undertaking culminated in the signing, in Togo, on 10 December 1999, of the Protocol on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. Among other things, the Protocol calls for the establishment of a military force. ECOWAS intention is to convert the ECOMOG model to an ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). It has approved an operational framework document to guide its planners in the establishment of the ESF. The force is designed to meet the security needs of the sub-region. The size of the force should be roughly that of a brigade (6,500 troops). The ESF is to be employed when there are breaches of the peace due to:

      1. Conflict between two or more member states;

      2. Internal conflict likely to lead to a humanitarian disaster and threatening peace and security in the sub region;

      3. Violations of human rights and rule of law;

      4. Overthrow or attempted overthrow of elected governments; and

5. Other situations of concern to the Mediation and Security Council. (Article 25 of the ECOWAS Protocol).

Statement of the Problem

Given the background of ECOWAS as an economic union designed to promote economic growth and its performance to date, expanding its mission to include security responsibilities presents numerous political, legal, military, and logistical challenges that may adversely affect ECOWAS prospects for sub-regional security. The motivation for the adoption of the agreement to establish the ESF was based on ECOWAS's successful deployment and employment of ECOMOG to resolve conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s. However, Nigeria and Ghana provided the bulk of material resources and personnel for the ECOMOG peace missions. Both countries were then under military regimes, which made it easier to fund such operations. But with democratically elected governments in virtually all ECOWAS member countries now, such engagements are unlikely. The lean resource base and low capacity of the member countries of ECOWAS pose great challenges to the ESF that may prevent it from achieving its stated objectives.

Objectives of the Study

This study will examine the ECOWAS Standby Force arrangement with a view to identifying the likely problems and challenges that might militate against the attainment of its objective of providing sub-regional security. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the concept and theory of collective security;

2. Critique the ECOWAS Standby Force model, structure, and roles of the ESF;

3. Determine the likely political, legal, operational, and logistical problems that might confront the force; and

4. Assess the prospects for sub-regional security.

Research Questions

This research raises the following questions:

1. Are ECOWAS's institutional structures for the formation, deployment, and sustainability of the Standby Force adequate to its mission?

2. To what extent have ECOWAS operations in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Ivory Coast succeeded?

3. What problems did ECOWAS face during these operations and how has the new mechanism for collective security resolved them?

4. What problems will ECOWAS face in conducting and sustaining future operations?

5. How might ECOWAS deal with conflict and insecurity in the sub-region?

ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional grouping of fifteen West African countries founded on May 28, 1975. It was formed to promote cooperation and integration through the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, foster relations among member states, and to contribute to the progress and development of the African continent (ECOWAS 2007). The member states of ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger,

Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The organization's institutions are the Authority of Heads of States and Governments, its Council of Ministers, Community of Parliament, Economic and Social Council, Community Court of Justice, Executive Secretariat, and the Bank for Investment and Development.

Convinced that economic progress could not be achieved unless the conditions for security were assured in all member states of the Community, the ECOWAS member states signed two security agreements in 1978 and 1981, and a non-aggression protocol in 1990. They also signed a Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence (MAD), in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on May 29, 1981 that provided for the establishment of an Allied Armed Force of the Community (ECOWAS 2007). Under this Protocol, all member states agreed to place earmarked units from existing national armed forces at the disposition of the Community in case of armed intervention. However, member states have been selective in their response to conflict in the sub-region. Senegal initially declined to contribute troops for the ECOWAS operation in Liberia in 1990. Nigeria simply refused to do so for the ECOWAS operation in the Ivory Coast. Ghana refused to take part in the ECOWAS operation in Guinea-Bissau (Amponsem-Boateng 2006, 6).

<div align="center">ECOMOG</div>

The Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence that was signed in 1981 provided for a non-standing military force to render mutual military aid and assistance to member states. ECOMOG--the Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group--is a non-standing military force consisting of land, sea, and air components that was set up by ECOWAS member states to deal with the insecurity that followed the collapse of the state structure in the Republic of Liberia in 1990. The force

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restored security that permitted the reinstatement of a functional state structure in Liberia. ECOMOG has since controlled conflicts in West Africa, notably in Sierra Leone (1997), Guinea-Bissau (1999), Guinea-Liberia border (2001), and for a second time in Liberia (2003). Even though the Protocol establishing the ESF had been signed by ECOWAS member states in 1999, the force was yet to be assembled by the time the 2003 Liberian conflict broke out. ECOWAS still relied on the *ad hoc* assembly of troops from member states, placed under ECOMOG, to control both the Guinea-Liberian border conflict, and the second Liberian conflict in 2001 and 2003 respectively.

Apart from the ECOMOG operation in Guinea-Bissau, ECOMOG's exit strategy has been to transition its troops to a subsequent UN peacekeeping force. Its *modus operandi* has involved an initial emergency response, followed by the deployment of a multifunctional UN mission. ECOMOG operations have usually been stop-gap measures predicated on the UN eventually taking over the lead (Amponsem-Boateng 2006, 8).

Many problems have characterized ECOMOG operations. The most salient of these have been excessive control by home governments; language differences; lack of standardization of equipment, arms and ammunition; different training standards, doctrine and staff procedures; poor sea- and air-lift capabilities; absence of vital air-to-ground support assets; lack of logistic support for some contingents; inadequate resources to deal with humanitarian problems; and poor coordination and liaison with international relief agencies (Khobe 2000). Despite all these difficulties, ECOMOG represents the first credible attempt at a regional security initiative within Africa.

There are three assumptions at this juncture. First, civil wars and their attendant destruction of lives and property will continue in West Africa. Second, a military force of some sort is required to promote and, when necessary, enforce peace in West Africa. Third, ECOWAS provides an appropriate cooperative agreement for assembling and employing security forces when needed.

Definitions

Authority: Authority means the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States established by Article 7 of the ECOWAS Treaty.

Collective Security: Collective security, as used in this research, is the combined use of the international community's coercive capability to combat illegal use of force in/and situations that threaten international peace and security.

Community: Community, as used in this research, means the Economic Community of West African States referred to under Article 2 of the ECOWAS Treaty.

Conflict: Conflict, in this research, refers to any situation in which two or more social entities or parties, perceiving that they possess mutually incompatible goals, resort to violence affecting one another.

Member State in Crisis: Member state in crisis refers to a member state experiencing an armed conflict or a member state facing serious and persisting problems or situations of extreme tension, which if left unchecked, could lead to a humanitarian disaster or threaten peace and security.

Observation and Monitoring Center: Observation and Monitoring Center means the Regional Peace and Security Monitoring Center provided for under Article 58 of the ECOWAS Treaty.

Treaty: Treaty as used in this research refers to the revised treaty of ECOWAS signed in Cotonou, Benin on July 24, 1993.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Efforts have been made to create a mechanism for conflict resolution in West

Africa. This has provoked much analysis and many studies by scholars within and outside

the sub-region. Some of the scholarly literature focuses on ECOWAS's employment of

ECOMOG for conflict resolution in the sub-region. This literature reveals that there has

long been a desire for a standby force as a mechanism for conflict resolution in West

Africa. The information reviewed will be discussed in three categories:

1. ECOWAS past efforts to create a conflict resolution mechanism in the sub-

region.

2. ECOWAS new collective security mechanism.

3. The reaction of the international community to ECOWAS peace initiatives.

ECOWAS Past Efforts to Create a Conflict Resolution Mechanism
in the Sub-Region

Founded to promote economic cooperation and integration among member states

but convinced that economic progress cannot be achieved amidst endless conflict;

ECOWAS has since taken on the additional mandate to prevent, manage, and support the

resolution of conflicts in the region. Under this mandate, the organization has been

playing a mediating role and has mounted peacekeeping operations in a number of West

African countries.

As a first step toward forging appropriate strategies, Anning underscores the

importance of peacekeepers and management personnel understanding the root causes of

conflicts, which, he proposes, is best understood by undertaking a contextual analysis of the economic interests at stake. His work suggests proactive strategies that can contribute to resolving and preventing conflict if political will is present (Amponsem-Boateng 2006, 20).

Audu contends that the peculiar nature of African conflicts requires a rapid, responsive, robust, and neutral standby force with adequate resources and deterrence capabilities. The focus of its controlling mechanism would be on conflict prevention by timely deployment of multinational forces to potential trouble spots in the sub-region (Audu, 2006, 22).

Erskine examines the experiences of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Chad and ECOWAS in Liberia against the backdrop of UN peacemaking experiences since 1948. He argues that peacekeeping forces will be required in Africa for some time to come, since most of the factors generating interstate and intrastate insecurity are endemic on the continent and will continue to persist for some time. He urges the OAU's successor organization, the African Union (AU), and the sub-regional organizations to assume more responsibility in the management of conflict since the UN and non-African members of the international community are allegedly suffering from African peacekeeping fatigue (Amponsem-Boateng 2006, 21).

Agyapong states that, "the end of the Cold War witnessed intensification of intrastate conflicts in the West Africa sub-region." He further states that, "prior to this era, the West African sub-regional body, ECOWAS, had used traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to resolve conflicts." These mechanisms notwithstanding, with the outbreak of conflict in Liberia in November 1989, ECOWAS deployed ECOMOG to

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Liberia in August 1990 to dampen the conflict. Since then, ECOMOG had been involved

in intervention operations in Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Ivory Coast (Agyapong,

2005, 2-12).

Berman and Sams suggest that ECOWAS peace initiatives are arguably deeply

flawed, however. They argue that although ECOWAS has fielded peacekeeping forces in

Liberia and Sierra Leone, the organization lacks an institutionalized crisis prevention and

management mechanism.

> In the Liberian conflict, for example, the ECOWAS Heads of State and
> Government established a Community Standing Mediation Committee, which in
> turn created ECOMOG at its inaugural session. In Sierra Leone, in contrast, the
> ECOWAS Heads of State and Government did not formally approve of the
> ECOMOG force until some three months after its intervention. (Berman and Sams
> 1998, 4)

The authors argue that this lack of a formal decision-making mechanism and the

willingness of ECOWAS to retroactively authorize the use of force have raised questions

about who controls ECOMOG.

