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TRANSITIONS FROM WAR TO PEACE: DILEMMAS OF MULTILATERAL INTERVENTION IN CIVIL WARS

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YARLI

PREFACE DEA

This paper examines the nexus between war and peace. It argues that war to peace transitions should not be seen as mechanistic processes which start at one point and end at another. Rather, to understand the dynamics and mechanics that characterise such processes, the paper argues that there are certain factors that should be examined in some detail.

First among these is the paper's argument that the root causes of conflicts must be understood to enable for the design of appropriate preventive strategies. Secondly, the nature of and dynamics characterising such conflicts must be understood in their proper context. Thirdly, the paper posits that the relationship between economic interests and violence should be understood to explain why peace is not and should not be seen necessarily, as a common good by all those involved in the violence. Finally, the paper posits that war to peace transitions should not see peace as a being part of a continuum starting from war-to-peace-to-development. The argument is that there is no such logical conclusions to war endings. What policy-makers should be more concerned about are the twists and turns of the processes that contribute to an eventual attainment of peace.

In the two cases that the paper examines-Liberia and Sierra Leone-the conclusions are clear. First, that in the Liberian case, peace would elude the country in so far as impunity was left unpunished. Secondly, that as a result of the enforced 'peace' through elections in 1997, none of the four major faction groups had been defeated. Thus the possibility of these groups taking up arms was highly probable Sierra Leone's example is not different, that is episodic violence would continue to define its war to peace transition eventually exploding to affect its neighbours.

Despite these dire conclusions, the study has shown the need for new and more proactive strategies that can contribute to resolving and preventing conflicts if the political will is present.

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Accra, March 2000

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INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the challenges and contradictions inherent in transition processes from war to peace and the possibilities for a regression into war. Transition is not applied to mean a movement from war to relief and development. Rather, I apply transitions to indicate the uncertain change from overt civil war to a condition of "temporary" non-belligerence. Such transitions do not necessarily assume a particular conclusion. Rather, they reflect the processes of crisis management to contain dangerous problems. The nature in which transitions can be ephemeral processes have been aptly captured by Joseph Rudolph's (1995:259) rather provocative conclusion that no successful military intervention has been recorded in an ongoing civil war.

The paper analyses West Africa's post-conflict transitional politics. It is situated within the context of the strategies initiated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its cease-fire monitoring group (ECOMOG) to elicit faction group compliance with its disarmament and demilitarisation strategies. As such, it deals with the challenges, contradictions and dilemmas inherent in the resolution of Liberia and Sierra Leone's wars between 1989-1997 and 1991-1999 respectively. Reviewing transitional processes in these states are suited within Boutros Boutros-Ghali's assertion in *An Agenda for Peace* of the need "to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:32). Such "support structures" encompass security sector reform processes whereby former combatants through disarmament and demilitarisation strategies are reintegrated into new national armies to solidify the peace.

I approach the analysis within a four-fold technique. First, the nature and distinctive features of these civil wars and the dynamics which fuelled them are discussed. The argument is that appreciating the distinctive characteristics of these wars contribute to understanding the difficulties faced by ECOWAS and its international partners. Second, ECOWAS's endeavours are placed within the changing and fluid context of international responses to civil wars in minor states. Third, a concrete analysis of ECOWAS's strategies in terms of disarmament, demilitarisation and re-integration of ex-combatants into integrated national armies. This involves the multi-agency effort to coordinate activities and combine available resources in the achievement of a common goal. Finally, I conclude by discussing the impact and lessons of ECOWAS's strategies in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

CIVIL WAR IN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE

Both conflicts were not war in any ordinary sense of the term, at least not in the Clausewitzean sense, that is a continuation of diplomacy by other means. Although observers of the West African scene were cognisant of a "crisis of the state" in both Liberia and Sierra Leone most were unprepared for the nature of civil wars in these countries. It was not so much that a violent conflict had to be dealt with. What characterised these wars was the new prominence demanded by and given to sub-state groups who acted and functioned as though they were recognised members of the international community. The actions of these actors and the nature of the crises have undermined perceptions of states as the only significant actors on the international scene. In fact, they have succeeded in introducing new practices into the conduct of armed conflicts. As a result, these sub-state warring factions have partially succeeded in effectively contesting some accepted archetypical conceptions of modern warfare.

The structure of both civil wars revolved around the perspectives and calculations of three major actors. First, was the relationship between faction groups and the incumbent governments. Secondly, in Liberia's case were the struggles among diverse factions, while the Revolutionary United Front (RUF/SL) experienced purges within its ranks, its structure remained basically intact. Thirdly, were the dynamics underlying the violent interrelationships among diverse factions and incumbent governments and then ECOWAS. Two mutually exclusive antagonistic dynamics were present. First for faction groups, their interests and calculations alternated around their ability to win political power while simultaneously exploiting natural resources. Secondly, the stakes in such conflicts are equally high for the incumbent government that seeks to maintain political control of the state, its resources and sovereign prerogatives. It is the argument of the paper that these become the critical factors underlying its position to maintain the coherence of the state. This was because it perceives its sovereign authority over its territory, population and legitimacy over the use of force to be challenged. For the specific purposes of this article, I discuss faction group interests and the synergist relationship among their political, military and economic calculations in some detail.

