

Current Emerging Trends in International Peacekeeping and the Management of Intra-State Conflicts in West Africa

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Abstract

The resolve of this modest study was to investigate the extent to which current evolving trends in international peacekeeping have influenced the management of intra-state conflicts in the West African sub-region in particular and the international community at large. Hitherto, most conflicts across the globe were mainly inter-state. In contemporary times however, the terrain is dominated by complex intra-state conflict); thereby necessitating more appropriate techniques to manage such conflicts. Increasingly, international peacekeeping has proven its relevance in this respect. Indeed this process having been enhanced significantly by a corresponding paradigm shift in peacekeeping activities, that now embraces multifunctional activities other than the traditional observation tasks. Today, these tasks mainly include: observation tasks, maintenance of law and order, humanitarian assistance, peace-building, policing, electoral assistance, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. Another significant innovation is that peacekeeping is no longer the preserve of soldiers alone as it has come to involve civilian and police personnel and even many non-UN actors. The main objective of this paper is to appraise how these evolving trends have enhanced the output of peacekeeping operations; within the context of the Liberian Civil War. And as I have tried to demonstrate, Liberia owes much of its success story today to the multidimensional operations that were initialed there by the ECOWAS, UN and many other actors over the years. This investigation which has implications for international policymakers, practitioners, international institutions, non-governmental organizations and the academia alike, has mainly adopted secondary and tertiary data (also made use of legal, historical, analytical and sociological approaches) to arrive at the following findings that: current evolving trends have enhanced in no small way the output of international peacekeeping operations across the globe; peacekeeping operations have contributed immensely in resolving intra-state conflicts in West Africa; and lastly peacekeeping is still the most relevant and effective conflict management tool today and in the foreseeable future. What however is required is a highly innovative peacekeeping system that is capable of addressing some attendant challenges within the system.

Key Words: Current, emerging, trends, international peacekeeping, management, intra-state conflicts, West Africa.

1. Introduction

The development of many West African states has been negatively affected by the series of intra-state conflicts that bedeviled the sub-region in the past. These conflicts mainly emanating from ethno-political tensions have caught the unwarranted attention of the international community, giving their spill-over effects (Lijn, J. et al, 2015). The crises in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote D'Ivoire and lately Mali readily come to mind. Since the beginning of this century, the world has witnessed tens of such conflicts at the global scene, notably the ongoing brutal Syrian conflict. Similarly, in the immediate past, those in Rwanda, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Yugoslavia had engaged the huge attention of the international community to the very neglect of the provision of basic needs for the deprived people in those countries. This modest study of mine seeks to analyze the management of such conflicts within the context of the technique of international peacekeeping, with the Liberian crisis as a case study.

The wide use of peacekeeping as a conflict management technique by the international community is in response to the changing dynamics of international conflicts (White 1995). The efficacy of this dynamic technique has being greatly enhanced by the emerging trends that have characterized recent operations. Kennedy (2006:77) therefore opines that, international peacekeeping is one of the greatest testimonies to human progress in the conflict resolution process, despite the challenges that sometimes retarded these processes. But regarding which one of the many interventions that will always be adopted in a given circumstance, Lijn et al (2015) suggest that, matters of geographical distribution and the nature of the conflict in question do influence the type of intervention adopted and more so which actor is best equipped to undertake the given intervention.

Adebajo (2011) asserts that, Africa has become a giant laboratory in which international peacekeeping operations are being tested. Indeed, this assertion holds water giving the fact that of the over 71 UN operations established across the globe, 29 are within Africa alone. The Liberian crisis forms the basis of this paper that is in three parts, and will seek to achieve the set objectives by answering the following pertinent questions:

- i. To what extent has current intra-state conflicts undermined the socio-politico-economic development of some nation-states in West Africa?
- ii. How has current evolving trends in international peacekeeping enabled the resolution of intra-state

- conflicts in some West African states?
iii. To what extent have current emerging trends influenced the output of international peace operations?