> At present, ECOMOG is only nominally accountable to ECOWAS, which
> exercises little oversight and provides minimal political and administrative
> guidance. The fear among ECOWAS member states that Nigeria has appropriated
> ECOMOG to promote its own foreign policy agenda is widespread. The fact that
> ECOWAS ministers designated Senegal to lead an ECOMOG military operation
> in Guinea Bissau suggests that any country willing and able – not only Nigeria –
> can manipulate ECOMOG. Because ECOWAS member states reportedly not only
> created but also supported different factions in the Liberian civil war,
> ECOMOG's intervention in Liberia was plagued by numerous operational
> difficulties and may have actually prolonged the conflict. (Berman and Sams
> 1998, 4)

Nowrojee is of the opinion that while African interventions can make a useful

contribution in conflict resolution, there are also many pitfalls. He notes that the trend

towards greater regional intervention was most evident in four countries: Burundi, Ivory

Coast, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. "All of these interventions were

prompted by conflict that has caused massive suffering to civilian populations. Yet, their

human rights component remained marginal." The Burundi peacekeeping mission

charged peacekeepers with protecting government buildings, facilitating rebel

demobilization, and paving way for the election in 2004, but said nothing about

protecting civilians. Also, the ECOWAS-brokered Liberian peace agreement did not

establish any justice mechanism to address crimes committed during the war. In Ivory

Coast, despite international recognition of the serious abuses that took place during the

conflict, no significant steps have been taken to bring perpetrators of abuses to justice.

Nowrojee suggests that African regional interventions may even sustain the wider

international community's tendency to abdicate its responsibility to respond to African

crises.

> The reality is that Africa's peacekeeping capabilities cannot in the short run equal those of wealthier countries. Even if wealthier countries make a more serious financial commitment to peacekeeping in Africa, Africa should not be expected to take sole charge of the burden of attempting to prevent or respond to war on the continent. (Nowrojee 2004, 3)

<u>ECOWAS New Collective Security Mechanism</u>

Recent experiences in West Africa have underscored the need to pursue the

ECOWAS security agenda; which will ensure peace and stability in the region, as a

developmental program. Peace and stability can come about if good governance and

democracy are entrenched in the region's body politic. Despite the enormous difficulty

bedeviling them, the West African peoples continue to manifest their determination to

build new, open societies founded on the values of democratic accountability, respect for

human rights and the rule of law. Laudable as they may be, past ECOWAS peace

initiatives encountered many problems, and hence failed to achieve the much needed

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stability. Past ECOWAS operations were run almost entirely by the military, and were set up largely by military governments. This led to some major difficulties for the Force's operations, among which was its inability to 'sell' its achievements. There was little public understanding of the Force's mandate, and ECOMOG received much bad press while the chief villain of the Liberian tragedy, Charles Taylor, effectively utilized the international media to undermine ECOMOG and project himself as a victorious liberator. ECOMOG's effectiveness was undermined as a result of lack of public information capability (Report of ECOWAS Workshop 2005, 11).

The main problem affecting early ECOWAS operations, however, was the lack of clear consensus among the region's political leaders about the role and mandate of the force. During the Liberian civil war for instance, some member states supported Charles Taylor-led rebel group with arms, and in some cases personnel. This severely undermined the ECOMOG's effectiveness, and badly splintered ECOWAS itself. There was also the problem of inter-contingent differences in terms of training, capability, and equipment. Troops came from different backgrounds, and while some troop-contributing countries had reasonably trained and equipped soldiers in the Liberian mission, some contingents were far less prepared. There was thus clearly a need for standardized training and equipment for troops contributed to ECOWAS operations. It was in this context that the idea of the ESF – which would be an integrated force undergoing joint training, with quotas set for each member state – was born.

The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, adopted by ECOWAS in 1999, can be regarded as the Organization's constitution on collective security in the West African sub-region.

As the main legal framework within which the sub-regional Organization's involvement in collective security must henceforth be regulated, the Mechanism embodies detailed and comprehensive provisions and structures. In a clear departure from its traditional principle of non-intervention, the Mechanism empowers ECOWAS to intervene in internal conflicts of member states, an action that can be triggered, not only by massive violation of human rights, but also by the breakdown of the rule of law (Ademola 2000, 211).

The substantive regulation of peace and security of the West African sub-region by ECOWAS is to be found in various sections of the Mechanism. Chapter I, which provides for the establishment of the Mechanism, introduces the Protocol in clear terms: "There is hereby established within the ECOWAS, a mechanism for collective security and peace to be known as "Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security" (ECOWAS 1999, 4). Chapter II (Institutions of the Mechanism) deals with various organs of the Mechanism that have authority to implement relevant provisions of the Protocol. Under Chapter VI of the Mechanism; "Member States . . . agree to make available to the ESF adequate resources from the army, navy, gendarme, police, and all other military and paramilitary or civil formations necessary for the accomplishment of the mission" (ECOWAS 1999, 12). Not only does the new Protocol establish a standing force, it goes further to spell out its role under the new dispensation. It is charged, among other things, with the task of observing and monitoring, peacekeeping and restoration of peace, enforcement of sanctions, including embargo, preventive deployment, peace-building, disarmament and demobilization,

policing activities including the control of organized fraud and crime, and any other

operations as may be mandated by the Mediation and Security Council (MSC).

The ECOWAS military vision is therefore anchored on the need to:

Define, build, organize, and maintain an ECOWAS stand-by regional military capability in peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance to a level of self-sustenance in the in the areas of troops and logistics support in order to respond to internal or external regional crises or threats to peace and security, including terrorist and/or environmental threats. (ECOWAS 2004, 5)

To achieve its objectives, ECOWAS needs to overcome many challenges ranging

from legal and institutional, to operational and logistical. The ECOWAS Protocol, which

legalizes the use of force in dealing with conflict within the sub-region, contravenes the

provisions of collective security by regional organizations as contained in Chapter VIII of

the UN Charter. In the past, ECOWAS has also demonstrated, as was the case in the

Liberian crisis, the willingness to depart from peacekeeping to peace enforcement

operations without UN authorization. "These legal issues have wider implications for

prospects of the ESF" (Dala 2007, 63). Unlike the relationship between the Security

Council and the General Assembly under the UN Charter, there is no distinction between

actions, which the Authority of Heads of State and Governments may take and those that

the Mediation and Security Council could ordinarily take under the Mechanism.

Although the Authority is the primary organ responsible for the general direction and

control of the Community, it delegated all its power to the MSC in Article VII of the

Protocol. "In the absence of such distinction therefore, the purported delegation is at best

a redundancy" (Ademola 2000, 215). The challenges associated with bringing multi-

national forces together are numerous. ECOWAS has a limited ability to mobilize

adequate resources and sustain a high level of operational readiness. Furthermore,

differences in language, military culture, and training standard between member states continue to pose challenges to ECOWAS peace operations.

<u>The Reaction of the International Community</u>
<u>to ECOWAS Peace Initiatives</u>

Magosi examines various regional conflict resolution mechanisms in Africa and asserts too that although African leaders have shown willingness to contribute towards a better Africa through commitment of forces at various levels, without international assistance, the dream of a peaceful Africa will never come true.

> For this reason, the G8 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) leaders made a commitment to develop African capacity to promote peace and security through development of a Joint Africa/ G8 Plan to mobilize technical and financial assistance that will give Africa the ability to engage more effectively in peace support operations by 2010. Toward that end military assistance continues to be provided bilaterally and at regional levels. (Magosi 2007, 13)

The United States provides training and long-term capacity building programs through the Joint/Combined Exchange Training (JCET) Program, the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) Program, the International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program, and the African Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). France has followed the United States initiative through a program called *Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix (RECAMP)*, while Great Britain's contribution is based on developing African military staff colleges into regional peacekeeping centers of excellence. Britain also provides military advisory and training teams (BMATT) that are based in Zimbabwe for the Southern Africa region and based in Ghana for the West African region.

Through the Canada-West Africa Peace and Security Initiative (PSI under the Canada Fund for Africa), Canada is contributing $4.5 million over three years to ECOWAS. This initiative aims at enhancing ECOWAS capacity to manage peace support operations, to support the creation of a regional small arms unit within ECOWAS, and to assist in the creation of a scholarship fund to facilitate regional participation in peacekeeping training at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra, Ghana (BBC 2004).

International support for ECOWAS operations has varied over time. The late Maxwell Khobe, former Nigerian Army General and one-time Chief of Defense Staff, Republic of Sierra Leone, noted that although the Francophone countries of Africa were opposed to military intervention in Liberia in 1990, the United States supported the initiative of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee, which favored the deployment of ECOMOG. He pointed out that the United States then assisted ECOMOG operations, through a private company, Pacific Architect Engineers (PAE), with transport helicopter services, communication facilities, vehicles, and general repairs and maintenance (Khobe 2000, 12).

In fact, the international response to African conflicts has sometimes been disappointing, as was the case in the Liberian civil war of 2003. Given its historic ties to Liberia, the United States seemed the obvious candidate to lead an international peacekeeping mission, yet the U.S. refused to assume responsibility to end the crisis in Liberia. After much debate, the U.S. made only a weak, largely symbolic intervention; some 2,000 U.S. Marines were stationed on vessels off-shore, but a mere 200 landed in Monrovia. These 200 troops landed only after ECOMOG had taken control of Monrovia

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and the rebels had withdrawn from the immediate area. The Marines stayed ashore only a few days and the entire U.S. force withdrew from the area roughly ten days later. The U.S.'s paltry intervention was a huge disappointment; many Liberians had believed that the presence of U.S. troops would have calmed significantly the volatile situation and enabled the West African peacekeepers to deploy outside the capital where serious abuses were then continuing (Nowrojee 2004, 6).

Prendergast states that transnational security issues, including terrorism and regional instability, are growing in Africa. Armed ethnic conflicts, civil wars, and failing states continue to pose a threat not only confined to Africa, but to international peace and stability, especially in today's Global war on Terrorism. "Left unattended, these transnational issues can develop into threats to U.S. national security interests and arrive on American shores with devastating consequences for the nation" (Prendergast 2003, 1). He opines that the provision of security assistance to Nigeria will ensure regional stability in the West African region and so promote U.S. foreign policy and national security interests.

Crupi suggests that the United States should support ECOWAS because the organization has a history of conflict resolution, peace enforcement, and peacekeeping operations in West Africa. ECOWAS is a relatively stable organization with a commitment to democratic reform and economic progress. ECOWAS has networked with other international groups such as the United Nations, the African Union, and other sub-regional bodies. It has established a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security and is collaborating with the African Union under the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It has cultivated

relationships with the United States, the European Union, Japan, and others (Crupi 2007, 12).