First, in the political and military calculations of factions, there was a realisation that a military defeat would result in both physical and political extermination. This is because once a faction group has attacked central authority and by extension the state, the contract that binds the domestic political fabric of the state and society has been breached. Therefore, by challenging government monopoly over the use of violence and sovereign authority, faction groups are isolated from protection under the law. They are forbidden and resisted not with the police but the army, and tried not under domestic criminal law, but under treason laws (Wesley, 1998). However, prior to the outbreak

of the insurgency, the use of treason trials had become a common form for eliminating opponents to military regimes in both states. Thus, one does not always have to commit an act of insurgency to be tried under treason laws. Unlike interstate wars, faction groups, in most cases do not have a previously recognised antebellum territory to which to withdraw. Since the consequences of defeat, capture, or surrender are extreme, the only logic is to fight to the end. Consequently, such wars are fought with particular brutality.

Secondly, economic opportunities provided by the civil war eventually attained an internal logic in both examples. They became an important independent variable for continuing the conflict, and undermined the prospects for peace. Over time, such economic calculations came to exert a decisive leverage on the pattern taken by the war. In both Sierra Leone and Liberia, diverse factions sabotaged efforts towards a transition from war to peace as they perceived such endeavours as representing a realignment of opportunistic political and military equations and a readjustment of economic tactics and interests that were not temporarily in their favour. ECOWAS's inability to appreciate the dynamics governing faction group perception of the war was based on;

- (i) its misunderstanding of the nature of the conflict, and
- (ii) the faulty premise that faction groups were "criminal elements", and thus could be "ordered" to comply with disarmament.

This was also partly based on the misunderstandings and misconceptions of the consequences of the political and economic uses of war, and the importance of the prize for which faction groups waged war. Such calculations, impacted on the conduct of the war, making its rationalise instrumental and opportunistic in the extreme.

Politically, Liberia's largest faction group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and its leader, Charles Taylor, manipulated and sustained different interest groups while concurrently tapping into their specific concerns and presenting the NPFL as capable of resolving their difficulties. There were multiple political, military and economic logics and advantages in using such a group. The primary reason was that as a faction group, there were no specific international rules and regulations governing its behaviour, and which its leader and members could be subjected. For example French diplomatic and economic support were obtained because the NPFL presented its struggle in Liberia as partly against suspected Nigerian hegemonic interests on the sub-region. Concurrently, large business firms domiciled in the European Union and with temporary bases in Côte d' Ivoire negotiated business deals without having to satisfy export controls and other demands.

Due to the relative success and innovativeness with which faction groups exploited natural resources and negotiated economic deals, there was a particularly opportunistic and instrumental edge to the manner in which these war were fought. These correlations are usually overlooked in the analysis of civil wars resulting in isolated emphasis on brutalities, and not as deliberate strategies to instil fear and control. For example, *The Economist* (London), was incapable of comprehending the dynamics fuelling the Liberian crisis and the NPFL's intransigence in complying with the demilitarisation components of the agreements it had signed. If therefore dismissed the "country's weird collapse" and declared that "Liberia's problems evade rational explanation" (21 November 1992). John Mackinlay concurred that the organisation was led by "unattractive and shadowy figures" (1998:24). *The Economist* again characterised the RUF in sundry manner as "one of Africa's nastiest and least coherent rebel movements". The

conflict was seen as a "...horrifyingly obscure war", while the RUF/SL was dismissed as "barely coherent" (January 9 1999:37). New African followed suit and also characterised the crisis in Sierra Leone as "a strange and savage war" (April, 1995:12). Bangura concurred, seeing the war as "senseless" (1997:218). However, this paper argues that different approaches need to be employed to appreciate the dynamics that fuelled these civil wars. One possible method is a rational choice analysis of the cost and benefits of waging war. The second is a discursive analysis of the uses and functions of violence. Such an approaches, I argue, demonstrate distinctive rationalities to the "irrational", "unattractive", "strange and savage" and "incoherent" actions of belligerent.

When the RUF invaded South-eastern Sierra Leone in March 1991, the political economy of the war and the development of other ancillary activities resulting from war-related enterprises had expanded to such an extent that it involved several thousands of people; both high and low profile and, could not easily be stopped. The resort to violence by different factions and their unwillingness to end the civil war correspondingly mirrored a rational choice analysis of the costs and benefits of continuing the war or gaining from an uncertain 'peace dividend'. With control over vast territories rich in natural resources. both the RUF and NPFL commenced the efficient and calculated exploitation of these abundant natural and mineral resources. From 1992, a lucrative export business based on diamonds, timber, iron ore and gold started with French, Belgian, Turkish, Malaysian and Taiwanese contacts. To circumvent ECOWAS's blockade on the ports of Buchanan, Harper and Greenville, products were shipped through the Ivorian port of San Pedro that was not affected by the same blockade as the Liberian ports of exits under NPFL control. Especially Ivorian intermediaries and their French counterparts negotiated directly with the NPFL war machine and succeed in bypassing the export controls

and restrictions that any such export through the embargoed ports would have brought. To John Chipman, "...Charles Taylor's control of most of the country has been credible enough that foreign companies have dealt directly with him" (1993:254; *West Africa*, 8-14 March 1993:369). It is partly within this context of the NPFL's presumed international 'credibility' that the difficulties faced by ECOWAS in eliciting compliance from the NPFL and other groups should be positioned.