2. Impact of Intra-state Conflicts on the Development of West African States

Intra-state Conflicts

Conflicts often come with changing forms though with little or no changing occurrence that often brings untold sufferings to humanity. The Human Security Report (2013) notes that, while the occurrences of inter-state conflicts across the globe has seen a sharp decline in recent years, occurrences of intra-state conflicts are on the ascendency. An earlier report from the Stockholm International Peace Institute (SIPRI Yearbook 2012) puts the figure of inter-state wars in the first decade of the 21st century at three as against over 45 of intra-state conflicts during the same period under review. As the term suggests, intra-state conflicts are usually political violence that take place between armed groups of the state on one side, and one or more non-state groups on the other (Lijn et al., 2015). According to Eminue (2004), intra-state conflicts are those which the governmental authorities of a state are opposed by groups within that state, with the latter seeking to overthrow the former with force of arms. However, in some instances these conflicts may erupt between non-state entities. And as David (1997) states, even though these kinds of conflicts are primarily limited to the borders of a single state, their effects nonetheless transcend those borders. In that regard, they do have significant international ramifications in respect of their spill-over effects on adjoining states in particular.

Furthermore, such recent waves of complex conflicts are usually of huge intractability and of seemingly limited relevance in global security settings at the very start of events, but may turn out to have devastating consequences on the international community (Aksu, 2003). Ethno-politico-religious tensions, activities of rebels in resistance to authoritarian regimes, separatist and secessionist struggles by minority groups, terrorist activities and the activities of criminal armed groups as seen in the cases of Syria, Liberia, Eritrea/Sudan and Sierra Leone respectively; remain the core sources of intra-state conflicts. Other factors which may have changed the conduct of warfare in recent times include extreme economic underdevelopment and issues of poverty, inept political leadership, corruption and unemployment (Fearon, 2010; Carment, 1994:137; Alabi, 2006:57). In contrast, inter-state conflicts do take place between two or more state entities, usually involving forces whose conduct is regulated by international law regarding warfare (Alabi; 2006). Their marked decline can be attributed to two major reasons: the rising body of global norms against such warfare as a result of the surge in civilization and the healthy growth of diplomatic bonds and financial ties amongst nations.

Conflict Dynamics in West Africa

Alabi (2006: 41) suggests that, the history of Africa is replete with conflicts, where conflict regulation is the distinct characteristic of the continent. But considering the Serbian and Syrian crises, this obviously is an over-statement as Africa is not the sole depository of conflicts. Be that as it may, for some time now the West African sub-region has been fertile grounds for many intra-state conflicts. Every one of the 16 member-states has either being engulfed in intra-state conflicts and/or military dictatorship. Ghana, described by many as a haven of peace was no exception as it came under the 11-year tyrannical rule of Jerry Rawlings, who rudely over-threw the constitutional government of Dr. Hilla Limann on December 31, 1981 (Gyimah-Boadi, 1996). The country was to receive its worse form of dictatorship and human rights abuse in its entire post-Colonial history, as many were incarcerated without trials. It has been confirmed by many sources including the Amnesty International that, over 200 people are missing till date, most of them probably slaughtered by agents of the unneeded barbaric coup, while thousands are either maimed or still bearing scares of the revolution (Herbst, 1993).