<u>Summary</u>

The above review of literature reveals that several efforts had been made by ECOWAS to create a mechanism for conflict resolution in Africa. Most of the literature reviewed agreed that most of the factors generating interstate and intrastate insecurity, and thereby inducing instability, are endemic on the continent and will continue to persist for some time; therefore African conflicts require a rapid, responsive, robust and neutral standby force with adequate resources and deterrence capabilities. ECOWAS peace initiatives are however deeply flawed, so Africa should not be expected to take sole charge of the burden of attempting to prevent or respond to war on the continent. Some other literature revealed considerable international community support for ECOWAS peace initiatives. This support is needed now, more than ever before, to deal with transnational security issues, including terrorism, which are growing in Africa, and if left unattended, pose a threat not only confined to Africa, but to international peace and security.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The research for this thesis was based on descriptive content analysis of primary

and secondary data. The primary sources included ECOWAS documents, such as the

protocols establishing the various organs, institutions, and *modus operandi* of the

ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). Secondary data was collected from books, journal

articles, magazines, and unpublished materials. Data was also sourced from the

Combined Arms Research Library, the ECOWAS Library, the National War College, the

African Center for Strategic Studies, and the Internet. This research facilitated an analysis

of ECOWAS's collective security arrangements and mechanisms for conflict resolution

through a consideration of the ESF structure and roles, and the challenges ECOWAS

faces in its effort to achieve regional security, with a view to making meaningful

recommendations.

Methodology

A qualitative methodology was used in the conduct of this research. Qualitative

research examines a problem through information collected from several sources

including primary and secondary materials, which constitute the data pertinent to the

study. This study is context-specific; the researcher chose and analyzed the materials to

discover their relevance to the research questions and how they related to the subject,

while attempting to minimize his own bias so as not to distort the meaning of the

information obtained (Wiersma 1991, 14-15).

The researcher followed William Wiersma's five steps for conducting research: identification and isolation of the problem; reviewing of information relevant to the thesis; collection and classification of data; data analysis; and drawing of conclusions (Wiersma 1991, 8).

<u>Step 1: Identification and Isolation of the Problem</u>

As indicated in chapter 1, Africa has accounted for more conflicts in the post-cold war era than any other continent. In a bid to deal with the myriad of conflicts on the continent, the African Chiefs of Defense Staff in their meeting, held in Zimbabwe, in 1997, recommended the establishment of an African Standby Force. Within this arrangement, sub-regional organizations, including ECOWAS, are to contribute regional standby forces to strengthen the security architecture.

ECOWAS member states signed a protocol in 1999 that calls for the establishment of a military force known as the ECOWAS Standby Force or ESF. The force is designed to meet the security needs of the sub-region and relates to a broader ECOWAS mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping, and security. ESF is to be employed when there are breaches of the peace due to conflict between two or more member states, violations of human rights and rule of law, and the overthrow or attempted overthrow of elected governments. Motivation for the adoption of the agreement to establish the ESF was based on ECOWAS's success in Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1990s.

ECOWAS needs to overcome numerous challenges in its pursuit of peace initiatives, the most salient of these being legal, institutional, logistical, and operational

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challenges. This research intends to examine how ECOWAS can successfully overcome these challenges with a view to making recommendations.

Step 2: Review of Information Relevant to the Thesis

A review of scholarly literature on the subject matter revealed a continuing desire for the establishment of standby forces at the regional and sub-regional levels. With ECOMOG's successful intervention in conflicts within the sub-region, ECOWAS has demonstrated not only its desire but also its capability to establish a mechanism for conflict resolution and prevention in West Africa. But while its interventions have been useful, there remain many pitfalls since ECOWAS peace and security mechanisms are deeply flawed. Similar pitfalls characterize regional security arrangements elsewhere in Africa, so the burden of attempting to prevent or respond to war on the continent should not rest solely on African states.

Through various training and financial aid programs, the international community has been supporting African peace initiatives. There was, for example, considerable international support for the 1990 ECOMOG operation in Liberia. But the research has shown that the international community needs to augment its support to African peace initiatives to eliminate transnational security issues that pose a threat not only to Africa but also to the rest of the world.

Step 3: Collection and Classification of Data

The data collected for the study was classified into three categories:

1. ECOWAS past efforts to create a conflict resolution mechanism in the sub-region.

2. ECOWAS new collective security mechanism.

3. The reaction of the international community to ECOWAS peace initiatives.

<u>Step 4: Data Analysis</u>

The data was analyzed in four parts:

Part 1 identified the history and evolution of ECOWAS treaties/agreements.

Part 2 analyzed the ECOWAS's oversight arrangements for ECOWAS forces.

Part 3 described and analyzed the proposed ESF structure, and its roles.

Part 4 identified and analyzed the challenges facing ECOWAS as it attempts to

field an effective/controllable/responsive ESF.

<u>Step 5: Drawing of Conclusions and Recommendations</u>

From the analysis of the data in step four, conclusions were derived regarding the

challenges ECOWAS faces in its pursuit of collective security. Recommendations were

then made to facilitate the achievement of regional collective security in the West African

sub-region.

<u>Arrangement of Chapters</u>

This study is composed of five chapters, each of which covers a specific part of

the analytical research conducted:

Chapter 1 identified and isolated the problem.

Chapter 2 reviewed material on ECOWAS efforts to create a conflict resolution

mechanism in the sub-region, and the reaction of the international community to

ECOWAS's peace initiatives.

Chapter 3 outlined the research methodology of the study.

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Chapter 4 presented an analysis of ECOWAS's collective security arrangements and mechanism for collective security and peace, and of the ESF structure and roles; as well as discussed the challenges facing ECOWAS in its pursuit of collective security in the West African sub-region.

Chapter 5, the conclusion, comprised a summation of the analysis and recommendations towards the achievement of regional security in the West African sub-region.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

As stated in chapter 3, this part of the research will analyze the data and material

collected in four parts:

Part 1 will identify the history and evolution of ECOWAS treaties and

agreements.

Part 2 will analyze the ECOWAS's oversight arrangements for ECOWAS forces.

Part 3 will describe and analyze the proposed ESF structure, and its roles.

Part 4 will identify and analyze the challenges facing ECOWAS as it attempts to

field an effective/controllable/responsive ESF.

Part 1: ECOWAS Collective Security Arrangements

ECOWAS was founded on 28th May 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria with the signing of

the ECOWAS Treaty. Established as an economic union, ECOWAS was designed to

integrate the economies of its fifteen member states in order to promote economic growth

and development within the West African sub region. The idea was influenced by the

trends in globalization and international economic relations of the twentieth century. The

organization has made notable achievements towards the attainment of its objectives.

However, the realization that the goal of regional economic cooperation cannot be fully

achieved without peace and stability led to the adoption of the Protocol on Non-

Aggression, and the Protocol Relating to the Mutual Assistance on Defence (MAD).

> The Protocol on Non-Aggression was signed in Lagos on 22 April 1978 by
> ECOWAS Member States. It was an attempt to prevent or avoid the use of force

among Member States in resolving conflicts, and to create an atmosphere free of acts of aggression by one Member State against another. The Protocol, however, overlooked the issues of the incidence of aggression from non-Member States and externally supported domestic insurrection within the region. The 1981 MAD Protocol provided the outlines for dealing with internal armed conflicts if they were engineered and actively supported by other actors in the region. The Protocol, however, did not make provision for any intervention in case of a purely internal conflict. Fifteen years after the formation of ECOWAS, the Community was confronted with its major security challenge: the 1989 Liberian Civil War. ECOWAS established ECOMOG to control the conflict, and justified its intervention on the basis of four interrelated factors, namely: humanitarian; the provisions of the MAD Protocol; regional security; and response to the request of the then government in Liberia. (ECOWAS 2005, 9)

However, the fact that ECOMOG operations were set up largely by military governments, and were run almost entirely by the military led to some major difficulties for the force's operations. In the first Liberian conflict, for instance, there was little public understanding of the ECOMOG's mandate; the force received much bad press while the rebels effectively utilized international media to undermine ECOMOG's achievements. The force also faced the problems of command and control, and inter-contingent differences in terms of language, training, capability, and equipment. Above all, the lack of clear consensus among the region's political leaders about the role and mandate of the force was the main problem of ECOMOG. Some Member States have allegedly supported rebel groups against ECOMOG, as was the case in Liberia. This severely undermined the force's effectiveness, and splintered ECOWAS itself (Report of ECOWAS Workshop 2005, 11).

Important lessons were drawn from these early ECOMOG experiences. "West African leaders became more conscious of the fact that good governance and sustainable development are essential for peace and conflict prevention" (ECOWAS 2005, 13). ECOWAS thus committed itself to promoting a lasting peace in the sub-region through a

mechanism for collective security and peace. This commitment eventually led to the

adoption of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management,

Resolution, Peacekeeping and security on 10th December 1999, and the additional

Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

<p style="text-align: center"><u>Part 2: ECOWAS's Mechanism for Collective Security and Peace.</u></p>

"The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management,

Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, adopted by ECOWAS in 1999, can be regarded

as the Organization's constitution on collective security in the West African sub-region"

(Ademola 2005, 211). The document provides the legal foundation for ECOWAS to deal

with security issues affecting the sub region. This new Protocol signed in 1999, in many

regards marks a departure from the traditional principle of non-intervention as the

Protocol empowers ECOWAS to intervene in the internal conflicts of member states. It is

noteworthy that the Protocol emerged in the aftermath of ECOWAS intervention in

Liberia and Sierra Leone. "It is the first time that an international organization has

formerly codified the doctrine of humanitarian intervention as well as legalizing the use

of force to restore or prevent the overthrow of a democratically elected government"

(ibid). Chapter I of the Protocol provides the establishment, principles and objectives of

the Mechanism. ECOWAS Member States reaffirmed their commitments particularly to

the following fundamental principles as contained in Article 2, Chapter I of the Protocol:

> 1. That economic and social development and the security of peoples and States
> are inextricably linked;

> 2. Promotion and reinforcement of the free movement of persons, the right of
> residence and establishment, which contribute to the reinforcement of good
> neighborliness;

<p style="text-align: center">29</p>

3. Promotion and consolidation of a democratic government as well as democratic institutions in each Member State;

4. Protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms and the rules of international humanitarian laws;

5. Equality of sovereign States; and

6. Territorial integrity and political independence of Member States (ECOWAS 1999).

Objectives of the Mechanism

The ECOWAS leadership, in an effort to take firm control over the security of the sub-region, outlined a comprehensive list of security issues. The objectives of the Mechanism, as contained in Article 3, Chapter I of the Protocol are as follows:

1. Prevent, manage and resolve internal and inter-State conflicts under the conditions provided in the Framework of the Mechanism;

2. Implement the relevant provisions of Article 58 of the Revised Treaty;

3. Implement the relevant provisions of the Protocols on Non-Aggression, Mutual Assistance in Defence, Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment;

4. Strengthen cooperation in the areas of conflict prevention, early-warning, peace-keeping operations, control of cross-border crime, international terrorism and proliferation of small arms and anti-personnel mines;

5. Maintain and consolidate peace, security and stability within the Community;

6. Establish institutions and formulate policies that would allow for the organization and coordination of humanitarian relief missions;

