

Synergies of Regional and UN Interventions

The ECOWAS Mission in Liberia and the Protection of Civilians

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“A considerable number of regional and sub-regional organisations are now active around the world, making important contributions to the stability and prosperity of their members, as well as of the broader international system. The United Nations and regional organisations should play complementary roles in facing the challenges to international peace and security.” – Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General

INTRODUCTION

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been involved in Liberia since August 1990, when the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring and Observer Group (ECOMOG) was deployed to enforce the peace after the outbreak of violent civil conflict in that country in 1989. Even though the ECOMOG troops were withdrawn in November 1998 after the elections of that year, ECOWAS remained politically engaged in Liberia. Unfortunately, largely as a result of Taylor’s intransigent politics of exclusion, the peace in Liberia was short-lived as two rebel groups – Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) – emerged at the end of 1999 and 2002 respectively to fight against what they viewed as Taylor’s politics of exclusion and tyranny.

In the light of the rebel groups’ vow to overthrow the government of Charles Taylor, several attempts by civil society organisations to promote dialogue and resolve the differences between the government and the rebel groups failed. Despite an early regional and international

engagement with the warring factions, the rebel groups succeeded in gaining control over two thirds of the country by early May 2003, with the LURD rebels threatening to seize Monrovia.

The rebels' capture of Bushrod Island and the occupation of the Freeport of Monrovia by the LURD rebels escalated the new cycle of violence, aggravating the already precarious humanitarian situation in Liberia. Bushrod Island is the hub of economic activity in Liberia, while Freeport controls almost all the import of humanitarian aid. By occupying the port, LURD was able to deny humanitarian access to the warehouses of humanitarian agencies, as well as prevent the docking of ships with humanitarian supplies. The situation was exacerbated by rampant looting of humanitarian aid from the warehouses by LURD rebels. In addition, the only fuel storage depot in Liberia, which is owned by the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company, is located on Bushrod Island. LURD occupation of the island and its siege of central Monrovia therefore amounted to a stranglehold on the lifeline of the needy population, particularly those sheltering in Monrovia. The consequences of the siege were catastrophic and engendered general starvation in Monrovia, especially in the refugee and displaced persons camps.

Armed with the lessons of its interventions in the Liberian conflict in the 1990s, and in the face of the humanitarian crisis precipitated by the upsurge in fighting, ECOWAS decided to deploy the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) in August 2003. The deployment of ECOMIL was preceded by the signing of the Agreement on Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities (ACCH) on 17 June, which was subsequently followed by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 18 August 2003. Whereas the three major warring parties signed the ACCH, the CPA was signed by a broad spectrum of Liberian stakeholders ranging from political parties to civil society organisations. Subsequently the UN consolidated the ECOMIL intervention with the deployment of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The larger UN mission was to carry out the more complex tasks of a multidimensional peace support operation such as disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration, and the restoration of civil authority. To date, UNMIL has succeeded in large measure in restoring peace and stability to Liberia.

Informed by the ease with which Liberia relapsed into war, this chapter provides a synopsis of the course of the regional intervention, as well as its dynamics. It highlights the challenges that ECOWAS was faced with in gaining a political entry and the significance of the timely deployment of the regional force, its best practices and lessons learned. The chapter

concludes that while the lasting legacy of the interventions will probably be the synergy between the regional and UN peace operations, there are outstanding gaps in ECOMIL's peace operations that need to be addressed in order to improve on future deployments. We therefore contend that not only is it crucial to ensure that UNMIL builds on ECOMIL's earlier achievements, but that regional mechanisms should be put in place to maintain an ECOWAS presence after the withdrawal of UNMIL. Such a presence would minimise the chances of a relapse to violence, reminiscent of the relapse that accompanied ECOMOG's untimely withdrawal in 1998. It would also ensure a continued international and regional engagement long after the peacekeepers have returned to their home countries.

JUST CAUSE OR MILITARY ADVENTURISM?

Whether conflict is a good thing or not may be subject to debate. However, one could argue that in the absence of military pressure from the rebel groups, no amount of dialogue would have caused a significant change in the style and governance of Taylor to accommodate Liberia's political opposition and civil society organisations, so that they could pursue their political objectives without intimidation or fear of persecution. Thus, war not only remains a social activity of human beings but sometimes also becomes necessary – the only means – to change the status quo, subject to the theory of the just war – *jus ad bellum* – that:

“The principles of the justice of war are commonly held to be: having just cause, being declared by a proper authority, possessing right intention, having a reasonable chance of success, and the end being proportional to the means used.”²

One may argue that in the process, given the nature of post-Cold War intra-state conflicts, particularly in West Africa's Mano River Union area, the reckless impunity with which warlords prosecuted their war aims has engendered a great deal of human suffering, not only in the conflict country, but also in the region. In this context, one might ask whether the second Liberian war in the 2000s was unavoidably necessary. Part of the answer can be gauged from Taylor's misrule and political repression. In addition to closing the space for multi-party democracy in Liberia, Taylor had succeeded in sending the political opposition into exile. After dismissing ECOMOG in 1998, he had embarked on a deliberate

policy of 'reforming' Liberia's security sector by multiplying the number of security forces, which were then saturated with his 'own men and women'. In these circumstances, one could ask whether Taylor would have abdicated without war.

It was therefore with a view to addressing the emerging political quagmire and averting a bloodbath that an International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL)³ was established on 17 September 2002. The ICGL was tasked with the responsibility of embarking on preventive diplomacy, with the sole aim of averting war and salvaging what was left of the ECOWAS peace process of the 1990s, as well as redeeming the questionable role of the international community in the conflict. The outbreak of Liberia's second war leaves one with no option but to ask whether the ICGL failed in its mandate. Perhaps it could not succeed in its political intervention, given Taylor's intransigence, coupled with the determination of his political opponents, who at this stage saw the military option as their best choice. In reality the rebels only re-ignited the first war, which had not ended in the true sense of the word, even after former president Taylor's ascendancy to head of state after winning the elections of 1997. Taylor's iron fist rule, in spite of being a 'democratically' elected president, forced surviving members of the political opposition into exile, setting the stage for the resumption of hostilities.