Many other member-states including Togo, Liberia, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone also came under the tyrannical rules of the military. Ironically, one coup d'état led to another and even sometimes into deep-rooted intra-state conflicts. The likes of General Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo hooked on to power for about 33 years, eventually reducing his people to the status of subjects, as General Sani Abacha of Nigeria callously cowed citizens of the most populated African country into cowardly submissiveness. And in the best case scenario, a few of these countries namely; Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal, the Gambia and Cameroon experienced civilian rule in its cruel form (described at best as civilian dictatorship). However, the sub-region was to suffer its worse experiences in the wake of the Civil Wars in Liberia (1989-1996 and 1999-2003), Sierra Leone (1991-2002), la Cote d'Ivoire (2002-2007) and very recently Mali (2012-2013). In all of these conflicts, close to 300,000 lives were lost with over 3,000,000 people displaced and of course several properties worth billions of US dollars destroyed in the midst of great 'want' (Gberie, 2005). Indeed the effects of these conflicts on member-states were anything but devastating as all facets of their socio-politico-economic development had been bruised, drawing the sub-region several miles backwards (Nossiter and MacFarquhar, 2013; Sesay, 2009). I could go on and on.

The Liberian crisis

Since its foundation in 1822 by 16 indigenous ethnic groups and freed slaves, the history of Liberia has

being a tortuous and turbulent one; spanning through three distinct periods namely; the colonial and commonwealth era (1822-1847); the 133-year First Republican era (1847-1990) and the post-First Republican era (1990 till date) (Moran, 2006). From the very onset, the minority American-Liberians who occupied key positions in governance and commerce had reduced the majority indigenes into nothingness, as the latter looked on haplessly (Liebenow, 1987: 48-9). A situation that created a deep-seated resentment and divisions within the society which the William Tolbert reforms failed to heal in the early 1970s (Olonisakin, 2000). Then came the coup d'état in 1980 led by Samuel Doe that saw the assassination of President Tolbert and 17 others including a one-time Head of State, an action many Liberians hailed (Sesay, 1996).

The Liberian Civil War which took place in two phases (1989-1996 and 1999-2003) had been described as one of the bloodiest in the history of Africa (Moran, 2006). It had its roots in ethnic rivalry, territorial disputes, power struggle and religious differences (Levitt, 2005). On December 24, 1989 a dissident group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor attacked the country from its base in Cote d'Ivoire. In a matter of weeks the ill-trained force which had now swelled to about 10,000 men, pushed its way into the heart of Liberia. President Doe responded in equal measure by sending his brutal 2 AFL battalions under the command of Colonel Bowen to push back the dissidents (Hartung, 2005). In a matter of weeks, thousands of people were massacred as hundreds of thousands fled their homes. Many splinter groups including INPFL, ULIMO-J and ULIMO-J joined in the slaughter as the conflict grew in intensity (Bay and Aboagye, 2005). Following these atrocities, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), setup its military monitoring observer team (ECOMOG) in 1990. It was tasked to stop the carnage that took several months to accomplish. Consequently, ECOWAS following the signing of several peace agreements by the combatants, organized elections in Liberia in July 1997 where Charles Taylor won the elections by landslide. But it appeared the democratic rule under vintage Taylor did very little to return peace to Liberia, since between 1999 and 2003, another dissident group the Liberians for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) reignited the Civil War. It again had to take many years of efforts from ECOMOG and UNMIL multifunctional operations to restore peace.

For a start, the conflict which took over 11 years brought untold sufferings to the people as 150, 000 were killed while over 1, 500, 000 others fled into neighboring Ghana and other countries as refugees (Adebajo, 2011). But as if that was not enough, several facilities were destroyed including basic social services like water and electricity supplies. Hospitals became cemeteries as doctors and other para-medical staff left in search for greener pastures, resulting in brain drain. All sectors of the Liberian economy by the close of the conflict had begun to show negative signals, for instance the per capita income of Liberia which stood at \$1000 at the beginning of the conflict sunk as low as \$150 by 2005 (Tipotech, 2007; World Bank 2010). Furthermore, as Demi (2005: 97-112) laments, the wars deprived the people of good governance and the rule of law. Many that were spared by the Civil War came to be claimed by famine. In the given milieu, some member-states of the sub-region were affected by the spill-over effects-for instance Sierra Leone was plunged into Civil War of its own, while many others had to share their limited resources (food rations, shelter and healthcare) with the huge influx of refugees. Above all peace which is the sine quo non of the socio-political-economic development of every nation-state, eluded the sub-region in the given circumstances.