7. Promote close cooperation between Member States in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping;

8. Constitute and deploy a civilian and military force to maintain or restore peace within the sub-region, whenever the need arises;

9. Set up an appropriate framework for the rational and equitable management of natural resources shared by neighboring Member States, which may be causes of frequent inter-State conflicts;

10. Protect the environment and take steps to restore the degraded environment to its natural state;

11. Safeguard the cultural heritage of Member States; and

12. Formulate and implement policies on anti-corruption, money-laundering and illegal circulation of small arms. (ECOWAS 1999)

Institutions and Organs of the Mechanism

Chapter II of the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, deals with the various organs and institutions that have authority for implementing the provisions of the Mechanism. Article 4 sets out the organs in hierarchical order as; the Authority of Heads of States and Government of Member States (the Authority), the Mediation and Security Council (MSC), the Executive Secretariat, and other institutions as may be established by the Authority. The Authority is the highest decision making body and consist of Heads of States of Member States. It meets as necessary, and has the powers to take action on all matters concerning conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping, security, humanitarian support, peace building, control of cross border crimes, proliferation of small arms, as well as all other matters covered by the provision of the Mechanism. As contained in Article 7, the Authority however mandates the MSC to take, on its behalf, appropriate decisions for the implementation of the provisions of the Mechanism. By this provision, the Authority practically handed over its responsibilities to the MSC without any conditions attached. This is rather problematic. In matters pertaining to peacekeeping or peace enforcement, centralized authority is crucial to the success or otherwise of the mission. Under the UN security arrangement, the Security Council remains the highest decision making organ without delegating its power to any subsidiary body, in an effort

to ensure centralized control. The delegation of powers to the MSC is one of the major weaknesses of the Mechanism.

The MSC, as provided by Article 8, comprises of nine members of which seven shall be elected by the Authority. The two other members shall be the current and the immediate past Chairman of the Authority, with both having an automatic right to membership of the MSC. The Council is assisted by three organs; the Defense and Security Commission, the Council of Elders, and ECOMOG, which has now been replaced by the ESF. The Defense and Security Commission include all the Chiefs of Defense Staff, and officers of Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Member States. Depending on the agenda, other officers from Customs and Immigration, Drugs and Narcotics Ministries, and Civil Protection Force may be invited to participate in the meetings of the Commission. The primary objective of the Defense and Security Commission is to examine all technical and administrative issues, and logistical requirements for peacekeeping operations. Other specific tasks as provided in Article 19 of the Protocol include:

1. Formulating the mandate of the Peace-keeping Force;

2. Defining the terms of reference for the Force;

3. Appointing the Force Commander; and

4. Determining the composition of the Contingents.

The Institutional mechanism put in place is comprehensive, as it makes clear the various organs that have authority for implementing the provisions of the Mechanism. However, the delegation of the powers of the Authority to the MSC without effective constitutional mechanism put in place to reverse decisions made by the MSC can be

misapplied or abused. This challenge will be discussed exhaustively in subsequent paragraphs.

<u>Part 3: ESF Structure and Roles</u>

ESF Structure

The difficulty of force mobilization and the need for prompt action in dealing with conflicts and emergencies were some of the lessons learnt from past ECOWAS missions. The Organization therefore adopted a standby collective security arrangement for rapid deployment in trouble spots around the sub region. The ECOWAS military vision, anchored on the need to build and maintain a standby regional military capability, provides a clear direction for ECOWAS senior military commanders to develop a multi-national force capable of meeting the security needs of the sub-region. "The ECOWAS military component will be comprised of pre-determined regional standby formations that are highly trained, equipped, and prepared to deploy as directed in response to a crises or threat to peace and security" (*ECOWAS* 2004, 6). To meet the force structure, as laid out in the *ECOWAS Standby Units*: *Proposed Concept and Structure*, ESF is to be composed of a Task Force (TF) and a Main Brigade (MB).

The TF will be comprised of 1,646 soldiers within pre-determined units located within member states, and upon order, deploy into any mission within 30 days and be fully self-sustaining for 90 days. Should the situation warrant an increase in the size of the peacekeeping force, the TF will be reinforced by the MB. The MB will be comprised of 5,028, additional peacekeepers, which are located within predetermined units and upon order are prepared to deploy within 90 days and be fully self-sustaining for 90 days. This brings the total strength of the ESF to 6,674 troops.

The MB force structure is based on the operational concept that the initial ECOWAS TF has been rapidly deployed and that a more robust, long- term force is required. The overarching assumption is that when needed, the MB will have advance warning, be able to review the actual conditions of the battlefield as experienced by the TF, and then prepare, assemble, and deploy. It is important to note that the MB is not a completely separate, stand-alone unit as contrasted to the TF. Instead, the MB is an objective, mission-oriented means of expanding the previously deployed TF into a more robust military organization based on actual needs. During actual employment in the field, the MB will have significant capability to conduct peace-building and humanitarian assistance operations in accordance with the mission mandate. (ECOWAS 2004, 13)

The task force will comprise command, staff, operational units (line elements), and logistics elements, which will provide all the supplies and materials required by the TF.

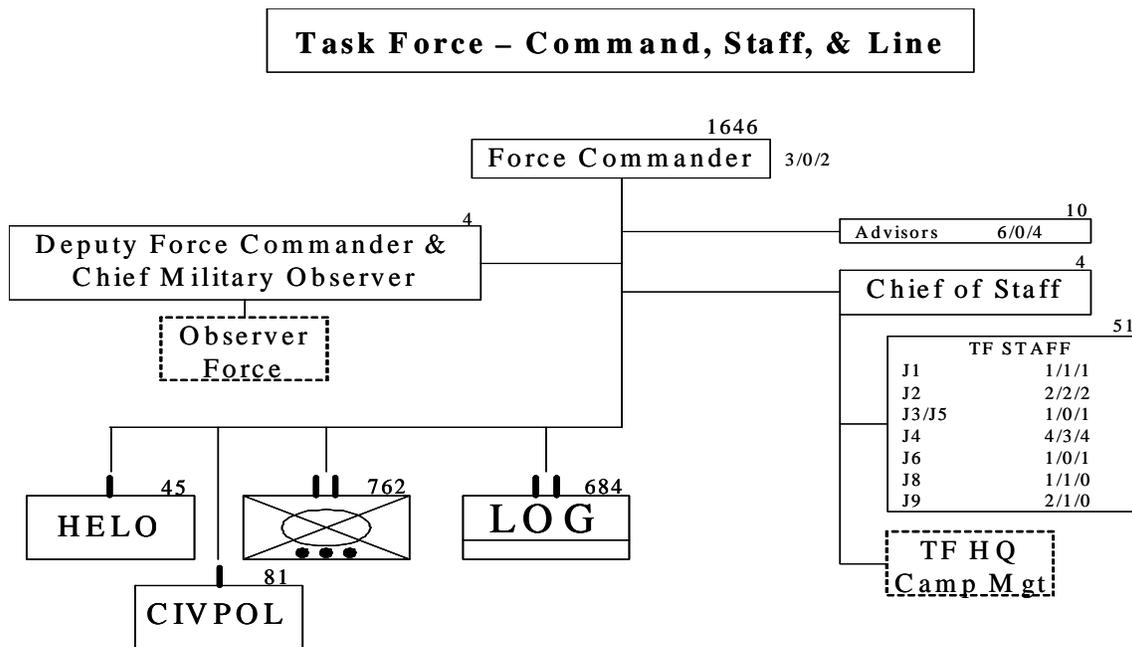Figure 1 below shows the structure of the TF Command, Staff, and Line elements.

Figure 1.   TF Command, Staff, and Line

Source: ECOWAS Secretariat, *ECOWAS Stand-by Units: Proposed Concept and Structures* (Abuja, Nigeria, 2004), 9.

At the apex of the TF is the Force Commander (FC) who has Operational Command (OPCOM) of the ESF. He is assisted by a Deputy Force Commander (DFC) who also doubles as the Chief Military Observer (CMO). The CMO commands all Military Observers (MO) deployed in the mission. . The Chief of Staff (COS) heads the team of TF Staff organized into seven cells (JI, J2, J3/J5, J4, J6, J8, and J9). The main task force is made up of a Mechanized Infantry Battalion (762 Men), Helicopter Squadron (45 Men), Logistics Battalion (648 Men) and a Civilian Police Unit (81 Police Men). The FC also has a team of advisers, which provide planning advice. Conceptually, the ECOWAS Task Force is based on the operational requirement to mobilize units in order to rapidly deploy into operations with the objective of enforcing peace. Based on this assumption, there are limited consideration and provision in the TF for peace-building or humanitarian assistance mission (ECOWAS 2004, 9). If the need arises, the TF will be expanded into the MB, which is capable of performing humanitarian operations.

Figure 2 below elaborates in greater detail the TF Headquarters Organization and the Staff elements. The FC is assisted by a team of specialist advisers covering Legal Affairs, Media, Civilian Police, Medical, Aviation Safety and a Provost Marshall. A TF Headquarters Camp Management Unit is incorporated in order to provide security for the Headquarters.
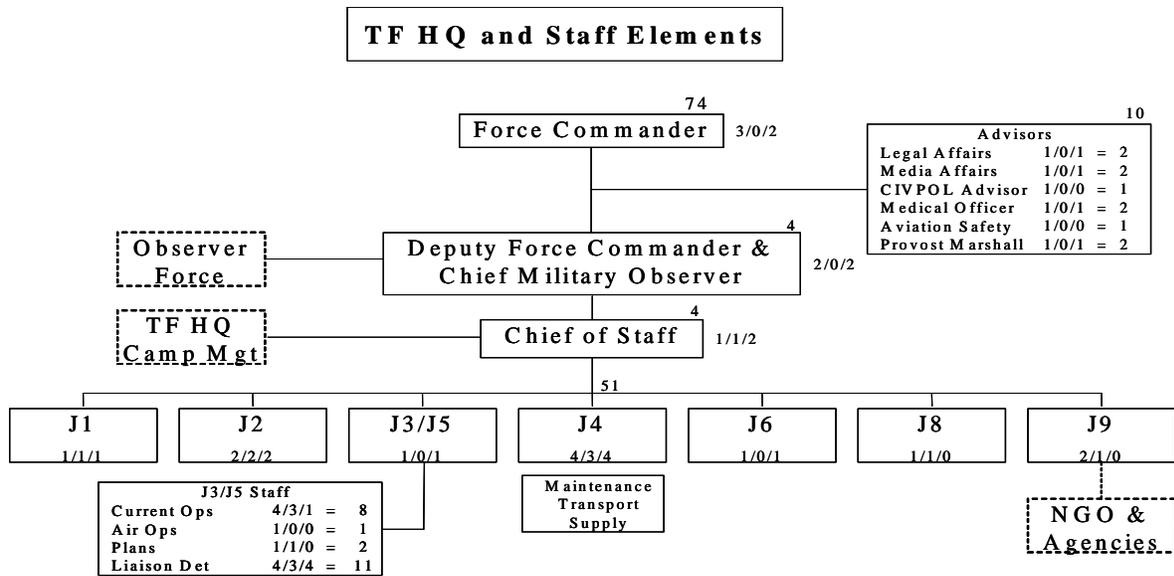
TF HQ and Staff Elements