In spite of persistent violations of the ACCH by all sides, on 2 July 2003 ECOWAS heads of state and government decided on the deployment of a vanguard force to Liberia to stabilise the security situation and facilitate the handover of power by President Charles Taylor. Subsequently, at its extraordinary summit meeting in Accra on 31 July 2003, the ECOWAS Summit decided on 4 August 2003 as the D-Day for the deployment.⁴ At the opening ceremony of the Accra Peace conference, President Charles Taylor offered to resign in the interest of peace, even though it was to take a little longer and with more military pressure from the rebels to achieve his abdication. Thus, given Taylor's foot-dragging, the Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (ACCH) of 17 June 2003 was subsequently broken when LURD forces captured Bushrod Island and made several attempts to gain a foothold in central Monrovia.

The escalation of the conflict that had been going on since 2002 meant that efforts at preventive diplomacy had not achieved their desired results and prompted a regional 'response' with UN and international community support. The ECOWAS decision therefore accorded with one of the fundamental principles of humanitarian intervention, especially in

addressing the often-contentious issue of the location of the responsibility to protect – the state or the international community? In a bid to address this dilemma the report of the International Commission on Intervention State Sovereignty (ICISS) left no doubt in the minds of observers when it stated that:

“This responsibility lies, first and foremost, with each individual State, whose primary *raison d’être* and duty is to protect its population. But if national authorities are unable or unwilling to protect their citizens, then the responsibility shifts to the international community to use diplomatic, humanitarian and other methods to help protect the human rights and well-being of civilian populations.”⁵

Thus the prevailing stalemate in Liberia at the time, where neither former president Taylor nor any of the rebel groups could guarantee the protection of the civilian population, met an important threshold requiring external intervention.

Whether in 1990 or in 2003, ECOWAS advanced a strong humanitarian argument, which, it contended, derived its legality and moral authority from one of the principles espoused by the ICISS, which states that:

“State sovereignty implies responsibility, and the primary responsibility for the protection of its people lies with the state itself ... where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and if the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect.”⁶

One can therefore advance the argument that ECOWAS’s intervention in Liberia was part of the international community’s responsibility to protect the innocent, especially in situations such as Liberia in 2003, where the central state authority clearly lacked the capacity to carry out its protection function. In such situations national sovereignty yields to international sovereignty.

This chapter will not delve into the political and legal acrimonies that precipitated the ECOWAS intervention, especially the first ECOMOG operation, but will focus on illustrating how the timely deployment of ECOMIL contributed to saving thousands of civilians who were trapped by the bloody contest for Liberia. An attempt will also be made to explore the synergy between ECOWAS and the UN in the area of peace

support operations. At this point, however, it is pertinent to briefly discuss the nature and composition of the statutory and non-statutory forces operating in Liberia by 2003.

A SYNOPSIS OF STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY FORCES IN LIBERIA

THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA (GOL) FORCES

While he was in power, President Taylor created a myriad of security forces to ensure that no single military, police, intelligence or militia faction would be strong enough to challenge his power-base. Individual security elements remained loyal to the President through their immediate commanders, but little loyalty existed in a normal operational chain of command. The end result of Taylor's strategy has been a confusing proliferation of military groups, among them, the 'elite' Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU); the Special Operations Division (SOD); the Special Security Services (SSS); the police; a very weak national army, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL); ministerial-controlled special security or paramilitary units; and an array of militia groups including the 'Marines', the 'Wild Geese' and a host of others.

The government militia numbered about 10,000 and were primarily armed with small arms – automatic rifles, machine-guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and some mortars. They were located predominantly in Monrovia and the central part of Liberia, but conducted military operations in towns and along roads in a hit-and-run manner, using numerous checkpoints as bases to establish varying sizes of controlled areas.

The militias were generally unpaid and engaged in widespread intimidation, extortion and looting of the general population and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Discipline was low, while sexual crime and drug abuse were prevalent within the ranks of the militias. Some of the militias had been expelled or had defected from the regular armed forces. They operated on their own with very loose ties to any formal command and control structure. Their main motivation appeared to be the exploitation of new opportunities for power and financial gain.

LIBERIANS UNITED FOR RECONCILIATION AND DEMOCRACY

Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) emerged in February 2000 from the merger of diverse groups of exiled Liberians,

namely the Justice Coalition of Liberia, the Organisation of Displaced Liberians, and the Union of Democratic Forces of Liberia. Their ranks were filled by the ethnic Mandingo and Krahn tribes with considerable training and experience from the national army of the late president Samuel Doe and through the previous conflict. The strength of the core fighters was estimated at between 3,000 and 5,000, though they claimed to have numbered about 15,000 men under arms.

The main political objective of the LURD rebel movement was to seize power by deposing Charles Taylor. The group were very well organised with a strong command and control structure, especially at brigade level. There was widespread use of child soldiers and the reported presence of mercenaries – regional and international – within their ranks. They were believed to have received considerable military and financial support from Guinean President Lansana Conteh, their main weapons being small arms and mortars, some of which were believed to have been supplied from neighbouring state(s). There was extensive use of drugs and alcohol among the combatants who, albeit, cooperated well with ECOMIL, especially when they realised that Charles Taylor would be stepping down from the presidency.

MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY IN LIBERIA

The Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) emerged in March 2003 as a breakaway group from LURD. MODEL was reported to have been strongly supported by Côte d'Ivoire or by elements within that country. Like LURD, their fighters were mostly former Liberian government troops, but unlike LURD, these fighters were drawn from the Krahn ethnic group of the late president Samuel Doe. Many of the fighters were experienced combatants who had been trained as part of Doe's national army and with considerable experience from the previous civil war.

MODEL was estimated to have had some 1,500–3,000 combatants operating in Liberia with significant numbers of child soldiers. There was extensive use of drugs and alcohol among the combatants. Command and control was good at brigade or 'field command' level, but the quality retrogressed at the tactical and individual fighter levels, the situation being inhibited by lack of communications equipment at this level of command. MODEL had a vertical command structure with absolute power vested in its leader, Thomas Nimely Yaya. Like LURD, the main political objective of the group was to depose Charles Taylor

and to obtain a fair share of the political and economic 'cake' after Taylor's deposition.