3. The Impact of Current Emerging Trends on the Output of Peacekeeping Operations Concept, legality and development of international peacekeeping

The usage of peacekeeping as a conflict management tool by the United Nations developed systematically over the years, and has since the 1990s grown exponentially in size, scope, complexity and importance (Macqueen, 2006). And even though the framers of the Charter of the United Nations may not have given express authorization to this technique within the Charter, it has nonetheless become the most widely applied conflict management measure known to the world body (Bellamy and Williams, 2010). Its legality however, has been settled for once by the International Court of Justice in the Certain Expenses case of the UN (I.C.J. Rep. 1962, 151) when the Court said the Security Council in its bid to restore peace to conflict areas could use other available means; including peacekeeping though may not have been expressly authorized in the Charter. This was with recourse to Articles 1(1), 40, 41 and 42 where the Charter provides for other measures either than those specifically outlined in chapters VI, VII and VIII (Bellamy and Williams, 2010). Per definition, peacekeeping operations usually involve the deployment of a neutral force in the field of hostilities by the UN, a regional or sub-regional body, an individual state, or a private entity through the use of varied activities, with the primary aim of maintaining or restoring peace and security to conflict areas (Benson, 2013).

Centuries before the League of Nations was founded (6th and 7th BC), some form of peace operations were adopted mainly to manage conflicts, protect the imperiled Christians and impose the collective will of the great powers at the time (Finnemore, 2003). Many other similar operations occurred subsequently which Booth and Wheeler (2008: 110) described as acts that only deterred potential destabilizing interventions rather than being collective operations. For instance in 1821 Austria, Prussia and Russia breaking away from the Vienne Settlements formed a Holy Alliance so as to intervene and prevent change of governments through revolutions

(Clark, 2005: 94). There was much more innovation in the nineteenth century however, when interventions were made by the allied forces of Britain, France and Russia (established by the London Treaty of 6th July 1827) to prevent all disorders of anarchy, effusion of blood and all kinds of evils perpetuated against people in those areas (in Westlake, 1910: 319 n.3). But as Bellamy and Williams (2010) suggest, the best form of peace operations were those undertaken by the League, notably in 1993 when the League deployed 3,300 troops comprising of British and Italian soldiers to protect the Saar region from the occupation of Adolf Hitler. Since 1948, the UN has authorized over seventy-two operations across all regions of the world (May, 2011). Currently, there are over 45 multilateral peacekeeping operations established across the globe of which 16 are mandated by the UN and of which 9 are within Africa alone. Total number of personnel serving Mission as at 29/02/2016 is 122, 778 comprising of- troops 89,406; police 13, 261; military observers 1,836; civilians 16, 471 (as at 1/07/2015) and volunteers 1804 (www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations, 25/03/2016).

Emerging trends

The dynamic technique of peacekeeping has seen many phenomenal innovations over the years. Foremost, there has been a paradigm shift from inter-positional to multifunctional peace operations. Second, many non-UN actors have come to be involved in peacekeeping and to that extent complementing the efforts of the world body in the areas of funding and professional expertise. Third, the terrain is no longer the preserve of only soldiers but now include many civilian and police personnel. I have tried to discuss these thematic areas below, albeit briefly.

Paradigm-Shift from Inter-Positional to Multifunctional Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping which begun in the traditional form of truce observation where lightly armed soldiers are interposed between feuding factions, today covers a whole gamut of functions (Durch and Blechman, 1992:9). Indeed since the end of the Cold War, this list which has increased exponentially depending on the conflict dynamics on the ground, includes but not limited to the following:

Observation tasks which involve the placement of peacekeeping troops between feuding factions with the primary aim of enforcing ceasefires (Diehl, 1994:10; Mays, 2011:11);

The Maintenance of Law and Order as was seen in United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), where police peacekeepers enforced the peace (Bull, 2008);

The provision of Humanitarian Assistance in the form of food rations, medical services, water, shelter and clothing to victims of conflicts by actors-in the past these services have been extended to Somalia, Haiti and Syria inter alia (Bellamy and Williams, 2010);

The conduct and supervision of elections in many failed states such as Afghanistan (2010) and East Timor as Timor-Leste in 2007 (2006, 2010) (UN, 2011:69-70).