Appreciating Taylor and Sankoh's negotiating and diplomatic tactics are important because they constituted part of the reasons that kept the conflict going for several years. Interrelated military, political and economic factors guided their negotiation positions. These interests were not static, but only responded to the specific stage and level of 'success' of their war. It was only when their positions were weakened either politically or militarily that both Taylor and Sankoh seemingly wished to comply. More often than not, negotiations were tactics manipulated as windows of opportunity either to rearm or to win new political allies. In the calculations of the RUF and NPFL, every new situation was evaluated in terms of the potential constraints and opportunities that it generated for the organisation. Strategies were subsequently either adjusted or initiated that advanced their interests and undermined that of ECOWAS. Of course NPFL and RUF intransigence became more entrenched as the conflict began to factionalise. This was partly so due to ECOMOG and the Tejan Kabbah government's deliberate establishment, support and provision of arms to new groups that specifically targeted the NPFL and the RUF (Ganabone, 1998:3). However, ECOWAS's inexperience in dealing with civil wars and faction groups also contributed to creating distinctive problems which reinforced the Liberian and Sierra Leone impasse. A generally overlooked fact is that eliciting compliance from non-state actors is operationally different from state actors since the element of sanctions is more difficult to apply. Part of ECOWAS= difficulties also arose from the fact that this was the first time it was undertaking such an activity.

THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO CIVIL WARS

These conflict dynamics were prevalent when ECOWAS and other international actors intervened in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. As early as 1990, there were discernible shifts in how the United Nations (UN) and its major supporters perceived their roles in civil wars. No interventions occurred if the status of civil wars in >minor= states and their potential threats to international security were judged inadequate to justify massive unilateral or multilateral response. Such widespread perceptions underpinned most post-Cold War approaches and responses to civil wars. Because of this narrow and simplified cost-benefit analysis of intervention, mostly espoused by the powerful members of the UN system, minor states like Liberia and Sierra Leone were not considered geo-strategic enough to vindicate the disbursement of material, political and moral costs of intervention and counterinsurgency by the international community.

ECOWAS, however, had another perspective. It perceived the civil conflict as presenting a concrete threat to the interests of its member-states and ruling regimes. These differences in perception resulted in ECOWAS's endeavours being denied initial international support. This was because the international community did not perceive threats from Liberia and Sierra Leone to the West African sub-region as threatening or undermining *international security*. As a response to this marginalisation, this normally fractious collection of states and regimes were virtually left alone to respond to a crisis they perceived as a threat to *their* conception and perception of international stability and security

(Interview, 18 July 1997 & 9 January 1998; West Africa, 26 November 1990). It was against this background that on 24 August 1990, ECOWAS initiated its historic intervention named >Operation Liberty= to resolve the civil war in Liberia.

By the time ECOWAS intervened in Liberia, it was a "forgotten country" (West Africa, 4-10 February 1991). Its conflict was seen as a "poor man's war" (Adebanjo, 1996) and "a forgotten war". Simply, the Liberian civil war had become the "world's forgotten emergency" (West Africa, 4-10 December 1995; National Concord, 4 September 1992:6). This conclusion arose from the fact that the international community refrained from showing an interest in Liberia because its "disintegration only minimally imperil[led] international security" (Helman & Ratner, 1992/3; African Recovery, June 1993; Michaels, 1993: 93-108). Stedman claimed that Asome civil wars are more threatening to international security than others. The war in the Balkans is a greater danger to international security than civil war in "Liberia" (1993:1-16). As a result, Tanner (1998:145) concluded that the lack of international interest showed Liberia's marginal importance globally and a measure of how little it was taken seriously.

ECOWAS's intervention, however, overcame the overriding international perception of Africa, and especially the sub-region's status as the cradle of "afro-pessimism" (Kaplan, 1994:44-76; Contact-The Magazine of ECOWAS, 1992:12-13) and "new nihilism" (Zack-Williams, 1998:10). It became the first sub-regional organisation to militarily intervene in a crisis that occurred within the ambit of its authority. As a result, these interventions contributed to the "Atricanisation of peacekeeping" and undermined the popular impression "that black African lives were of less value than white European ones" (Cleaver & May 1995: 485ff).

DISARMAMENT AND DEMILITARISATION PROCESSES IN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE

ECOWAS's interventions had two explicit strategies: disarmament and demilitarisation. First, disarmament components include arms embargoes and control, weapons buy-back programms, and the disarming of combatants and irregular forces. Second, demilitarisation schemes entailed reintegration of combatants into civilian life, formation of new national security forces, and the reassertion of civilian control over security forces.25

Dissarmament

In both instances, disarmament was related to the search for stability and implemented under the supervision of international peacekeepers and observers. In Liberia, disarmament process were undertaken by ECOMOG forces while the verification and monitoring of faction compliance were supervised by United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). ECOMOG in collaboration with United Nations Military Observers in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) are overseeing a similar process.

Arms Embargoes

Instituting arms embargo as a strategy to reduce weapons entering Liberia became an inherent part of ECOWAD's peace efforts from September 1990 when the port of Buchanan was blockaded. Inevitably, the controversies surrounding the appropriateness of this policy eventually resulted in the blockade being lifted. However, continued NPFL refusal to comply with the disarmament component of agreements and eace accord and the simultaneous proliferation of

factions increased the level of fighting. In June 1992 ECOWAS threatened to "impose comprehensive sanctions against Charles Taylor and NPFL controlled areas of Liberia, and any other party that failed to comply with the implementation of the programmes".26

Recognising its weakness in effectively sealing all entry points, especially the land borders, ECOWAS finally sought United Nations Security Council (UNSC) support. At ECOWAS's initiative the UNSC convened on the 19 November 1992 to consider the Liberia conflict. The deliberations resulted in Resolution 788 which imposed an arms embargo on Liberia. All violations of the embargo were brought before a Council Committee established to monitor its implementation and consider any such violations reported to its members. Despite this concerted effort, there were indications of improper enforcement. Eventually, the UN established the United Nations Observer Mission to Liberia (UNOMIL) in 1993 to oversee warlord compliance with disarmament components of peace agreements.