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| Force Commander | 3/0/2

Advisors 10
Legal Affairs   1/0/1 = 2
Media Affairs   1/0/1 = 2
CIVPOL Advisor   1/0/0 = 1
Medical Officer   1/0/1 = 2
Aviation Safety   1/0/0 = 1
Provost Marshall   1/0/1 = 2

Observer Force

Deputy Force Commander & Chief Military Observer   2/0/2   4

TF HQ Camp Mgt

Chief of Staff   1/1/2   4

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| J1 | J2 | J3/J5 | J4 | J6 | J8 | J9 |
| 1/1/1 | 2/2/2 | 1/0/1 | 4/3/4 | 1/0/1 | 1/1/0 | 2/1/0 |

J3/J5 Staff
Current Ops   4/3/1 = 8
Air Ops   1/0/0 = 1
Plans   1/1/0 = 2
Liaison Det   4/3/4 = 11

Maintenance Transport Supply

NGO & Agencies

Figure 2.   TF HQ and Staff Elements

The line elements (figure 3 below) comprise the main operational elements of the TF. A motorized Battalion consisting of five Motorized Companies with 128 personnel each provides the main peacekeeping force. The Battalion has a Combat Service Support (CSS) Company that provides all the needed supplies for the Battalion. Civilian Police are a crucial element in modern Peace keeping operations. They are often required for the maintenance of law and order especially in a collapsed state scenario, when local state police are unable to perform their duties. Accordingly, a CIVPOL Company comprising three Police Platoons (20 personnel each), a Body Guard and Support Platoon make up the CIVPOL elements of the TF. Aviation Units constitute a critical capability in peacekeeping

operations. A Squadron of helicopters, consisting of a light and medium platoon with a maintenance platoon is provided for the TF. This will be utilized for reconnaissance, firepower, logistics lift, and medical evacuation (MEDVAC) during operations.
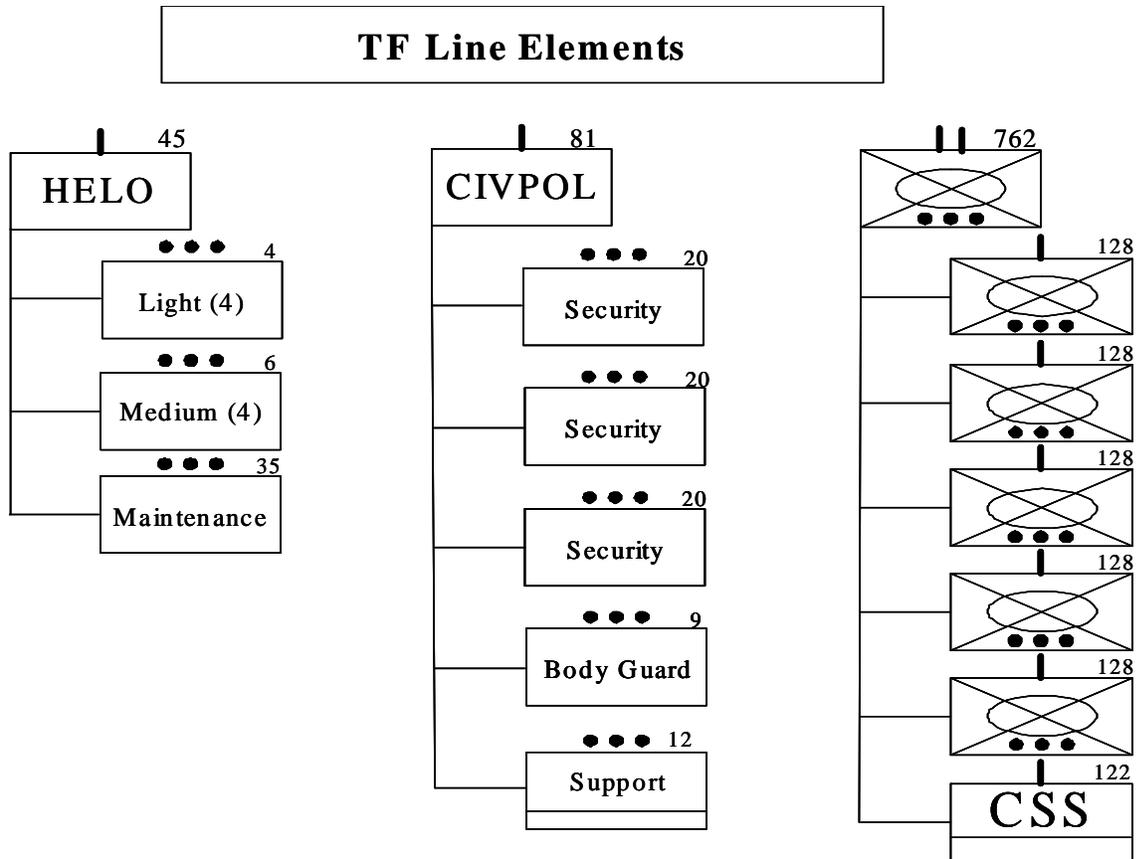

Figure 3.   TF Line Elements

Source: ECOWAS Secretariat, *ECOWAS Stand-by Units: Proposed Concept and Structures* (Abuja, Nigeria, 2004), 11.

Figure 4 below depicts the structural design of the logistics elements that comprises the TF. It is important to note that the sub-organization of the logistics element have as a primary task to provide almost all levels of supplies, services and direct support to the combat element. In general, the logistics unit is self-sustainable; however, the line elements do provide the logistics element some security and aviation support. As the Figure indicates, the logistics elements include Engineer Squadron (108 troops), Medical (50 personnel), Signal Squadron (96 operators), Maintenance Squadron (135 personnel), Transport Company (110 Personnel), and a Supply and Services Unit staffed with 23 Personnel.

TF Logistics Elements

LOG 684
5

Logistics Staff 17
J1	1/0/1 = 2	J4	4/2/3 = 7
J2	1/0/1 = 2	J5	1/0/1 = 2
J3	1/0/1 = 2	J6	1/0/1 = 2

TF HQ Camp Mgt 20
HQ Camp Mgt 20

Engineer 108
Medical 50
Signal 96
Maintenance 135
Transport 110
SVC — Supply & Services 123

Figure 4.   TF Logistics Elements

The overarching advantage of the structure of the TF is that it is designed as a baseline structure, which allows for rapid mobilization and deployment, which makes it

flexible for expansion. The TF is mobilized and deployed to conduct

peacekeeping/enforcement operations. Should the need arise; the force is progressively and

systematically expanded into a full fledged Brigade capable of conducting peace-building and

humanitarian mission and sustained operations for a longer duration. The structure of the

Main Brigade is indicated below in Figure 5.

Figure 5.   Main Brigade Command, Staff, and Line
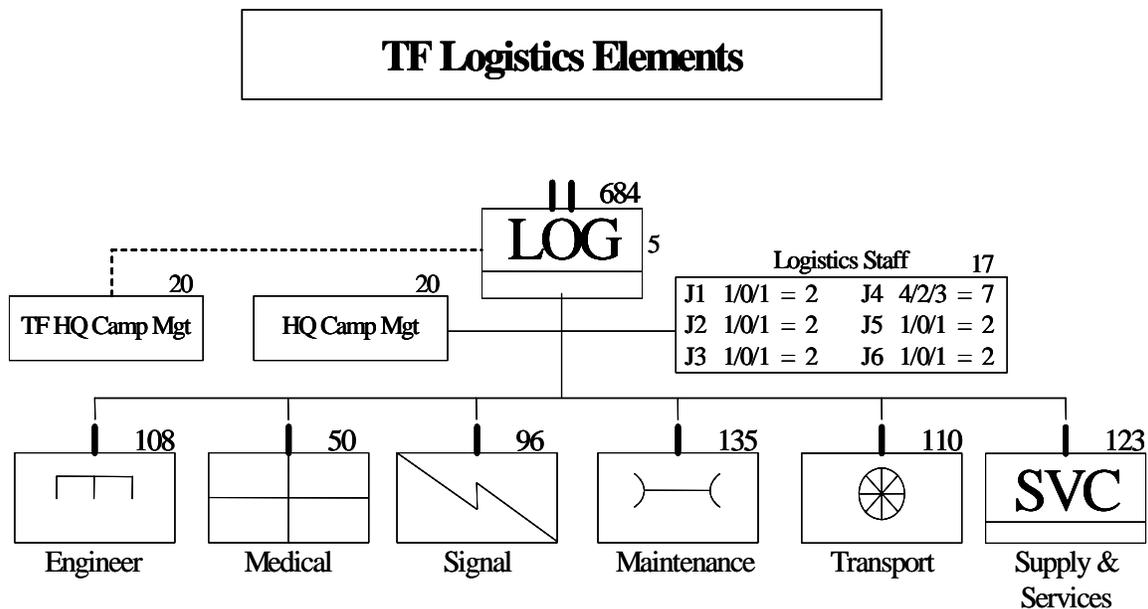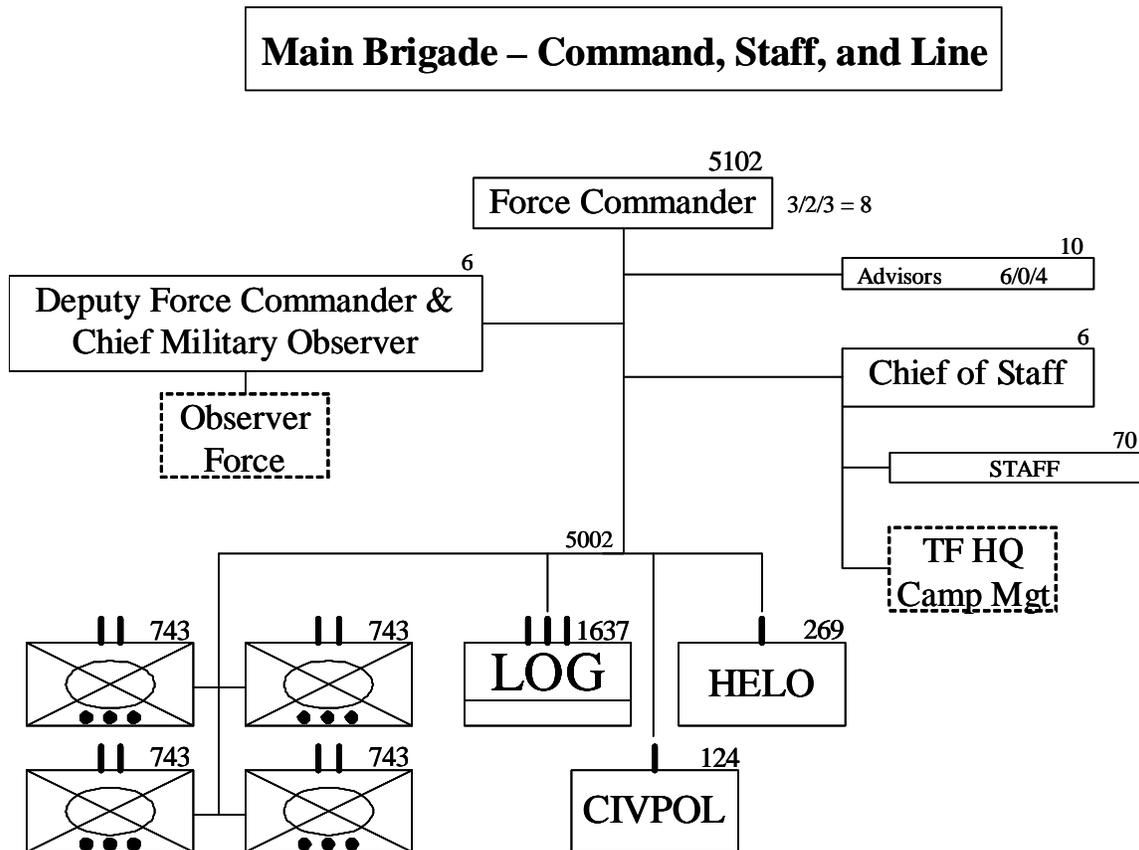
Source: ECOWAS Secretariat, *ECOWAS Stand-by Units: Proposed Concept and Structures*
(Abuja, Nigeria, 2004), 13.