The provision of economic resources (Economic Support) and training sessions organized for the rehabilitation of conflict-victims (UN, 2015);

The execution of complex peace-building and state-building activities aimed at stabilizing countries just emerging from conflict, mostly in the aero post-conflict reconstruction (Call, 2006:3-5).

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) are some of the most demanding tasks of peacekeeping that involve the collection, control, disposal and destruction of weapons and explosives used by combatants (UN, 2015).

Peacekeeping has also come to include monitoring of transitional regimes as was seen in Cambodia and the temporal assumption of some or all governmental tasks as was seen in Bosnia and Herzegovina and East Timor (Lijn, 2006);

Regional organizations are empowered under UN Security Council Resolution 161 of 1961 and Document 809 of 2000 to carry out limited enforcement measures (Lijn, 2006).

To reemphasize the importance of these functions in the enhancement of the operational output of Missions, Security Council resolution 2086 of 2013 expanded the mandates of Missions in 10 significant areas which amongst others include the protection of civilians, protection and promotion of human rights, strengthening of states under the rule of law, cooperation and coordination of the efforts of peacekeeping actors and rapid support in mine areas (UN Security Council resolution 2086 of 2013).

(B) Police Personnel and civilians in International Peacekeeping

Police in Peacekeeping

Police involvement in peacekeeping operations has increased tremendously in recent years, with the current figure of over 13,000 serving in almost all the Missions across the globe. Usually drawn from armed police units and formal police units, police peacekeepers perform such duties as: patrols; criminal investigations and crowd control; the provision of public security and the promotion of the rule of law; the reformation, restructuring and the rebuilding of the indigenous law enforcement capacity as seen in UNMIL and UNMIS (Lin and Law, 2008: 13; Perito, 2002: 85; Smith et al, 2007a:19). They may also perform tasks that military peacekeepers are ill-suited for. To that extent, policing has come to form the lead agency in many peace operations in as far as the rule of law remains the bedrock of stable peace (Bull; 2008; Stromseth, et al: 2006).

Civilian Peacekeepers

Increasingly, civilians have come to play key roles in international peacekeeping operations. Currently there are over 16,000 civilian personnel involved in peacekeeping worldwide (www.un.org/peacekeeping/operations retrieved on 22/03/2016). Due to their increasing significance, the Secretariat-General acting under the mandate of the Security Council has constituted a civilian-led multi-level Mission Management Structure which directs the day-to-day running of Missions and led by the Head of Mission.

Civilian personnel perform the following functions and roles: monitor and analyze the political aspects of the peace process and provide Mission leaders and the Headquarters with advice and reports for its development; monitor Mission planning and operations, providing legal advice to the Mission on the legal implications of any intended actions and their consequences; facilitate Mission planning processes and coordination; facilitate the promotion of the fundamental human rights of the local populations and also promote issues of gender equality and child rights; and provide expertise to improve the quality of justice as well as securing access to justice through law reforms and the establishment of institutions (DPKO, 2010; Bellamy and Williams). As a matter of fact civilians are involved in almost every aspect of peacekeeping today.