Faction groups continued to purchase weapons in contravention of the embargo by using unconventional suppliers. By turning to non-state commercial suppliers, weapons could be obtained in exchange for exploiting and utilising natural resources in the areas under the control of specific faction groups. Indeed, it is questionable whether an effective embargo could have reduced the ability of factions to obtain weapons from their sub-region allies. The vibrant war economies straddling the Liberian borders with its contiguous states created easy markets for the acquisition of 'cheap' weapons. This not only undermined effective disarmament, but also endangered the security of especially UNOMIL officers who were unarmed.

· 2 Weapons Buy Back Programmes evel and beasenon anoilos?

There was a close correlation between the level of insecurity and mistrust among faction groups and the quantity and quality of weapons delivered to ECOWAS. What explains this fact was the lack of clear confidence-building measures and an apparent lack of progress in peace negotiations. To accomplish any modicum of success, a new and more flexible strategy had to be adopted. The result was an informal and partial introduction of a weapons buy back scheme by IGNU in September 1992, which was an economic incentive scheme to encourage faction participation in the disarmament programmes. Accordingly, a "cash-for-arms" programme, whereby disarmed soldiers were given cash rewards, small scale business loans and job training schemes to provide alternative possibilities for post-combative activities was introduced.28 According to Amos Sawyer, the critical factor was the reintroduction of combatants who had been living a life of violence and crime to productive ventures and alternative modes of useful contribution to societal development.29

Taking into consideration that almost 25% of all combatants were children, there was a need to disarm and quickly reintegrate such young people into productive ventures. A study of child soldiers in Liberia showed that during the demilitarisation and demobilisation phases, some child soldiers became "stranded in the capital without family or community support" Despite the cash-for-arms programme, subsequent agreements did not have specific stipulations concerning child soldier. As a result the incentive to demobilise was minimal although child soldiers formed sizeable groups in both cases. While 25% of all Liberian combatants were children, in Sierra Leone, the government estimates 12% of the 45,000 combatants to be demobilised were children. Controversy, however, surrounds the

effectiveness of weapons buy back Programmes and cash-for-land deals. According to a world Bank study.

Weapons-buy-back programmes have had limited medium-term impact in reducing the number of weapons circulating in countries which have:

- (i) porous borders with countries with active weapon markets;
- (2) lack of capacity to enforce regulations on the open carrying and criminal use of weapons;
- (3) apolitical, economic or security climate which enhances the security and economic value of owing and using weapon.³²

Until the Cotonou accord in 1993, none of the earlier agreements had made an issue of the disarming of private and irregular units characterised as "non-combatants". This term is difficult to differentiate from the non-private/non irregular forces involved in the conflict and Cotonou did not clarify how such differentiation could be made and their disarming carried out. Furthermore, one critical peculiarity of this civil war was the disdain that all involved combatants under their control because of the lack of permanent allegiance and alliance to the faction. Effective differentiation between supposedly private and irregular units was therefore difficult under such chaotic conditions. This was more so because of the inability of the facilitators to define the types of weapons they were looking for. ECOMOG/UNOMIL were expected to disarm all people "in possession of weapons and warlike materials" 35.

Under the Cotonou Accord, after due registration, licensing and certification, weapons were returned to their owners. This process

created difficulties since this was not a regular war with known insignias and codes. Supposed noncombatants could go through the registration, licensing and certification process and still be actively engaged in conflict. The low level of disarmament and the increasing suspicion about the status of fighters resulted from the difficulty of differentiating between combatants and non-combatants and required further clarification under the Akosombo supplement accord. This sought to improve the ability of ECOMOG and UNOMIL to drastically reduce the quantity of weapons in circulation. Whatever outcome this clarification had on the level of disarmament is questionable as the Akosombo Accord was engulfed in controversy among the different factions and had to be clarified at Accra.36 Compliance with disarmament initiatives was still not successful partly because weapons had come to attain both a security and economic value. For most of the fighters, economic incentives, called "value" and loot had become the primary motives for fighting.³⁷

Disarming Combatants of Serving non-ent months tenth to the conflict and Cotonou did not clarify how such differentiation could be

Disarming factions groups became a component of most agreements and accords signed during the course of this conflict. However, no specific programmes were set up for the post-disarmament and demobilisation stages. The Cotonou accord sought to rectify this oversight buy linking demobilisation to "retraining, rehabilitation and re-absorption of all former combatants to normal social and community life: 38 To improve the prospects of combatant re-absorption into community social life, educational and community programmes were initiated. 39 ECOWAS's strategy was that combatants had to hand in weapons upon registration at designated assembly points before qualifying to receive their benefits. With the exception of minor cases, the disarmament of combatants was voluntary. There were, however,

cidents where coercive strategy had to be used to elicit co-operation th disarmament teams.⁴⁰

utual suspicion among faction groups contributed to non-compliance th disarmament components amid acrimonious accusations of plations. The outbreak of urban violence on April 6 1999 and 9 muary 1999 demonstrated in Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively, one of the warning factions were fully committed to disarmament. sarmament also meant that the economic security and livelihood of any combatants would be undermined and in some cases totally oded. According to a former ECOMOG commander, T. M. Shelphidi, some of the warlords and their cohorts ... surrender(ed) some of eir arsenals and hide others for possible resumption of hostilities in se their hopes and desires are flouted¹⁴¹.

both cases, several overlapping dilemmas contributed to making ction group compliance with disarmament components of reements an agonising and arduous process:

political uncertainty;

- logistical difficulties;
-) humanitarian crises:
- security issues;
 problems with child soldiers; and
-) economic issues.

reements changed, however, under the Abuja Extension Agreement Abuja II in August 1996, which marked a major departure from evious agreements on the question of disarmament and election. ter seven years of non-compliance, Abuja II strategically shifted

responsibility for the success of the disarmament process entirely to the faction leaders. For the first time, faction leaders, were held responsible for the non-compliance of their combatants. Abuja II also stipulated deadlines and imposed penalties for non-compliance. Introducing this pro-active approach signalled to all faction leaders the prelude of a more interventionist and robust role for ECOMOG and UNOMIL in guaranteeing the disarmament component of Abuja II.