RELATIVE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE OPPOSING FORCES

When Charles Taylor successfully 'booted' ECOMOG out of Liberia in 1998, he had the whole political-military theatre to himself, or so it would have appeared. So Taylor consolidated his hold on power by threatening his political opponents out of the country into exile. He then played the number game by multiplying the types of national security agency, which he saturated with his loyalists to counterbalance their power, while retaining the direct allegiance that each of them owed to him as the supreme commander-in-chief.

But Taylor might have miscalculated or overplayed this hand for, although he achieved absolute power, he did so without the national consensus that was requisite for national cohesion. This led to loss of confidence in the country's peace process, which began to falter, rather than being deepened through policies of inclusion, as he had promised at his inauguration on 2 August 1997. Given this situation, the embers of the first conflict, which really were never extinguished, re-ignited in 2002 before their conflagration in early 2003 into the second conflict.

The upsurge of the conflict in 2002 started with LURD, which invaded Liberia from neighbouring Guinea and Sierra Leone. Before long, ethnic cleavages appeared among the ranks of the anti-Taylor coalition forces, which split into the mainstream Mandingo-dominated LURD and the splinter Krahn-dominated MODEL. Rather than weaken the anti-Taylor forces, however, the split enabled them to open two fronts against Taylor's forces. Operationally, LURD operated from the north and east, controlling more than half of the country, while MODEL operated from the south-east, controlling about a third of the country. The GoL forces were thus almost encircled in Monrovia and central Liberia in a classic insurgency. With LURD running wild on the south-eastern axis and MODEL pushing down along the north-western axis, Taylor came under intense military pressure, which most observers believed compelled him to take part in the ECOWAS-mediated peace talks in the Ghanaian capital, Accra. Taylor's position became increasingly untenable as his war machine began to suffer from the arms embargo that had been imposed on Liberia by the UN Security Council for his support to the rebel RUF in neighbouring Sierra Leone. Consequently, a combination of LURD and MODEL military pressure on Monrovia, the arms embargo and

pressure from ECOWAS and the international community, coupled with soured relations with his former mentors and backers – Côte d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso – forced Taylor to resign and go into exile in Nigeria. In his own words, Taylor made a “soft landing” in exile in Nigeria, but with the rather ominous chilling bluff: “I will be back.”⁷

The weakening of Taylor’s military machine demonstrates that given the right conditions, sanctions really do work – this, in spite of the numerous violations of the embargo and the ECOWAS moratorium on small arms and light weapons. But one should caution against an application of a one-size-fits-all approach to conflict situations, while recalling that similar sanctions did not work effectively in the 1990s.⁸

In retrospect, data on the disarmament and demobilisation (DD) programme relating to the relative strengths of the opposing forces supports the argument that between them LURD and MODEL forces, totalling more than 42,600 combatants, were far superior in number – by a factor of 1.5 – to the AFL–GoL alliance, totalling about 27,800 combatants, unless a sizeable number of the unspecified freelance elements belonging to the ‘other’ group were affiliated to Taylor’s forces (see Table 4.1). Even so, on the assumption that any exaggerations and underestimations affected the factions equally, it is pertinent to note that given the political and operational circumstances of the conflict, the intangible factor of morale was in favour of the LURD–MODEL forces. But the high preponderance in numbers enjoyed by LURD and MODEL should in no way be interpreted as a guarantee that Taylor would have been defeated. This was largely because of the unpredictable nature of the Liberian insurgent groups that kept fragmenting.⁹

Table 4.1 Matrix of the relative strengths of the warring factions

Serial (a)	Faction (b)	Estimated strength (c)	Disarmed strength (d)	Deviation factor (e)
1	AFL	(12,240)	(12,240)	1.00
2	GoL/militia/paramilitary	10,000	15,586	1.56
3	LURD	3,000–5,000	29,476	1.97
4	MODEL	1,500–3,000	13,120	4.37

In the long run, it is fair to say that Taylor failed in his own 1989 promise to return the country to constitutional democracy, economic reconstruction and nation building. This failure was the result of political

brinkmanship that went abysmally wrong because Taylor ignored changing regional and international dynamics of democratisation and the rule of law in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1999, informed by the lessons of the Mano River Union conflicts and in order to be ‘up to speed’ with the provisions of its Revised Treaty of 1975 relating to non-aggression and peaceful resolution of conflicts, ECOWAS had adopted the “Protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping security”. The mechanism emphasised the “promotion and consolidation of a democratic government ... protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms and the rules of the international humanitarian laws” and that “in case of internal conflict that threatens to trigger a humanitarian disaster, or that poses serious threat to peace and security in the sub-region ...”¹⁰ ECOWAS would invoke its application.

In sum one could argue that Taylor badly miscalculated the will and determination of other member states to enforce their commitment to intervene when the civilian population was under threat.

On a different note, it is interesting to assess the credibility of the warring factions from deviations from their estimated strengths in comparison with the actual numbers of their disarmed combatants. Based on the results of the voluntary DD, it would appear that GoL (and excluding the AFL), which was underestimated by a factor of ‘1.6’, was relatively more reliable in its estimated strength. On the other hand, the strength of LURD appears to have been grossly underestimated by a factor of nearly ‘2’, while MODEL was even more grossly underestimated by a factor of more than ‘4’. Given the lack of effective command, control and communications within the structure of the warring factions, this is not surprising. This underscores the lesson that such programmes should be planned with adequate allowance for the absorption of far greater numbers of armed combatants. The reason is simple. By being more efficient in the psychological – propaganda – aspects of the war, LURD and MODEL, to the extent possible, appear to have succeeded in keeping Taylor guessing as to their real military strengths. This also appears to have applied to the planners of the DDDR programme, at least initially, until after the start of the programme.

VERIFYING THE CEASEFIRE: THE ECOWAS JOINT VERIFICATION TEAM

As part of the ACCH, the parties to the Liberian conflict agreed to “declare and observe a ceasefire ...; refrain from committing any

acts that might constitute or facilitate a violations of the ceasefire ...; establish an ECOWAS-led Joint Verification Team (JVT), comprising two representatives from each of the parties, plus representatives of the UN, AU and the ICGL; establish a Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) to supervise and monitor the ceasefire ...; and the need for the creation and deployment of an international stabilisation force and committed themselves to cooperate with it”.¹¹ The agreement also dealt with a wide range of issues that were subsequently addressed in the negotiations leading to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 18 August 2003.¹²

The deployment of ECOMIL was to be preceded by the establishment and deployment of the ECOWAS-led JVT. Pursuant to paragraphs 3–4 of the ACCH, the JVT was to complete the verification of the locations of the parties at the time of the ceasefire in a period of ten days. This involved the verification of the ceasefire and two reconnaissance missions, which were intended to facilitate the deployment of an ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL).