Other non-UN actors

Though the UN still remains the primary body that is mandated to undertake peacekeeping operations several non-UN actors have come to be involved in numerous peacekeeping operations across the globe. These actors include regional international organizations, regional security alliances, coalitions of the willing, pivotal states and individual nation-states (Diehl, 1994). A DPKO report (2003) indicates that more than half of peace operations across the globe are currently undertaken by non-UN actors, most of which are regional international organizations and security alliances. It is however, the considered view of many including Abott and Snidal (1998) and Barnett and Finnemore (2005) that, international organizations have more considerable functional and normative advantages over the other non-UN actors and are therefore better off with the initiation of peace operations. Notable examples include the League of Arab States; the African Union, the Common Wealth of Independent States, the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Mays, 2011:2; Brownlie, 1999). When it comes to state entities (either acting unilaterally or as pivotal states) just a few are actively involved in peace operations at the global level (Coleman, 2007). Starkest of examples include the French interventions in the Central African Republic and its operation Licorne in Cote d'Ivoire, and then the United States-led UNITAF in Somalia. Finally, since the 1990s, Private Security Companies (PSCs) including DynCorp and Armor Group have played significant roles in peace operations across the globe per the provision of equipment and logistics (Singer, 2003a:78-9).

4. The Liberian Crisis and Multidimensional Peacekeeping

The current reliance of the UN and the international community on a highly innovated international peacekeeping system as a major conflict management technique aptly bears testimony to its efficacy (Bellamy and Williams, 2010). Over the years these innovations have impacted the outputs of many operations across the globe positively and significantly; thereby influencing the resolution of many intra-state conflicts in no small way (Annan, 2000b; May, 2011). Many observers have said that, the Liberian success story by all standards is the starkest of examples that attest to the achievements of international peacekeeping in the field of conflict management (Adebajo, 2011). It had tasted the full complement of all multifunctional operations that were undertaken by a myriad of peacekeeping actors. The Liberian interventions are a classic post-Cold War peace operation that features(ed) military and police aspects, as well as the adoption of several functions (Sisk, 2009:214). To that extent, this hypothesis can only be verified within the context of a review of the numerous peacekeeping interventions undertaken there so far and how they influenced the conflict dynamics of the War.

First, operations of ECOMOG, UNMIL and other actors largely led to the restoration of peace in Liberia, through the unflinching efforts of the troops that stopped the carnage, paving the way for meaningful negotiations that led to the signing of lasting peace agreements (Aboagye and Bah, 2004).

Second, the thorny issue of armed proliferation was finally and effectively resolved within the context of the DDR programme. Between 2003 and 2004, the programme oversaw the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of 101,449 combatants as well as 612 mercenaries from neighboring countries (Adebajo, 2011:147).

Third, civilian and police peacekeepers in particular played an important role in the promotion of the internal security of Liberia and the maintenance of the rule of law, through patrols and monitoring. The peacekeepers also restructured the police service, by offering training to both exiting and newly recruited security personnel (Adebajo, 2011).

Fourth, the UN, ECOWAS, AU and other actors notably the Carter Center, USAID and Swiss-based NGO, Femmes Africa Solidaire, assisted in the conduct of successful elections in 1997, 2005 and 2011. This gesture by and large restored good governance and the consolidation of democracy to the onetime failed state (Olonisakin, 2000; Aboagye and Bah, 2004).

Fifth, the shattered economy of Liberia was guided back into place through the efforts of actors including

international donors, agencies of the UN and NGOs like USAID. For instance, in addition to the financial support rendered to the government of Liberia by the World Bank, the institution had also by 2008 setup a number of programmes and projects that fostered economic growth and development; in areas such as poverty reduction, water, health, energy, transportation, road network, girl-child education, health care delivery. (www.worldbank/liberia/liberia).

Sixth, many UN agencies including UNHCR, UNDP, IMF, World Bank, IMF, and other NGOs such as World Vision, OXFAM, CARE, Action Aid and USAID collaborated in the state-building and peacebuilding efforts of the lead actors. The UNDP in particular has since 2003 accomplished the following: assisted women to start own businesses by providing micro-credit facilities; sponsored some aspects of the Truth and Reconciliation process; helped in the rebuilding of local institutions, infrastructure and basic services for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. (www.undp.org/cpr/whats_new/Regions/liberia.shtml>27-02-16. On its part, the UNHCR provided thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons shelter, food, clothing, education, medication and other essential services (www.unhcr/liberia). USAID also carried out works in nearly all the 15 Counties in Liberia, involving itself in peacebuilding activities that ranged from relief aid to development (www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan/africa/countries/liberia).