Abuja II also changed implementation delays by introducing a stringent sanctions regime, which included: travel and residence restrictions. freezing business activities and assets of leading faction leaders in Ecowas states, exclusion from participation in the electoral process. restrictions on the uses of ECOWAS airspace and territorial waters. explosion of faction leaders and members of their families from ECOWAS states, request to the United Nations security Council to impose visa and import restrictions, and finally invoke the OAU summit resolution, which calls for the establishment of a war crimes tribunal to adjudge all human rights offences 42. According to T. M. Shelpedi, this contributed in a "large extent to successful disarmament in the Liberian peace process. 43 Despite Shelpedi's positive assessment doubts, however, persisted concerning whether faction groups had withheld troops and weapons as a tactic for future use. Uncertainties also remained as to whether the numbers of combatants to be demobilised were fully accounted for. The impression was that a sizeable number of combatants had crossed the borders into areas where they were assured of sympathetic support. NPFL combatants were generally thought to have entered Sierra Leone where their 'revolutionary' compatriots, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), still controlled the countryside, and were simultaneously junior partners in a much maligned military regime. ULIMO-K deployed some of its best and battle-hardened combatants to Guinea, while ULIMO-J, Liberia

Peace Council (LPC) and Lofa Defence Force (LDF) sent their troops among the predominantly Yakuba ethnic group along the Liberian-Cote d'Ivoire border. 44 Also, the weapons which were not collected, stored and/or destroyed during ECOMOG/UNOMIL operations did not stay in Liberia alone. Rather, they were ploughed back into the sub-region, and added to the proliferation of weapons in neighbouring countries like Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Guinea where there are ready markets and insatiable demands for small arms by diverse sub-state actors to fuel their conflicts with central authorities and criminal activities. 45

The lessons learnt from the Liberian experience have been applied in Sierra Leone. First, the UN Envoy to the country, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, in a meeting with faction leaders has stated the UN's determination to apply force against groups that undermine the peace accord. In sharp contradistinction to the *ad hocism* that characterised the Liberian process, Ambassador Adeniji's, similarly instruction made faction leaders responsible for the non-compliance of their leaders.46 Sympathetic as one can be to Adanige's concerns, the dynamics of comtemporary civil wars that were raised earlier does not seem to have been taken into consideration. It is doubtful the extent to which the RUF, Kamajors or the CDF is in control of its combatants.

DEMILIARISATION

According to Susan Willet, demilitarisation is an;

all-encompassing concept, which attempts to deconstruct the ideological and institutional structures of militarism and reassert civil control over the organs of the state and over the economy. It implies the search for a new normative framework for conceptualising and implementing security at both a national and regional context¹⁷.

In the following discussion, I examine the extent to which the peace agreements which introduced negotiated settlements have inaugurated a new normative framework for national security. This will be situated within the context of the reintegration of combatants into new and integrated national armed forces. Implicitly, this will also affect the regional context within which conflicts are taking place.

Liberia and Sierra Leone's demobilisation and reintegration of excombatants into integrated national armies have been particularly problematic. While estimates of combatants to be demobilised ranged between 60,000 and 45,000 combatants respectively for Liberia and Sierra Leone, the demobilisation phase has shown much smaller figures. This can be interpreted in two ways. First, either all groups have decided to retain some of their weapons and fighters and to await the outcome of the peace process and what their groups can possibly attain from a peacwe dividend. Second, since the costs related to these processes are borne by the international community, retaining the best fighters can be used as a bargaining chip to attain more resources and aid.

Certain specificities characterised both processes. Liberia's negotiated settlement followed by elections occured through an ECOWAS-brokered transition from war to peace. The process was distinguished by four mutually reinforcing factors. First, by January 1997, there were four main factions involved in the conflict, none of which won a decisive victory and none was completely disarmed and demobilised. Second, the elections declared free and fair were won by a leader of only one of the warring factions. Thirdly, the elected

government, claiming the prerogatives of sovereignty defied agreements signed with ECOWAS concerning security and the reorganisation of Liberia's security forces. Fourthly, there is the fear of the manipulation of earlier NPFL combatants into the new security forces. Sierra Leone's example is not different in the sense that while the national army was extremely weak, several other militias like the Civil Defence Force (CDF) and the popular traditional hunters guild, Kamajors and the RUF signed the Lome Agreement with their forces intact.

· Weapons Destruction

Weapons destruction as a component of the disarmament programmes was first introduced under the Lome agreement in 1991. Under the modalities for monitoring the implementation of the cease-fire agreement by ECOMOG, most of the weapons delivered for destruction were unserviceable. During the post-Lome disarmament period, ecomog soldiers reported NPFL troops delivering weapons that were inoperative. After the initial registration, most of them were destroyed.48 Such instances were so frequent that prior to the completion of the process, depending on the quality of the weapon presented, they were not counted as weapons but was simply destroyed.