Pursuant to paragraph 4 of the ACCH, each party was to identify and communicate the locations of its units, including combat equipment, to the JVT in writing within 72 hours of the signature of the ACCH. The JVT was then tasked with visiting, verifying and plotting the locations on a map, which would be signed by all the parties to serve as a reference document on the limits of their locations. The report was then to be submitted two days after the completion of the operational missions.

To give clarity on the operations of the JVT, ECOWAS provided two framework documents, namely “ECOWAS instructions on the reconnaissance mission to Liberia dated 13 June 2003” and the undated “Monitoring mission in Liberia: terms of reference”. The three documents tasked the JVT with conducting detailed reconnaissance of the mission area for the deployment of ECOMIL and, pursuant to relevant ECOWAS directives, to conduct a reconnaissance mission in the Monrovia area, in order to assess the security situation and gather information as a prelude to the insertion of the lead troops.¹³

In addition to the establishment of the JVT, however, the ACCH provided for the establishment of a Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) to supervise and monitor the ceasefire. The composition of the JMC was similar to that of the JVT. The parties also agreed on the need for the creation and deployment of an International Stabilisation Force (ISF), which was later changed to a 3,500-strong Inter-Positional Force (IPF), whose vanguard force was expected to deploy to Monrovia to provide

security, followed by the deployment of a US force, then the main force, to prepare the conditions for the deployment of a larger UN force, estimated at between 10,000 and 15,000. In practice, the JVT, at the end of its mission, was to be under-implemented and reconstituted as the JMC for deployment with the IPF. It was unclear at the time whether the JMC would have continued to be co-deployed with the UN mission.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Operations of this nature demand clear end states and exit criteria. Thus, pursuant to its specified mandate and for planning purposes, the JVT considered that it was desirable to aim at and/or to base the success of the mission on written commitments from the parties which, besides the stipulation of the ACCH, related to the freedom of movement and unhindered access of the JVT, as well as the safety and security of members of the mission, including UNAMSIL's air crew and helicopter(s). In terms of its exit criteria, the JVT considered that its missions should be suspended and/or the team withdrawn in situations that jeopardised the mission such as serious violations or collapse of the ACCH; hostage, arrest, detention and armed attack against members of the team; the denial of freedom of movement and unhindered access; and on accomplishment of its mission and/or the partial or complete reconstitution as the JMC.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?

While it was considered vital to verify compliance with the ceasefire, it was considered unnecessary for a small unarmed and unprotected team to undertake a dangerous mission while the situation was volatile. Owing to the fluid nature of the situation on the ground in Liberia, the JVT could not deploy in accordance with appropriate ECOWAS instructions.¹⁴ In its revised plan, which recognised the vital need for security, the team planned to conduct the missions from a forward operating base at Kenema in eastern Sierra Leone, where it would co-locate with the UNAMSIL Pakistani battalion or with the UN Office in Liberia (UNOL) in Monrovia. To gain the trust and cooperation of the parties for freedom of movement within their areas, the plan involved pre-operational political visits to the headquarters of all the parties. In view of the precarious security situation, these verifications were to be conducted in daylight hours, avoiding dangerous inter-party frontlines.

As planned, the 15-member team¹⁵ was inserted into the mission area (Freetown) on 2 July 2003. However, the start of the verification was delayed when the parties technically violated the ACCH for failing to submit the required details of the dispositions of their forces by 20 June 2003. While LURD and MODEL provided more details of their locations, the data did not include information on their combat equipment. On its part, GoL delayed until 8 July 2003 when, in a letter dated 25 June 2003 and signed by the Minister for National Defence, Daniel L Chea Sr, it submitted the locations of its forces in accordance with the ACCH. In that letter the GoL authorities maintained that they controlled seven counties, namely Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, River Cess, Margibi, Bong and Nimba. Despite this, it provided limited substantive information on six locations only, without any information on its combat equipment.

Owing to apparent mistrust, the parties were unwilling to divulge too much operational information to the team, even if that meant a violation of the ACCH. In the long run, this distrust unduly delayed the operationalisation of the JVT, compounded by changes in UNAMSIL's operational support plans to base the mission at UNAMSIL headquarters in Freetown and not Kenema. This change, plausible as it seemed, implied four hours of daily flying and servicing time, which reduced the available daylight hours for the verification from 13 to nine, and with the overall implication that the verification mission would then last some 13 days, instead of seven. Further changes followed that proposed to base the mission in Monrovia, with the possibility that it might return to Accra on 10 July to be jointly inserted into Monrovia with a US assessment team. Before any of these materialised, the team was informed of arrangements for the provision of ECOWAS (Nigerian) aircraft (15–22 July 2003), implying a standing down on the joint insertion.¹⁶

Undoubtedly the constantly changing situation and plans, as well as the apparent glossing over of the Liberian security situation by ECOWAS, were unnerving and, among other considerations, left one wondering why ECOWAS would want to deploy a small unarmed mission into a conflict area where the UN and the international community thought the security situation was not congenial enough. But while the GoL members of the JVT were excited about the prospect of moving to Monrovia, the other parties and some members of the JVT expressed misgivings about the feasibility of the mission and the security implications for the team. Given the apparent undercurrents, the verification mission of the JVT was eventually revised into a reconnaissance, to exclude the members of the Liberian parties, for the deployment of the ECOWAS Vanguard

Force in accordance with the ECOWAS correspondence of 16 July 2003. Was this sudden change in plan an indication of an apparent opposition from LURD and GoL factions regarding security concerns about their representatives or a realisation by ECOWAS of the potential dangers of deploying a small unarmed force into a volatile theatre? Whatever the reasons, the JVT was not able to carry out the subsequent phases of the plan, owing to a combination of situational factors.