Seventh, many individual states including the USA, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Libya did assist the reconstruction of Liberia at various stages and in many forms including diplomatic overtures, financial support and training of security services personnel (Kieh, 2003).

These and many other interventions made by the actors via the peacekeeping technique to a large extent restored peace to that country. But it must be pointed out at this stage that, while the application of a few of these functions were complete failures perhaps mostly stemming from inappropriate application, most of them were extremely successful where many have been replicated elsewhere across the globe. Hence, the Liberian operations which were largely successful did provide the entire international community lots of lessons to guide future operations.

5. Conclusion

Since the end of the Cold-War, inter-state conflicts across the globe have decreased in occurrences. The drastic turn-out of events having foremost been credited to the surge of modernity and deepened diplomatic ties amongst nation-states, that has often been facilitated by the United Nations. But what has been considered by many as lesser evils have rather rudely befuddled humanity without any sign of letting up- given their often complex nature and spell-over effects. Since then, the West African sub-region has been afflicted by these complex intra-state conflicts which have had devastating consequences on the socio-politico-economic development of many member-states. In the given milieu, the UN and the international community have resorted to the use of international peacekeeping, which has now turned to become the forerunner in this entire enterprise. And it goes without saying that, current innovations including but obviously not excluding the functions of DDR, election monitoring, peacebuilding and state-building have enhanced the output of operations of this technique hugely. It is thus instructive to state that, this technique has been used to stop several conflicts across the globe, notably those in Yugoslavia, Colombia, Haiti, Rwanda, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Additionally, the involvement of many non-UN actors in peacekeeping activities has significantly complemented the efforts of the already distressed world body, in the areas of logistics, expertise and finance in particular.

Admittedly, the Liberian crisis and the subsequent multilateral and multidimensional operations in that country, serve as a good example of what peacekeeping can achieve in the field of conflict management. Hence, offering a lot of lessons to the international community regarding the management of future operations. Basic among which are: the management of intra-state conflicts which are usually complex thereby calling for prompt and extensive external intervention-particularly reawakening the P5 to their original role of responding promptly and effectively to regional conflicts (Adebajo, 2011: 231-241); the Liberian carnage guides present and future operations as it revealed the primeval savage warfare of intra-state conflicts (Yorke, E., 2001); Liberian operations reinforce the importance of regional interventions and those of other non-UN actors; humanitarian interventions must be accompanied by parallel efforts in order to address the root causes of conflicts (Wilmort, J. 1997:148-150); conflict prevention is more desirable than managing conflicts and that political will is pivotal to the success of preventive efforts (Kieh, 2003: 322-3); and that peacekeeping works (Fortna, 2008b).

It is therefore a truism that for many years to come, international peacekeeping will remain a relevant conflict management tool in the hands of the UN in particular. However, this position has been slightly weakened by the challenges that face the system, thereby calling for a rejuvenated system mostly based on the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations of 2000 (the Brahimi Committee) and the UN Secretary-General High-Level Panel of 2004. These two committees offered vital suggestions for reforms if this technique is to remain relevant in the area of conflict management including; improving decision-making at UN headquarters and initiating effective and efficient mission mandates *inter alia*. That notwithstanding, it appears to me that as the saying goes ‘a stitch in time saves nine’ and better still, ‘prevention is better than cure’.

And to the very extent of preventing intra-state conflicts within the sub-region, I put forward these humble suggestions: we demand committed and sincere leadership from what one person describes as our ‘misleaders’; we seek the promotion of the rule of law and justice and we call and insist on the protection and promotion of our fundamental human rights.

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