The rationale behind weapons collection was for their later transfer to a reconstituted AFL. Nevertheless, the frequency with which unserviceable weapons were delivered made the scheme unviable. During the disarmament scheme, many weapons were obviously hidden or lest undeclared. Though ECOMOG and UNOMIL had suspicions about this, it was not until the April 6, 1996 crisis in Monrovia that the level of noncompliance and undeclared weapons could be

detected. still, faction leaders refained from declaring their caches in their private homes. In the aftermath of April 6, the NPFL withdrew only to Kakata while ULIMO-J and LPC argued that their bases in Tubmanburg, Tode, Kakata and Bong Mines were insecure. As the table below indicates that one in four of all weapons relinquished were unserviceable by the time the conflict ended. The executive Secretariat of the National Committee, which is the official organ established to oversee the disarmament, demobilisation and Reintegratin (DDR) scheme in the Sierra Leone stated that by January 2000, only 3,183 of the expected 45,000 weapons had been delivered. However, by mid-April 2000, an explosive increase in disarmament had taken place. According to this committee 23,009 combatants have been disarmed comprising 4,373 RUF, 7,698 CDF, %,671 Armed Forces Revolutionary Council/Ex-Sierra Leone Army, 3,804 current Sierra Leone Army troops and 1,463 other combatants had demobilised. So

Table 1: Weapons Relinquished by Liberian Factions as of 26.1.9751

Faction	Serviceable	Unserviceable	
NPFL	3100	10u2 8hb 777	
ULIMO	733	198	
AFL	203	33	
ULIMO-J	197	69	
LPC	136 O 2000 SAV	bolitad elene 20	
LDF	59	BA bataliance 610s	
TOTAL	4428	1103	

Source: 21st progress Report of the Secretary General on UNOMIL, S/1997/90 including pistols, revolvers, sub-machine guns, grenades, small arms, mines, artillery shells

Table 2 : Breakdown of deisarmament by Liberian Factions as of 26.1.97

Faction	Original Strength	Revised Strength	Disarmed	con%notic
NPFL	25,000	12,500	6,770	54.16
ULIMO-K	12,460	6,800	3,507	51.57
AFL BASE	8,734	7,000	484	06.91
ULIMO-J	7,776	3,800	920	24.21
LPC See	4,650	2,500	656	26.24
LDF - 9012	750	1 100 400 215	173 918	43.25
TOTAL	59,370	33,000	12,510	37.90

Source: 21st progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOMIL, S/1997/90

DEMOBILISING AND REINTEGRATION OF COMBATANTS

Demobilisation has been characterised as the "formal disbanding of military formations and, at the individual level, as the process of releasing combatants from a mobilised state". Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of Liberian combatants date from the lome 1991 agreement. It stipulated the following procedures: the cantonment and disbanding of regular combat units; the disbanding of irregular units; the re-integration of ex-combatants into civilian life. These determine that combatants require schooling or vocational training, provision of relief materials, medical services and food, and finally arrange transportation of combatants to their places of residence⁵³. the Cotonou agreement and subsequent accords included stipulations for reintegrating combatants into new national security appatatus. However, this security sector reform process was

left unresolved until a post-election government had been installed whereupon the process would be undertaken jointly with ECOMOG.

In conjunction with ECOMOG and UNOMIL, the UN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (UN-HACO) introduced a two-tiered demobilistion programme. Stage I started in the immediate post-disarmament period. Combatants were then registered, interviewed and received counselling and medical examination. Stage II began immediately hereafter by determining those without livelihood and who needed to be absorded into so-called "bridging activities". This involved work and training projects to ensure productive engagement in the immediate post-conflict situation. This "bridging" or "stop-gap" activity sought to close the schism between the immediate post-disarmmament phase and the longer-term re-integration programme which constituted a third stage (Twentieth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOMIL).

Congnisant of the differential strength of faction groups, it is incomprehensible that Abuja II did not insist on the creation of a new AFL but suspended this sensitive and intricate affair until the post-elections phase. This is because the correlation of forces in Liberia indicated that the NPFL stood a greater chance of winning any election. Aware of Taylor's sensitivity to issue of state sovereignty, ECOWAS and ECOMOG had potentially created the basis for confrontation between a post-conflict NPFL government and ECOMOG. Arguments that atrocities committed by the NPFL would count against it in any election overlooked critical intelligence information by Baffour Anokomah:

Taylor was very popular in the 99 per cent of Liberia under his government, except in Monrovia where nine out of ten people hated him. Election in

November 1992, as proposed by the joint electoral commission suited him. Taylor would have swept the board if what I saw, travelling round Liberia, was any guide. 54

Several factors, however, explain the eventual victory of the NPFL in the 1997 election. People questioned in Liberia expressed fear of the unknown, of what Taylor might instruct his combatants to do. Ignorance and traditional fetish rituals under which impoverished people in the provinces were given basic commodities and made to swear allegiance to a local fetish to vote for the NPFL. According to Peter Batchelor:

The rationale for implementing a demobilisation and reintegration programme for ex-combatants during a peace support operation is that such a programme can defuse tensions between parties, thereby helping to achieve the effective disarming of warring parties and reducing the possibility of parties trying to uses military means for political purposes ... (Such processes) provides a relatively stable environment ...⁵⁵

Bachelor's argument that demobilisation can and should be seen as a common and collective public good by all combatants and faction groups is faulty. It overlooks some of the potential problems that arise during post-conflict demobilisation phases. In both cases, several overlapping dilemmas contributed to making these processes agonising and arduous:

 political problems: suspicion and mistrust among factional leaders and cross alliances hampered efforts at demobilisation. Throughout the demobilisation phases of the diverse agreements, faction groups were reluctant to demobilise until their opponents had taken a verifiable first lead. This lack of confidence and inability to reconcile the diverse interests of conflicting parties did not enhance the general security atmosphere. Delays in the demobilisation and reintegration of the 45,000 and 60,000 troops have resulted from mistrust, lack of commitment and, in some instances, open hostility between and among various parties and other armed groups. These have been and continue to be the principal reasons for the slow pace of disarmament. however, a combination of confidence-building measures could have improved the situation.