Concerned over persistent violations of the ACCH even a few days after its signing, the UN Security Council expressed apprehension over the Liberian security situation, and asked ECOWAS to clarify the status of the ACCH, as well as arrangements for the deployment of an ECOWAS emergency extraction force. In addition to its concern about the security of the mission, it expressed interest in gaining clarity on the status of the Liberian presidency. Adding his voice to the UNSC, President George Bush insisted that President Taylor step down and leave the country as a precondition for US military and humanitarian assistance to efforts to resolve the Liberian conflict.

Eventually, owing to persistent violations of the ACCH and its total collapse after the resumption and escalation of fighting, the mission was gradually withdrawn to Accra and later replaced by the JMC, as provided for under paragraph 6 of the ceasefire agreement. The JMC, which was to be made up of representatives of ECOWAS, the AU, the UN, the ICGL and the parties, was mandated to supervise and monitor the implementation of the ceasefire. In this vein, it was tasked to resolve disputes arising out of the ceasefire agreement, investigate ceasefire violations, and recommend remedial action for confirmed violations. Prior to the deployment of the UN, the meetings of the JMC were chaired by Ambassador Francis Blaine, special representative of the executive secretary of ECOWAS, and later by Lieutenant General Daniel Ishmael Opande, UNMIL force commander. These meetings encouraged discussion among the factions and challenged them to show their commitment to the peace process. The JMC was instrumental in resolving many issues arising from violations of the ceasefire by organising visits to the frontlines of the various factions, interacting with the fighters on the ground and assuring them that the peace was holding.

THE ECOWAS MISSION IN LIBERIA

As part of its decisions, the 4th Extraordinary Meeting of ECOWAS Defence and Security Council (DSC) in Accra on 3–4 July 2003 agreed on the deployment of a 1,200-strong ECOWAS force within four to six

weeks as a nucleus of the Inter-Positional Force (IPF). To underscore commitment to the regional peace efforts, member states pledged troops and assets totalling more than 3,000 to the planned force deployment: Benin (150 troops); Côte d'Ivoire (surgical team of unspecified strength); Gambia (150 troops); Ghana (250 troops); Guinea-Bissau (650 troops); Mali (250 troops, subject to confirmation at the time); Nigeria (1,300 troops); Senegal (250 troops); and Togo (which was to indicate its troop contributions later).

At the 5th Extraordinary Meeting of ECOWAS DSC in Dakar, Senegal, on 22 July 2003, Nigeria offered to commit two battalions to the vanguard force, including one battalion from the Nigerian contingent in UNAMSIL. In all, the multinational regional force was estimated to number up to 5,000 troops. Between 26 and 29 July, the force commander of the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) and his principal staff undertook the joint planning and preparation for the intervention, in collaboration with the US Joint Task Force (USJTF) for Liberia. This included a briefing for the chairman of the ECOWAS DSC, the US ambassador in Ghana, selected UNAMSIL staff officers and UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations (NDPKO) representatives on his draft concept of operations on 28 July 2003.

THE ECOMIL MANDATE

At the time of its deployment on 4 August 2003, ECOMIL had four main tasks, namely to

- establish zones of separation between the factions in order to secure the ACCH;
- stabilise the security situation in Liberia;
- provide safe corridors for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the free movement of persons; and
- prepare for the deployment of an ISF.

Subsequently, ECOMIL's mandate was enlarged in the CPA to include the following:

- facilitate and monitor the disengagement of forces as provided under the CPA;
- obtain data and information on activities relating to military forces of the parties to the ACCH and coordinate all military movements;

- establish conditions for the initial stages of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) activities;
- ensure respect by the parties for the definitive cessation of hostilities and all other aspects of the ACCH;
- ensure the security of all senior political and military leaders;
- ensure the security of all persons and experts involved in the implementation of the CPA in collaboration with all the parties; and
- monitor the storage of arms, munitions and equipment, including supervising the collection, storage and custody of battlefield and offensive armament in the hands of combatants.

COMPOSITION OF THE FORCE

In accordance with the decision of the ECOWAS heads of state meeting in Accra, the first elements of the force arrived in Monrovia from UNAMSIL on 4 August 2003. The second Nigerian battalion followed between 10 and 14 August. Senegal, Mali, Togo, Ghana, Benin, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau then followed in that order. ECOMIL achieved its full strength in early September 2003. The total number of personnel deployed in Liberia was 3,566, comprising 232 officers and 3,334 men. The contribution of troops by country was as follows:

- ECOMIL headquarters 27 officers and 53 men
- Benin 19 officers and 230 men
- Gambia 6 officers and 144 men
- Ghana 17 officers and 213 men
- Guinea-Bissau 45 officers and 605 men
- Mali 18 officers and 231 men
- NIBATT 1 37 officers and 733 men
- NIBATT 2 41 officers and 735 men
- Senegal 14 officers and 248 men
- Togo 8 officers and 142 men

ECOMIL CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The mandate was a tall order for a 3,500-strong force with very basic equipment and limited logistic support to implement within the given time frame, not to mention the pressure from many quarters on the force commander to deploy troops outside Monrovia. It was clear to the force commander that the force could only stabilise the security situation

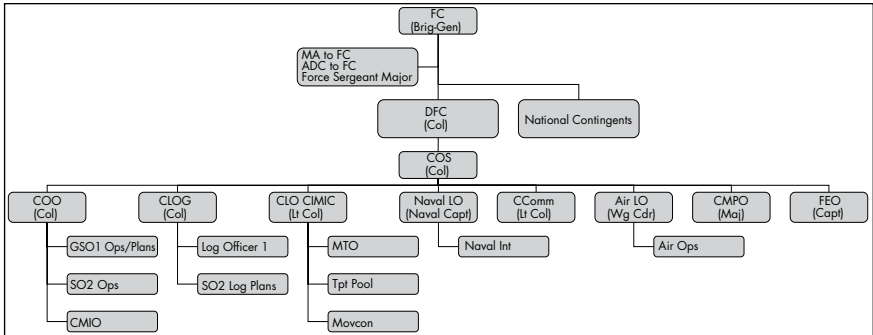
in Monrovia. He was under no illusion that he would be able to do more than that. Accordingly, the mission statement of the force was to deploy to Liberia to establish zones of separation between the warring factions to secure the ceasefire and create conditions for the deployment of a follow-on stabilisation force, and handover to a UN peacekeeping force. To accomplish that mission, the concept of operations of the force commander entailed the following:

- Phase 1: The initial deployment of the vanguard force involving the insertion of two Nigerian battalions, including one from UNAMSIL and another under training in Sokoto
- Phase 2: The deployment of the ECOWAS follow-on force
- Phase 3: Build up and expansion of the force (under-implemented because additional pledged troops did not arrive)
- Phase 4: Transition to UN

After the insertion of the ECOMIL headquarters¹⁷ into Monrovia on 30 July aboard a Ghanaian Air Force aircraft, for reconnaissance and preparation, the actual deployment of ECOMIL was conducted in five phases as follows:

- Phase 1 covered pre-deployment activities from July through to 3 August 2003. It focused on the planning of the operation, the reconnaissance to Monrovia, the assessment and inspection of the units to be deployed, their concentration, and pre-deployment training. Inspections identified logistic shortfalls and assessed the training and the readiness of the units for deployment.
- Phase 2 covered the initial deployment of NIBATT 1 of the vanguard force, from 4 to 13 August, to secure the forward operating base at RIA.
- During phase 3, NIBATT 2 deployed to Bushrod Island with its northernmost boundary at St Paul's River, its boundary being later extended to the Po River line, to which LURD rebels withdrew on handing over Bushrod Island to ECOMIL.
- Phase 4 phase saw the deployment of Composite Battalion 1 (Senegal, Mali and Ghana) on Bushrod Island from 23 August to 13 September.

Figure 4.1 The organisational structure of ECOMIL headquarters



- Finally, phase 5 saw the deployment of the battalion from Guinea Bissau and Composite Battalion 2 (Benin, Gambia and Togo) from 3 to 13 September. The Guinea Bissau battalion was deployed on the Kakata–Salala–Totota axis, while the second composite battalion was deployed on the Buchanan highway.¹⁸

COMMAND AND CONTROL

The ECOMIL force commander was Brigadier General Festus Okonkwo (Nigeria), who was a veteran of ECOMOG operations in Liberia and on one occasion was its ground task force commander. This gave him knowledge of the situation and the character of the players. General Okonkwo assumed command of the ECOMIL force on 28 July 2003, with Colonel Aliou Ndiaye (Senegal) as his deputy. In accordance with article 33 of the 1999 Protocol, the overall command and control of the force was exercised by the ECOWAS Secretariat acting through the DSC, particularly in the absence of a special representative as provided for under Article 34. The battalions and contingents were commanded by national officers.¹⁹

In practice, communication within ECOMIL was hampered by lack of equipment. Apart from the UNMASIL Nigerian battalion, which arrived with its full complement of communication equipment, the contingents arrived in the mission area expecting the Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE), which was to provide logistics support for the force, to provide their communication needs. It is worth noting that the PAE, a well-known US Private Logistical Company (PLC), had operated in Liberia and the region since 1996. The equipment provided by the PAE, however, fell short of requirements. As in other regional missions,

such as the African Mission in Sudan (Darfur) and the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), communication within ECOMIL headquarters in Monrovia was by more expensive cellular and satellite phones. In addition, communication was affected to some extent by the linguistic divide between the anglophone, francophone and lusophone countries operating alongside one another.

FRAMEWORK OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Although ECOMIL was deployed as an advance force with limited stabilisation capacity, its mandate was not limited to monitoring the ceasefire lines, but included the protection of the thousands of civilians caught in the fighting. This incorporated opening safe corridors for the delivery of humanitarian relief. Even though the force was only deployed in and around the capital, Monrovia, its presence paved the way for the delivery of relief to thousands of civilians trapped in the city, giving hope to those in the interior of the country. Thus, although ECOMIL was thin on the ground, its timely deployment encouraged hundreds of civilians who had been trapped in the fighting to come out of their hiding places. The inclusion of the protection of civilians in the mandate of ECOMIL, as well as that of UNMIL, is a significant pointer to the humanitarian rationale in contemporary peace-support operations, and more so in Liberia. Within its capabilities, therefore, the force was able to achieve part of its mandate, notably the stabilisation of the security situation in Monrovia and its environs to allow the citizens the freedom to carry out their livelihoods. The insertion of the UN Mission would have been impossible, but for the spadework by ECOMIL.

ECOMIL carried out a number of key operational activities, notably the establishment of a security umbrella through a network of checkpoints and patrols, for the protection of the beleaguered civilian population, as well as for humanitarian activities. Besides Monrovia, the system of checkpoints and observation posts was established and maintained along the entire Roberts International Airport–Monrovia road, and on Bushrod Island, up to St Paul River, and subsequently up to Po River. Others were thrown on the Somalia Drive through the ‘red light’ area in Paynesville, up to Kakata in Margibi County. Coupled with regular vehicular and foot patrolling in and around Monrovia to show its presence, ECOWAS quickly restored the confidence of the population and was able, as a result, to curb the high incidence of looting and other criminal activities in the city.

In addition, ECOMIL ensured the establishment of a weapons-free zone in Monrovia through the withdrawal and rearrangement of the opposing forces. The restoration of security devolved on the security of Roberts International Airport, which was critical to the successful build-up, maintenance and augmentation of the force and its transition to the UN, by the advance units of ECOMIL on 4 August 2003. ECOMIL's establishment of full control over Roberts International Airport dealt a serious blow to Taylor and his GoL forces, which had been using it to re-supply and oil his war machinery. For instance, not long after their arrival at the airport, ECOMIL NIBATT 1 troops seized a large consignment of arms and ammunition that had been delivered by a cargo plane to the beleaguered GoL forces on 7 August. The seizure of this consignment turned out to be very significant as it is believed to have contributed to breaking the will of the GoL forces, whose stock of arms and ammunition was seriously depleted at the time of the seizure.

On the other side of the battle lines, ECOMIL successfully negotiated the withdrawal of LURD rebel forces from Bushrod Island on 14 August, with the assistance of the US Embassy in Monrovia. With LURD's handover of Freeport of Monrovia to ECOMIL, and the withdrawal of its forces, ECOMIL was able to declare Bushrod Island a weapons-free zone. The demilitarisation of Freeport and Bushrod Island created conditions for the delivery of humanitarian relief items, starting with the first vessel loaded with drugs and other relief items at Freeport on 16 August 2003. The arrival of the first relief vessel signified the opening of the port to commercial and humanitarian activities.