Compared with the structure of the TF, the MB with a proposed strength of 5,102 troops is a more robust and larger force. The Brigade is developed by expanding the TF with additional troops. This would include staff officers, combat units (line elements) and logistics units. As the TF gradually expands into the MB, there is a requirement for a larger staff to manage the operations. The headquarters is therefore expanded to cater for this requirement. Figure 6 below is the envisaged structure of Main Brigade Headquarters Staff.
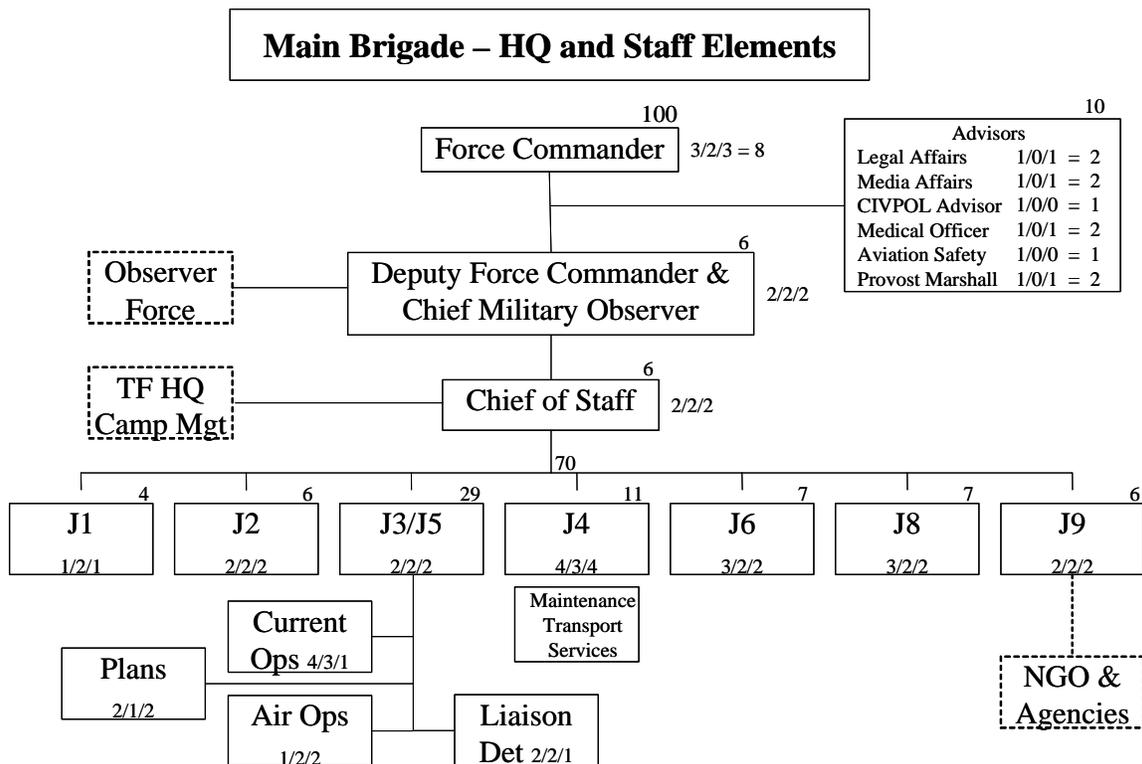

Figure 6.   MB HQ and Staff Elements

Source: ECOWAS Secretariat, *ECOWAS Stand-by Units: Proposed Concept and Structures* (Abuja, Nigeria, 2004), 14.

Notice the inclusion of an NGO and other Agencies under J9. This is required in order to coordinate the activities of humanitarian agencies and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In order to enable the MB to be fully functional and operational, additional line elements (combat units) are provided. Figure 7 shows the expanded organizational structure of the MB line elements. Also note the increase in the number of Battalions to four, Military Police to 6 platoons and helicopter unit to a full fledged Aviation Battalion with a Scout Company and Medium Company with its integral Combat Service Support (CSS) Unit.

Main Brigade – Line Elements

	269			124			743
HELO			MP				X4

Scout (10) 60
Body Guard 9
MP 20
172

Medium (10) 66
Support 14
MP 20
172

CSS 143
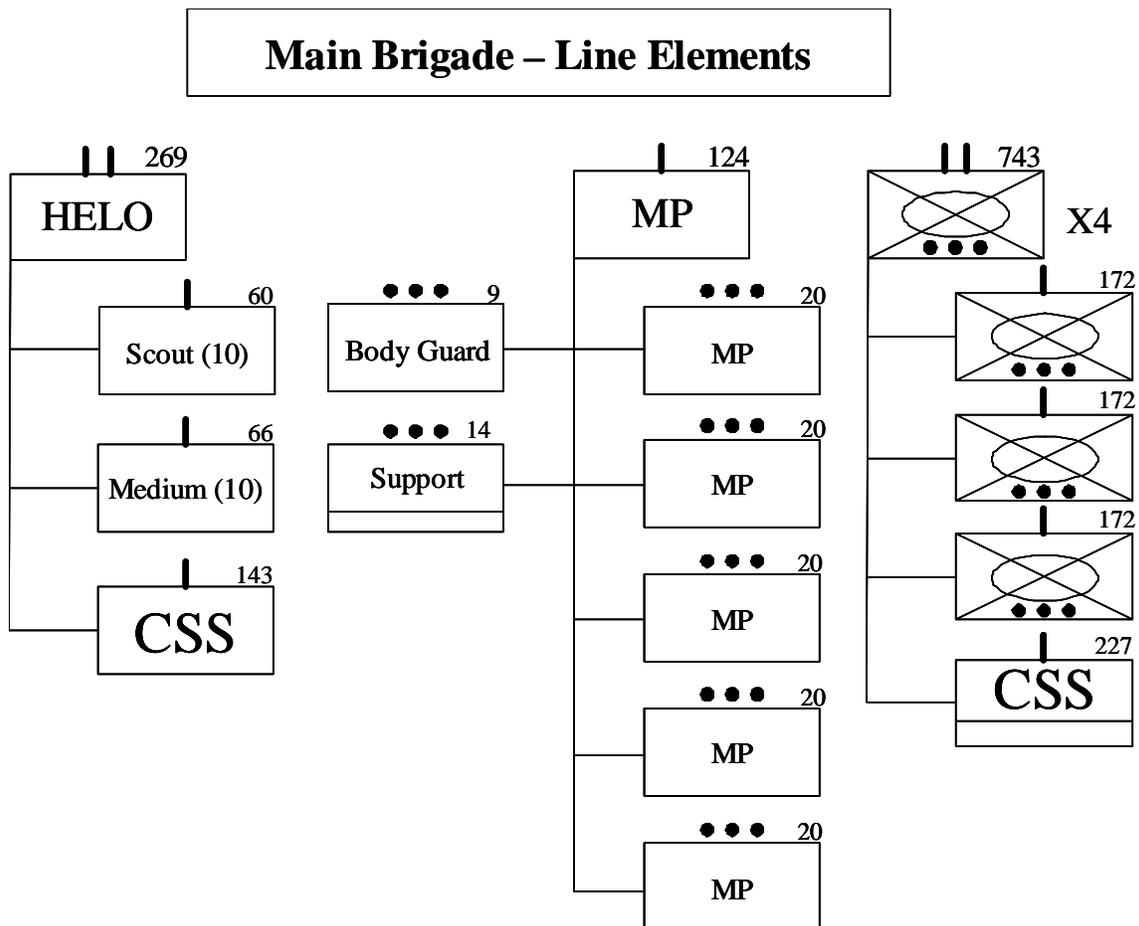MP 20
172

MP 20
CSS 227

MP 20

MP 20

Figure 7.   MB Line Elements

Source: ECOWAS Secretariat, *ECOWAS Stand-by Units: Proposed Concept and Structures* (Abuja, Nigeria, 2004), 15.

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Immediate maintenance is crucial for the MB operational effectiveness. Therefore, the Brigade's logistics element is similar to the logistic structure of the TF, which is designed to rapidly and effectively sustain the deployed units. The logistics elements are however expanded to cater for the increased number of units. Figure 8 below is the structure of the logistics unit required to maintain the MB.