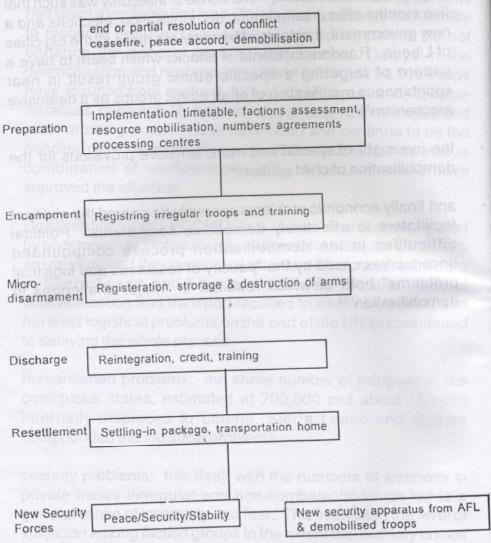
- logistical difficulties: ECOMOG's activities have been hampered by poor logistics. Unfortunately, neither UNAMSIL nor UNOMIL's arrival improved the operational situation: the poor infrastructure in Sierra Leone and Liberia; insufficient facilities; lack of communication and transport facilities to assembly points; and not least logistical problems on the part of the UN all contributed to delaying the whole process.
- humanitarian problems: the sheer number of refugees in the contiguous states, estimated at 700,000 and about 150,000 internally displaced in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea compounded the logistical problems.
- security problems: this dealt with the numbers of weapons in private hands 9irregular and non-combatants) which led to a general sense of insecurity and fear. This intensified the level of suspicion among faction groups to the extent that ordinary crimes were at times seen as security threats and lapses in ECQMOG,

UNAMSIL and UNOMIL's ability to create a conducive atmsphere for demobilisation. Occasionally, such actions resulted in heightened faction activity. The sense of insecurity was such that five months after disarmament, demobilisation, elections and a new government, incidents of banditry are rife in all the big cities of Liberia. Random incidents of attacks which seem to have a pattern of targeting a specific ethnic group result in near spontaneous mobilisation of other ethnic groups as a defensive mechanism⁵⁶.

- the oversight of special and more sensitive provisions for the demobilisation of child soldiers⁵⁷.
- and finally economic problems seriously hampered the ability of facilitators to effectively demobilise combatants. Political difficulties in the demobilisation process compounded uncertainties cased by the "paucity of resources and logistical problems" both of which resulted in "major challenges in demobilisation"⁵⁸

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Figure 1 ECOWAS's Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Process



All these problems compounded the disarmament and demobilisation schemes. Until the Cotonou Accord of 1993, not a single Liberian combatant had been demobilised. Extensive preparations for demobilisation resulted in the deployment of UNOMIL and ECOMOG into twenty-seven team sites and four regional headquarters around the country with three demobilisation centes for each of the warring factions. With this extensive arangement it was hoped that the disarmament and demobilisation of the 60,000 soldiers would be completed within two months. The optimism engendered by Cotonou was not fulfilled as the demobilisation process was suspended three months after its initiation due to the myriad problems listed above. In spite of Abuja II's weaknesses, it mitigated implementation delays by introducing a stringent sanctions regime. ECOMOG and UNOMIL felt that disarmament had been sufficiently successful for general elections to be held, although doubt persisted that all faction groups had withheld troops and weapons as a tactic to deal with post-election crises. However, uncertainties remaind whether the number of combatants to be demobilised were fully accounted for.

The decision by the framers of Abuja II to postpone restructuring the AFL army until the inauguration of a new government placed this delicate and complicated duty in the hands of bothsECOMOG and the new administration. Because of this insertion, there are disparities in information as to what perentage of the new army should be formed by combatants and in what proportions. Such complex technicl issues were not resolved by Abuja II. However, despite this oversight, the Cotonou agreement acquiesced on the need for programmes comprising the retraining, rehabilitation and reintegration of combatants into normal community and social life⁵⁹.

we are fully comitted to the welfare of and equal opportunity for all excombatants - whether you are healthy, traumatised, disabled or

otherwise disarmed and demobilised. I am not an NPFL president. I am president for ULIMO, LPC, AFL, LDF, and every ex-combatant who participated in the war. we are duty bound to seek your welfare, for you did not risk your lives for the NPFL, ULIMO, LPC, LDF or AFL. You risked your lives for the Republic of Liberia, and the Republic of Liberia owes you at least a decent opportunity to enable you to live up to your greatest potential, nd your greatest potential you shall achieve under our administation⁶⁰.

There are problems and difficulties with Taylor's positive inaugural statement. First, no specific assistance programmes were presented by the President during this address. Second, promises were given at a time when the Liberian economy had virtually collapsed or was at best stagnant and the state was not in a position to provide the requisite facilities for rewconstruction. Despite Taylor's promises, the restructuring process was delayed until February 2000. According to the President, a Restructuring Commission of the Armed Forces of Liberia had finally been allocated USD I million needed for the processes of re-documenting and adjusting the size of the army in keeping with its plan⁶¹. The retraining of the new army is scheduled to commence in May 2000.