It is fair to say that the success of ECOMIL's operations was also due to the goodwill it enjoyed from all the factions, especially from the ordinary citizenry of Liberia. ECOMIL's presence reassured the people of the prevailing peace and stability, even though its deployment did not end the fighting outside Monrovia, where marauding bands of lawless rebels continued to terrorise the citizens of Nimba, Margibi and Bong counties and in the south-east. Even though this situation placed tremendous pressure on ECOMIL to deploy outside Monrovia, it resisted the temptation of mission creep that could have undermined the consolidation of the peace, security and stability in Monrovia, given its limited capacity.

LOGISTICS SUPPORT

With both seaports – Monrovia and Buchanan – in rebel hands and the airport under constant threat from rebel attack, ECOMIL deployed

initially under very austere logistic conditions. The situation was made worse because the international airport was barely operational. Most of the material-handling equipment had been looted, stolen or damaged during the years of conflict. On the other hand, movement by road was inconceivable, as the roads were in a bad state and infested with rebel checkpoints. The only alternative therefore was to deploy logistics assets by air and this presented a huge problem where armoured personnel carriers and other heavy equipment were involved.

Fundamentally, the logistical problem was caused by the limited logistics capacity of ECOWAS member states for peace-support operations. To a large extent the sustainment of the ECOMOG contingents in the 1990s was probably made possible by a combination of two factors. First, some of the key troop-contributing countries were under military regimes that were not constrained by domestic politics and parliamentary dictates. Second, Nigeria, which had borne a disproportionate percentage of the ECOMOG budget, was not in a position to do the same this time. The situation in 2003 was vastly different because nearly all the troop-contributing countries, including Nigeria, were now operating in a democratic dispensation, which required them to seek parliamentary approval for troop deployments and operational budgets. This had been significantly different during the previous intervention, when nearly all the intervening states were headed by military regimes or pseudo-democrats, who could commit sizeable numbers of troops and allocate millions of dollars without constraints. Some ECOMIL contingents therefore had to operate with significant shortfalls of supplies and services needed for troop subsistence and mission sustainment.

As indicated earlier, some alleviation of the situation came through the PAE, which provided logistical support in the areas of accommodation, stores, office equipment and defence stores, as well as vital communication equipment, ranging from radio base stations, hand-held radios and repeaters to cellular and satellite telephones. The PAE also provided rations throughout the operation. Additional logistical support – as well as military – came from the US Joint Task Force.²⁰

However, one of the fundamental challenges stemmed from the lack of a substantive concept of logistics. Given that Article 38 of the ECOWAS Mechanism merely provides that “the organisation of logistics, including troop transport, shall be determined by the Executive Secretariat in consultation with the host country and the states contributing troops”, ECOWAS lacked a centralised logistical capacity.²¹ In addition, even though the PAE support was only meant to complement organic

resources of the contingents, this information had not been brought to the attention of the TCCs, some of which arrived in Monrovia expecting the PAE to supply them with all their unit needs, resulting in shortfalls in vehicles, communication equipment and other basic items such as camp beds. As the operation got under way, the force was confronted with the challenge of forecasting and tracking logistical requirements and assets, owing to a lack of requisite training and competence. This left the supply system weak and severely hampered by the breakdown of infrastructure in Liberia.

TRANSITION TO UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN LIBERIA (UNMIL)

Given the close collaboration between ECOWAS, the AU and UN systems from the inception of the peace process, as well as on the deployment of ECOMIL, the UN was more forthcoming in its decision to establish and deploy a UN mission, in contrast with the tenuous relations over ECOMOG in the 1990s. On 1 August 2003, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1497 (2003) authorising the deployment of a multinational force in Liberia and declared its readiness to establish a follow-on force to be deployed not later than 1 October 2003. Coupled with the authorisation for UNAMSIL to extend support to ECOMIL, UN staff worked closely with ECOMIL on the planning and deployment of the mission. Having achieved its objectives, ECOMIL duly transferred operational authority of the mission to UNMIL on 1 October 2003, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1509 (2003).

CONCLUSION

The policy decision to verify the ACCH was a sound one and consistent with traditional peacekeeping. Its timely execution within 10 to 14 days of the signing of the ACCH, however, was affected by a complex interplay of UN Security Council considerations and the lack of regional capacity to go ahead with a challenging mission in the face of a fragile ceasefire. Ostensibly calculating to force the hand of the international community for a more substantive role to ensure Charles Taylor's removal from power, the parties did not hesitate to break the ceasefire agreement.

Even though the verification of the ceasefire was a political and operational imperative, the JVT was faced with a number of administrative and operational problems that potentially could have undermined the integrity of the mission if it had been undertaken on

schedule as planned. In retrospect, it does appear that the apparent inconsistencies that affected the execution of the JVT's mandate were part of well-orchestrated brinkmanship by key actors in the region and the international community to ensure a point of no return for Charles Taylor, to convince him to discard any military option that he might have entertained, and to take himself out of the equation for the peace process to have a real chance of success.

The unhindered deployment of ECOMIL therefore was partly due to the success of ECOWAS and international diplomacy. Even if ECOWAS and the international system had failed to prevent war in Liberia, given the lack of political consensus over the principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention, they were successful in reacting rapidly to contain its escalation, first, through the deployment of ECOMIL, which was able to stabilise the security situation in Monrovia. It is important to recognise that in contrast to the political, diplomatic and legal acrimony reminiscent of ECOWAS's interventions in the 1990s, the broad consensus within ECOWAS was a manifestation of acceptance by its member states that the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention should yield to humanitarian intervention. It also underscores the maturity of regional integration, informed by the wisdom of the interlinked nature of conflicts in the region. ECOWAS, AU and the international community, including the UN, were therefore wiser in recognising the need for synergies between regional, continental and international community approaches to the resolution of conflicts that would ordinarily be perceived as domestic.