Main Brigade – Logistics Elements

TF HQ Camp Mgt 35	LOG 1637	8	Logistics Staff 30		
HQ Camp Mgt 35			J1 1/1/1 = 3 J4 4/4/3 = 11		
			J2 1/0/1 = 2 J5 1/0/1 = 2		
			J3 2/2/4 = 8 J6 1/2/1 = 4		

Engineer 378	Medical 133	Signal 193	Maintenance 255	Transport 235	SVC Supply & Services 335
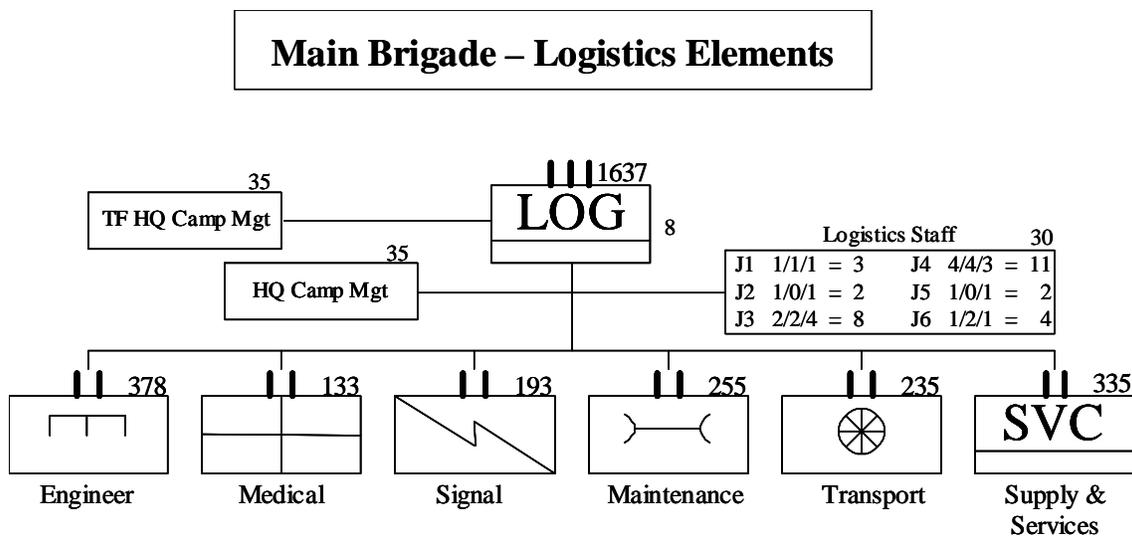
Figure 8.   MB Logistics Elements

Note that the size of all the line units (Engineer, Medical, Signal, Maintenance, Transport, and Supply and Services) have been tripled compared to that of the TF. The Supply and Services Unit would provide increased mobile services such as laundry, fuel, water etc to the forward deployed elements. In summary, the structure of the MB is a modular design for operations. The concept is that the TF has been deployed on site for about 90 days for

peace enforcement role and, having attained a level of security, the MB follows incrementally to provide a more robust capability for peace building and humanitarian operations.

Achieving the ECOWAS Military Strategic Vision necessitates a focused, dedicated, and professional logistic infrastructure. In recognition of this fact, ECOWAS included in the ESF architecture plans to maintain a logistics depot at Hastings Airfield complex in Sierra Leone. The depot is designed to provide rapid response in times of conflict, and the capability to sustain the ESF. It will have the material management capability to receive, store, issue, control, and manage all classes of supplies, and materiel in support of the ESF. Other services that would be provided by the depot include logistics oriented services such as, transport, management of maintenance operations, and specialist systems.

ESF Roles

The vision of ECOWAS leadership for the ESF is a peacekeeping and humanitarian role. Article 25 of the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security defines when the sub-region's military capability would be exercised. The overarching principle is that peace and harmony would be protected, even if it entails the use of force. Consequently, the Article provides that ESF would be employed when there is a threat to peace and security resulting from:

1. Conflict between two or more member states;

2. Internal conflict likely to lead to a humanitarian disaster and threatening peace and security in the sub region;

3. Violations of human rights and rule of law;

4. Overthrow or attempted overthrow of elected governments; and

5. Other situations of concern to the Mediation and Security Council (ECOWAS 1999).

In addition, ECOWAS Member States articulated pre-determined mission types or military operations that would be conducted by the ESF. Article 22 of the same Protocol indicates the types of operations to include:

1. Observation and Monitoring;

2. Peacekeeping, Peace building, and Peace enforcement;

3. Humanitarian operations;

4. Enforcement of sanctions;

5. Preventive deployment;

6. Disarmament and Demobilization;

7. Policing activities; and

8. Other operations mandated by the MSC (ECOWAS 1999).

Important to the definition of the types of operation is the need for early intervention during a conflict. Observation and monitoring are the first and most important activities prior to possible deployment of troops. If the situation degenerates, other means of conflict management outlined above would be employed as appropriate, to meet the ECOWAS leadership objective of maintaining peace and security in the sub region.

Part 4: Challenges of ECOWAS's Mechanism for Collective Security

The institutions and structure put in place by ECOWAS for the pursuit of collective security in the West African sub-region are undoubtedly ambitious. A close

look at the provisions of the Protocol which establish the Mechanism for collective security reveals likely problem areas, which if not addressed will militate against the attainment of its objectives. The likely legal, institutional, logistical, and operational challenges are examined in the following paragraphs.

Legal Challenges

ECOWAS current effort in developing a peace enforcement capability marks a departure from the provisions of collective security by regional organizations as contained in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. The Chapter encourages regional organizations to pacifically settle disputes amongst their members, and delegates the enforcement powers of the UN Security Council to regional organizations. It stated that, "the Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority" (UN 2007). It however pointed out that "no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council" (ibid). The UN also insisted that "the Security Council shall at all times be kept fully informed of activities undertaken or in contemplation under regional arrangements or by regional agencies for the maintenance of international peace and security" (ibid). Past ECOWAS peace initiatives had acted in disregard to these provisions. In the Liberian and Sierra Leone conflicts for instance, ECOMOG, in guise of pacific settlement, allegedly conducted peace enforcement operations against rebel factions without the UN Security Council authorization. The contention has always been the distinction of the type of crisis which warrants peace keeping or peace enforcement.

The ECOWAS Protocol on regional collective security, amongst other things legalized the use of force to maintain peace, and restore or prevent the overthrow of a democratically elected government (ECOWAS 1999). While ECOWAS effort to exercise firm control over security in the sub region is commendable, the Protocol contains loopholes, which would enable ECOWAS to operate without the UN Security Council supervision and control thus, not only creating potential areas of conflict with the UN, but casting doubt on the legality of certain ECOWAS operations.

Institutional Challenges

As contained in the Protocol, the Authority has the overall responsibility for the general direction and control of the Community (ECOWAS 1999). However, the same Authority, under Article 7 of the Protocol, mandated the MSC to take, on its behalf, appropriate decisions for the implementation of the provisions of the Mechanism. The MSC can initiate and take actions on all policies for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping, and security. Furthermore, the MSC is empowered to authorize all forms of intervention and decisions on employment of political and military solutions to threats to peace and security. It is also empowered to approve mandates for peacekeeping operations, and appoint the principal mission leadership (the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary and the Force Commander).

In all these, the MSC is only required to keep the Authority informed of its actions and decisions. The Protocol however has no provision for the Authority to override the decisions of the MSC, should there be disagreement between the two. In effect, the MSC seems to have more powers than the Authority of Heads of States and Government – the highest decision making body within ECOWAS. This is a major

shortcoming of the ECOWAS Collective Security Mechanism. The beneficiary of a

delegated power should be accountable to the benefactor.

Logistics and Funding Challenges

On account of the under-developed economies of its Member States, logistics and

funding required for the ESF constitute one of the greatest challenges confronting

ECOWAS. Poor logistics and inadequate funding were known to have hampered early

ECOMOG operations.

> It was noted that throughout its operations, ECOMOG was plagued by problems
> such as: lack of standardization of equipment, arms and ammunition; poor sea and
> air lift capabilities; absence of vital air to ground support assets (particularly
> ground attack helicopters); lack of logistic support for some contingents; and
> inadequate resources to deal with humanitarian problems. (Report of ECOWAS
> Workshop, 32)

Unlike the UN, which relies on contributions from its member states to finance

and sustain its operations; past ECOWAS Protocols did not make provisions for such.

Nigeria bore more than half of the cost of ECOMOG operations in Liberia, and allegedly

manipulated the force for its own national interests. In order to prevent the re-occurrence

of the ECOMOG experience, the new Mechanism provides for the establishment of a

peace fund, into which member states and peace partners would make contributions. As

contained in the new Mechanism:

> The Executive Secretariat shall make provision in its annual budget, for funds to
> finance activities of the Mechanism. As soon as the Protocol governing conditions
> for application of the Community Levy enters into force, a percentage of the said
> Levy shall be earmarked for these activities. (ECOWAS 1999)

The projection for the community levy is 0.5 percent of GDPs, which will be

earmarked to fund the Mechanism. Furthermore special requests for funds shall be made

to the United Nations, AU and other international agencies. Funds may also be raised

from voluntary contributions and grants from bilateral and multilateral sources. A system of pre-financing in which States contributing contingents bear the cost of operations during the first three months has also been introduced. Under this arrangement, ECOWAS shall refund the expenditure incurred by the States within a maximum period of six (6) months after deployment, and then proceed to finance the operations.

ECOWAS has hitherto relied heavily on donations from the international community, and other agencies for both financial and logistical support of its operations. With no remarkable improvements in the economy of the sub-region, it can be argued that this tendency would continue in the near future. It is therefore likely that without the support of donor countries, and other international organizations, ECOWAS will be unable to achieve its goal of collective security in the West African sub-region.

Structural and Operational Challenges

The availability of trained and equipped forces ready for rapid deployment into conflict areas is a fundamental requirement of a standby force. In recognition of this, the ECOWAS Mechanism provides for a 1,646 man Task Force to be deployed to any conflict area within the sub region within thirty days. This can later be augmented by a Main Brigade of an additional 5,028 troops if required. Member States have also agreed to make available military, paramilitary, and civilian resources for the accomplishment of the Mechanism's objectives. The challenges associated with bringing together multi-national forces are numerous. Given the poor equipment holding and maintenance culture of most of the Member States, availability of serviceable equipment will prove a major problem for the ESF. Apart from this, the fact that ESF troops are from different backgrounds poses the challenge of inter-operability and equipment incompatibility.

These are limiting factors for future ESF operations given the numerous tasks the force is expected to execute. The decision by member states to make available equipped troops is the most significant provision of the new ECOWAS Mechanism. Modern day peace-keeping, peace-enforcement, and humanitarian operations require robust and well equipped troops to succeed. There is no easy solution to this challenge as it is beyond the capacity of ECOWAS to procure new military equipment to meet its needs. However, ECOWAS member states need to meet their obligations by providing well equipped troops with serviceable equipments. ECOWAS could provide assistance to member states in difficulties, while seeking further assistance from the AU, UN, and other peace partners.