Studies from states that have undergone similar experiences in (Nicaragua, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Mozambique) reveal that the provision of severance pay and targetted programmes frequently defer having to tackle the real challenges of post-conflict re-integration dilemmas. re-integrating combats from different faction groups into a new and integrated AFL has been problematic. Calculations of faction interests and deeply ingrained suspicion after seven years of warfare have virtually stalled the process. Taylor's government, uncertain of ECOMOG's role in the reintegration scheme and uncomfortable with the presence of ECOMOG commander, Victor Malu, now Chief of Army

Staff in Nigeria asserted his sovereign authority as president to determine the pace and selection of combatants. Under the Abuja II stipulations, ECOMOG was to remain in Liberia for a period of six months. However, Taylor undermined the AFL by splitting it into factions with some parts acting as a sort of Presidential Guard. Contoversies have arisen concerning the mathematics of what percentage should come from different faction groups into the new national army.

The only programme of interst that sought to fulfil the reintegration aspects of Abuja II was initiated by various international organisations. For example the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Humanitarian Coordination Office in Liberia and the UNICEF initiated 'quick impact' projects to bridge the gap between demobilisation and implementation of the long-term reintegration programmes.

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CONCLUSION sosso and assonstance in the conclusion of the conclusi

In spite of the initial problems faced by ECOWAS in getting sub-state actors to comply with its demands, its eventual crisis management resulted in the disarming and demobilisation of combatants and is a reflection of regime strength and consolidation. This paper has attempted to analyse thematicall and chronologically ECOWAS's disarmament and demilitarisation endeavours in Liberia and Sierra Leoneand the subsequent crisis management as a test of regime strength, effectiveness and consolidation. Despite the initial weaknesses and difficulties of the co-operation between ECOMOG, UNAMSIL and UNOMIL, their institutional handicaps were overcome and almost a third of all combatants were disarmed.

A partial conclusion is that limited and unfinished disarmament initiatives can have extremely destablising consequences not only on

Liberia and Sierra Leone but on the sub-region as a whole. Earlier, a critique was presented of the unwillingness of ECOWAS and its international partners to make the re-establishment of a new and hopefully politically neutral security force a prerequisite of Abuja II, Abidjan and Lome accords before elections. This omission has given the new government the option of infiltrating any such security apparatus with its own earlier combatants in gratitude for their contributions during the war.

The potential effects of any such action are two: First, it can undermine the re-democratisation processes in both states if and when ethnic groups and faction leaders feel threatened enough to seek redress or security in new mobilisation. Second, the nature of support patterns extended by sub-regional states to diverse faction groups during the civil conflict can begin to regroup. already, there are disturbing signs that such reconfigurations are beginning to form in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Under such circumstances, the peace and reconciliation processes that were expected to be the end result of disarmament and demobilisation components, will particularly exposed to changees in fluid local allegiances.

The question of security impacted on the suspended reconstruction programme in ways that ECOWAS's leaders had not anticipated. The major reasons should be sought in understanding the ECOWAS-brokered transition from war to peace and the potential for a retrogressive process from peace to war in Liberia. Several problems resulted in the non-implementation of disarmament components of peace agreements which were specific to the political, military and strategic consideratins of faction groups in the post-signatory stage and contributed to undermining multilateral efforts at chieving compliance. Apart from the nature of the conflict, other factors included inadequate funding and logistic and coordination problems. These

factors contributed to institutional dysfunctionality which undermined the ability of ECOWAS and its international partners to elicit compliance. They delayed because of the lack of adequate planning, and reliable and accurate information about the disarmament process, most especially the number of combatants and the quality and quantity of weapons in circulation that were to be collected. ECOWAS had no real understanding of the Liberian and Sierra Leone local scenes. This compounded the already intricate nexus between the dynamics of both conflicts and the domestic politics of sub-regional countries. Compounding the difficulties of carrying out disarmament was the lack of focus between multilateral organisations concerning the specific modalities, schedule and procedures of the disarmament components of their missions.

Other factors also influenced the effectiveness of ECOWAS's disarmament activities in Liberia and Sierra Leone. First, peace agreements were signed within the context of a civil war. Secondly, the protracted character of both wars created an alternative war economy inside both states and along their contiguous borders and acquired an economic and security "value" for those who possessed them. Weapons had simply become a form of security and currency. ECOWAS's endeavour to disarm and demobilise factional combatants should be seen within the context of the presence of arms and ammunition, especially small arms and light weapons. This generated specific hazards and threats for the demobilisation of troops and their reintegration into civilian life.

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- 50. Figures from the National committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration as of April 20, 2000.
- 51. According to final figures presented by UN-HACO and UNOMIL, ECOMOG collected a total of 9,579 weapons. Of these, 7,797 (81.4%) were serviceable. 1,782 (18.6%) were unserviceable. The NPFL accounted for 58% of the demobilised combatants and 68% all delivered weapons. ULIMO-K accounted for 6% of the combatants and 17% of the delivered weapons.
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- 53. See Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and Peaceful Settlement on Conflict, signed, 13th February, 1991 and Joint Declaration on the Liberian Situation, signed 1st March 1991. Journal of ECOWAS, vol. 21, 1992, pp. 16 21.
- 54. New African, September 1993, p. 6; Tanner, 1998, op cit., p. 137.
- 55. Batchelor, 1996, pp. 78 79.
- 56. During my field trip to Monrovia in December 1997, a robbery involving the death of a Mandingo money changer was not interpreted as a common criminal act, but as the targeting of a specific ethnic/regious group. within minutes of the attack, the story had spread in central Monrovia that Mandingoes were being attacked. it took the diplomacy of Sheikh Kafumba and

other personalities to calm the situation. I was at a meeting with Amos Sawyer and Sheihk Kafumba Konneh when this incident occured and had the chance of witnessing the diplomatic skill of these men in diffusing a sensitive and potentially explosive incident.

- 57. Wessells, 1997, op cit., p. 37.
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