Operationally, pursuant to the political vision of resolving the conflict, ECOMIL's concept of focusing operations on the separation of forces in Monrovia, and its resistance to spreading its troops too thinly, which could lead to mission creep, proved a sound decision. Consequently, in spite of its limited size and resources, ECOMIL succeeded in consolidating the ACCH without being distracted by reported violations in the countryside. The violations of the ACCH and the CPA continued even after the deployment of the UN mission. The success of the mission was captured by an ECOWAS after-action report, which states that it was only through the timely deployment of ECOMIL that a

“... great loss of life; human suffering and destruction of property were forestalled as a result of the political will of ECOWAS member states to deploy ECOMIL. This success of ECOMIL was achieved without firing a shot and without any major complaints from the warring factions

about the legality or legitimacy of the intervention. The deployment of ECOMIL provided a critically important bridging function until a more robust UN force was authorised and deployed ... [and that] a small force of 3,566 determined, well-led West African soldiers, secured the peace process in Liberia, [and] ... in so doing, they forestalled great loss of life, indescribable suffering and widespread destruction.”²²

While commending the efforts of ECOWAS and ECOMIL, one should not lose sight of the operational limitations that attended these efforts and that could have undermined its effectiveness, especially if the parties had shown less commitment to the ceasefire agreement. In the aftermath of the regional intervention, therefore, further efforts need to be deployed to build substantive collective regional standby capacities, namely the ECOWAS Standby Brigade (ECOBRIg).²³ These capacities must address the issue of the political control and direction of future ECOWAS regional deployments through the timely appointment of a special representative with clear directives and channels of communication upwards to the secretariat and downwards to the force commander.

Additionally, capacity-building ought to include external commitments for strategic air- and sea-lifts, coupled with centralised arrangements for mission logistical sustainment and mission funding, in order to lessen the burden on lead nations and enhance the participation of other member states. However, these efforts ought to be pursued within the framework of the African Standby Force (ASF), because a continental security architecture provides more security synergies than a regional framework.

As stated by the UN Secretary General, the international community should commit itself, through multilateral arrangements, to enhancing the capacity of ECOWAS to lead on regional interventions that would create conditions for the eventual deployment of UN peace operations, in the light of the UN’s institutional expertise and capacity for more complex multidimensional peacekeeping. It is therefore a question of synergising regional and UN peace deployments with appropriate international community assistance.

NOTES

- 1 Colonel Theophilus Tawiah was the sector senior military observer for the Monrovia Sector from October 2003 to October 2004. From August to September

- 2003, he was the chief of staff of the ECOWAS vanguard force deployed to implement the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement of 18 August 2003.
- 2 Alex Moseley, Just war theory, *The Internet encyclopaedia of psychology*, <www.iep.utm.edu/justwar.html>, 15 March 2005.
 - 3 The ICGL consists of the AU, ECOWAS, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, the UK, the USA, the EU and the UN.
 - 4 See afrol News, West African leaders meet on Liberia, <www.afrol.com/articles/10330>, 15 March 2005.
 - 5 UN General Assembly, Report of the Secretary General, In larger freedom: Towards development, security and human rights for all, A/59/2005, 21 March 2005, p 35.
 - 6 See Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), The responsibility to protect, December 2001, p xi.
 - 7 Festus B Aboagye and Alhaji M S Bah, Liberia at a crossroads: A preliminary look at the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the protection of civilians, *ISS Occasional Paper* 95, November 2004, p 2.
 - 8 See Alhaji M S Bah, *Micro-disarmament in West Africa, the ECOWAS moratorium on small arms and light weapons*, in *African Security Review*, Volume 13 Number 3, 2004, pp 37–38.
 - 9 Aboagye and Bah, op cit, pp 8–9.
 - 10 See ECOWAS protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security, December 1999, pp 7 and 17.
 - 11 See Agreement on Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of Liberia (GoL) and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), Accra, Ghana, 17 June 2003.
 - 12 See the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of Liberia and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and political parties, Accra, Ghana, 18 August 2003.
 - 13 See the ECOWAS instructions on reconnaissance mission into Monrovia, 16 July 2003.
 - 14 These included the ECOWAS Instructions No 1/JVT on the Deployment of a Joint Verification Team to Liberia dated 19 June 2003 and the ECOWAS Administrative Instructions for the Deployment of a Joint Verification Team to Liberia dated 20 June 2003.
 - 15 The members of the JVT were: Lieutenant Colonel B F Kusi (Ghana), team leader; Wing Commander O J Osahor (Nigeria), ECOWAS Secretariat representative; Major R J Alexander (Nigeria); Commandant M Drabo (Mali); Commandant Y E Gnakouafré (Togo); Commandant S Mama (Benin); Lieutenant Colonel T Aroso (Nigeria), UNAMSIL representative; Colonel (Retired) M Smith (USA), ICGL representative; F B Aboagye (Ghana), AU representative; GoL representatives: Lieutenant General P Bass Kamah and S Bedell Fahn; LURD representatives: Brigadier General C Pajibo and Colonel K Fofana; MODEL representatives:

Colonels T A Towah and B E Roesler. The following four members did not join the team: Colonel G Partington (Ghana), UN representative; Lieutenant Colonel P Ndiaye (Senegal); Commandant S Hamani (Niger); and Lieutenant Colonel Akhtar Pervez (Pakistan), United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO). They were accompanied by Ghana's Ambassador to Liberia, HE Mr Amoah Awuah, for appropriate regional diplomatic cover.

- 16 The latter delays also owed to the framework meeting of troop-contributing countries (TCC) in Dakar, Senegal, on 21 July, followed on 23 July by the meeting of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council (MSC), as well as the intervening seminar of the African Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS) on conflict management in West Africa on 22 July 2003.
- 17 The staff officers on the reconnaissance mission comprised the Chief of Staff (Ghana), Chief Operations Officer (Nigeria), Chief Logistics Officer (Mali), Force Communications Officer (Ghana), Military Information Officer (Benin), Force Liaison Officer (Togo) and Force Finance Officer (Senegal). All the officers had assembled in Accra for mission planning.
- 18 See ECOMIL after-action review, Final Report, August 2004, pp III-8-9.
- 19 See ECOWAS Mechanism, *op cit*, pp 19–20.
- 20 The US force was provided by the Fleet Anti-Terror Support Team (FAST) – returning from Iraq that landed between 150 and 200 marines in Monrovia for a limited time in August 2003.
- 21 See the ECOWAS Mechanism (1999), *op cit*, p 21.
- 22 See *ECOMIL after-action review, Final Report*, Abuja, August 2004.
- 23 See Proposed Concept of ECOWAS Standby Brigade, May 2004.