The training of troops to required standard before deployment is an essential factor for the success of military operations. Given the diverse background from which the ESF troops are to be assembled, the need for individual, collective, specialist, and staff training cannot be over-emphasized. The current training strategy envisaged for the ESF is that Member States will be responsible for the individual training of their troops, while ECOWAS will provide collective training in the form of joint military exercises. The problem lies with ensuring that the required training standard is attained before troops can be deployed for operations. In its present organizational structure, ECOWAS has no office that caters to training. Given the large numbers of countries contributing to the ESF, there is a need for training standardization and evaluation, which can best be coordinated by an office created solely for this purpose.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The post Cold War international landscape has witnessed not only dramatic changes in the types of conflict and humanitarian crisis, but also a change in the nature of conflict management strategies. Several nations around the world continue to gravitate from centralized collective security, under the UN, towards decentralized peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and humanitarian operations undertaken by regional organizations. These organizations have developed new and robust mechanisms for the management of threats to peace and security in their respective regions. ECOWAS's quest for peace and stability in the West African sub-region led to the formation of ECOMOG; an *ad hoc* force established in 1990 to deal with the insecurity that followed the collapse of state in Liberia. The force was later used to control several of the region's conflicts. ECOWAS peace initiatives are arguably deeply flawed, however, as the organization lacks an institutionalized crisis prevention and management mechanism. Consequently, ECOWAS peace initiatives encountered many problems, and hence failed to achieve the much needed peace and stability. Conscious of the fact that sustainable development cannot be achieved in an atmosphere devoid of peace; ECOWAS leadership committed itself to promoting a lasting peace in the sub-region through a mechanism for collective security and peace. This commitment eventually led to the adoption of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and security.

The ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security marked a major milestone from

previous approach to security matters in the West African sub region. It signaled a remarkable departure in the Organization's approach to conflict management in the region. The most significant feature of the 1999 Protocol, in terms of intent, vision and objectives, is that it makes for a better understanding of regional security dynamics. The Protocol is fundamentally more encompassing, comprehensive, and arguably ambitious in its approach to conflict management.

The Protocol describes with great clarity and detail, the institutional mechanism and objectives of future ECOWAS interventions in tackling conflicts within the sub region. In outlining the objectives of the Mechanism, the Protocol also incorporates almost a decade of lessons and experiences in conflict management and resolution in the West African sub region. In terms of organizational structures, the Protocol accords the Authority of Heads of States and Government, the highest decision making powers. The MSC is mandated to take appropriate decisions for the implementation of the provisions of the Mechanism on behalf of the Authority. A Defense and Security Commission serves as the body to the MSC in the formulation of the mandate, and the terms of reference of peacekeeping forces.

The Protocol calls for the establishment of the ESF, modeled after ECOMOG. The 6,674 strong force is to be employed when there are breaches of the peace due to conflict between two or more member states; internal conflict likely to lead to a humanitarian disaster and threatening peace and security in the sub region; violations of human rights and rule of law; overthrow or attempted overthrow of elected governments; and other situations of concern to the MSC. The force is to comprise of a Task Force and a Main Brigade. The TF will be comprised of 1,646 soldiers in pre-determined units

located within member states, and upon order deploy into any mission within 30 days and be fully self-sustaining for 90 days. Should the situation warrant an increase in the size of the peacekeeping force, the TF will be reinforced by the MB, which will comprise 5,028 additional peacekeepers, which are located within pre-determined units, and upon order are prepared to deploy within 90 days and be fully self-sustaining for 90 days. The force will be sustained by a logistics depot located in Sierra Leone.

Despite this laudable arrangement, it remains questionable whether ECOWAS collective security objectives can be achieved. An examination of the Mechanism reveals serious challenges, which if not properly addressed, could deny ECOWAS the achievement of regional collective security. The Protocol gives room for ECOWAS to operate without the UN Security Council supervision and control. ECOWAS had allegedly conducted peace enforcement operations without the authorization of the UN Security Council in the past. There is the need for ECOWAS to act more responsibly in future operations by avoiding potential conflict with the UN, if it is to be taken seriously in the international community. Under the present arrangement, the MSC, having been mandated by the Authority to take on its behalf, appropriate decisions for the implementation of the provisions of the Mechanism, appears to be more powerful than the Authority. This represents an institutional challenge especially as the Protocol makes no provision for the Authority to override the decisions of the MSC, should there be disagreement between the two. There is a need to clearly spell out the powers and limitations of the institutions of the Mechanism to avoid potential conflicts in the future.

At present, ECOWAS financial capabilities fall far short of what the organization intends to achieve. ECOWAS collective security ambitions still depend, to a large extent,

on optimism, hope, and goodwill from member states, donors, and international organizations. As a way of ensuring funds are available for ESF operations, the new Mechanism provides for the establishment of a peace fund, into which member states would make regular contributions. There is a need for West African leaders to display greater political will, and make stronger financial commitments in order to actualize the full potentials of the sub-region's collective security mechanism. Presently, it is beyond the capacity of ECOWAS to procure new military equipment to meet ESF operational requirements. Member states need to meet their obligations by providing ESF with well equipped troops and serviceable equipments, while ECOWAS continue to seek the assistance of the international community for much needed equipments. The challenges associated with bringing together a multi-national force cannot be over-emphasized. The need for adequate training for the ESF is an important requirement, if the force is to operate successfully.

Recommendations

This study identified that ECOWAS established the ESF to meet the community's objective of regional collective security in the West African sub-region. The following are therefore, recommended to make ECOWAS overcome the challenges militating against its objective:

1. ECOWAS must demonstrate more willingness to abide by UN Security Council's regulations on peacekeeping, and peace enforcement operations.

2. ECOWAS must review the provisions of the Protocol, as regards the powers and limitations of the Authority and the MSC, to avoid confusion regarding the control of ESF.

3. ECOWAS member states must be more committed to funding ESF's operations.

4. ECOWAS member states must meet their obligations by providing ESF with well equipped troops and serviceable equipments.

5. ECOWAS must introduce a training and evaluation unit that would focus on training standardization and evaluation of all troops serving in the ESF.

Recommendations for Future Study

In recent years, Beijing has identified the African continent as an area of significant economic and strategic interest. Chinese government firms have invested billions of dollars in foreign exchange and have used Chinese engineering and construction resources on infrastructure for developing oil, gas, mineral, and other natural resources in dozens of African countries, including Algeria, Angola, Gabon, Nigeria, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. In April 2008, China and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish Markets in China and the ECOWAS Region that will enable their citizens to exploit trade and investment opportunities in their two areas. The markets would contribute to enhanced trade and investment activities between Chinese and ECOWAS business sectors, the first step towards promoting the ECOWAS-Chinese economic and trade cooperation envisioned under the proposed ECOWAS-China Economic and Trade Forum scheduled for September 2008.

African governments are regular buyers of Chinese weapons and military equipment. China recently reaffirmed its intention to strengthen military collaboration and exchanges with Nigeria, Liberia, and other African countries. In a bid to further its

escalating influence in Africa, it is highly probable that China will provide ECOWAS

with the much needed assistance by providing equipments, logistics support, and funding

for ESF operations. Some African leaders oppose the establishment of U.S. African

Command (AFRICOM) in Africa, on the basis that it negates Africa's collective security

arrangements, and rather request for direct funding of such existing security initiatives. In

the wake of China's continued challenges to America's interests in Africa, there is the

need for a further study on China's role and influence on Africa's collective security

arrangements.

APPENDIX A

ECOWAS REGION OF AFRICA

ECOWAS
Region of
Africa
(shaded area)
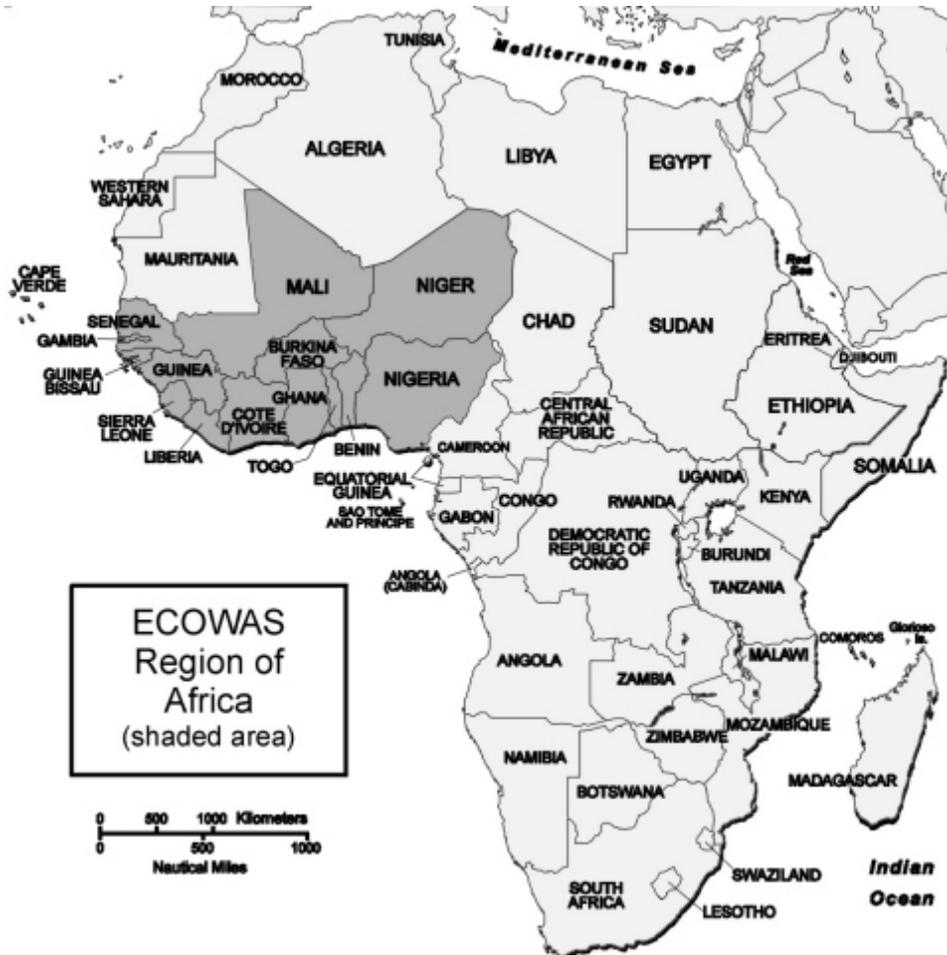
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