Review

Regional conflict resolution mechanisms: A comparative analysis of two African security complexes

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The need for regional organizations to take up the resolution of the conflicts in their region or security complex has become important especially following the end of the cold war. Two regional security complexes in Africa, namely ECOWAS and SADC are examined in the light of conflicts erupting in their regions - Liberia and Sierra Leone in the ECOWAS and Lesotho and DR Congo in the SADC sub regions. The paper examines the efforts of the two regional bodies to resolve the conflicts and concludes that intervention in conflicts succeed or fail depending on the level of regionness or the existence of structures for conflict resolution in the regional security complex. In the case of the conflicts in the ECOWAS security complex the organization's conflict resolution efforts were ad hoc, even though they were bold and innovative, the efforts were not set within an effective conflict resolution mechanism and they were not very successful. In the case of SADC its conflict resolution effort in Lesotho was botched and in the DR Congo it did not make any meaningful effort at helping to resolve the conflict save some mediation efforts by South African leaders.

Key words: Security complex, new regionalism, regionness, black holes, overlay, amity, enmity, ECOWAS, ECOMOG, SADC.

INTRODUCTION

In the "Agenda for Peace" UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali supported a greater role for regional organizations in preventing and resolving regional conflicts, partly on the assumption that regional states know their regions best and partly as a form of burden-sharing. Regional organizations were often restrained by the Cold War in initiating and or resolving regional conflicts. In the post Cold War era, the role of regional organizations in managing regional issues merits examination for the following reasons: First, the major powers may not have the interest and more significantly, the resources to deal with all regional conflicts. While conflicts like the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait may evoke prompt and substantive responses, others that are less consequential or less clear-cut may not.

Secondly, although the strengthening of the role of the UN Security Council may be viewed as a positive development, it could also produce resentment if it is perceived by the developing countries as an imposition from the permanent five. Third, a reduction in internation-al tensions may be perceived by regional powers as creating opportunities to increase their control over the

immediate strategic environment. Thus, the aspiration for 'regional solutions to regional problems" may gain a firm ground. As such, certain regional organizations have since become directly involved in conflict prevention, management and resolution in their regions. For instance, in Somalia in 1993 the UN cooperated with the OAU, the Arab League States and the Organization of Islamic Conference in attempting to draw the Somali factions into a peace settlement. The role of ECOWAS and the OAU in the Liberian conflict from 1990 to 1994 also illustrates this point. (Findlay in Trevor, 1994 43 - 53) This work looks at two regional groups in Africa, namely the ECOWAS and SADC as regional security complexes and examines their conflict resolution mechanisms in conflicts that have erupted in their sub regions. The rationale for this work is to examine the conflict resolution record of ECOWAS and SADC within the larger OAU/AU politics of "African solutions for African problems" and to assess how successful their efforts at regional conflict resolution have been. The question that this paper seeks to find answers is "why does regional intervention work in some cases and not in others?"

Regional security complex and conflict resolution

The cases in this paper are analyzed within the conceptual framework of regional security complex. This paper is an attempt to explore the utility of the concept of regional security complex as a tool for understanding regional conflict resolution. A regional security complex has been defined as a group of states whose primary security concerns are so closely intertwined that their national securities cannot meaningfully be understood in isolation from one another (Buzan, 1991; Buzan and Waever, 2003). The concept is predicated upon what Buzan calls patterns of amity and enmity among states. Patterns of amity and enmity are shaped by a multiplicity of factors. These include territorial disputes, cross-border ethnic distribution, ideological orientations, suspicion and fear and long standing historical links of genuine friendship and expectations of protection or support. A defining feature of a security complex, therefore, is independence, be it conflictual or cooperative. In brief, a security complex may exist where there is a high level of mutually felt insecurity among two or more regional states. Similarly, a high degree of mutual trust and friendship can also demarcate the boundaries of a security complex. Security complexes emphasize the interdependence of rivalry as well as that of shared interests.

The concept of security complex has now come into its own. In the past, two main conditions militated against its utility. First, the weakness of the local states in most parts of the Third World constrained them from projecting their power beyond their immediate borders. This was undoubtedly the case with most of the countries in the two African regional groups SADC and ECOWAS. Second, the cold war rivalry among the superpowers tended to subsume the normal outworking of national security dynamics in many parts of the Third world. This condition has been referred to as overlay or stabilizing controls which formed part of the old world order of the cold war (Buzan, 1991). The cessation of cold war hostilities, however, has drastically altered the international order. The shift from bi-polarity has lifted the overlay, which shaped most conflicts in the Third world. This has unleashed a myriad of forces and processes, which have put to the test the efficacy of the state in a number of countries. Ethno nationalism, democratization, religious fundamentalism, to mention only a few has assumed new significance as rallying points for social and political mobilization.

The trend in a number of countries appears to be towards disintegration and fragmentation which has been called "black holes". A "black hole" is a term coined by Richard Falk as a way of accounting for the disintegration of nation states or 'nation-state projects' in the context of global change. Black holes or the threat of them lead to regional security crises as has already become a reality in countries such as the former Yugoslavia in Europe, Sri Lanka in South Asia, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and

DR Congo in Africa and is a threat to many more (Hettne and Andras, 1994). This paper looks at the eruption of black holes in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the West African Security complex and in Lesotho and DR Congo in the Southern African security complex and the conflict resolution mechanisms used by the regional groupings, namely ECOWAS and SADC, to deal with the problems resulting from the black holes. The debacle of the United Nations in Somalia and the resumption of war in Angola in 1992 led to a widespread perception that in future the world body will be less willing to intervene in the world's troubled spots. Against this backdrop, it has been suggested that the future will see more regional conflict resolution initiatives. The normative appeal of regional security mechanisms, however, is yet to be grounded in empirical reality. Internationally brokered peace efforts have a checkered history. They have been dogged by a plethora of problems, which have included failure to bring about the cooperation of all the parties to the conflict, lack of political authority by mediating parties over the warring factions and accusations of partiality. It is hoped that the validity (or the lack) of a number of these variables will be brought out in this paper.

The cases chosen for these studies can all, with minimum misgivings, be located within clearly identifiable regional security complexes. The weakness of most states in Africa has been cited as one of the reasons why it is hard to identify regional security complexes in this part of the world. There are, of course, exceptions to this general observation. Southern Africa, for example, is one such case. In this regard, Lesotho and DR Congo fall within a clearly defined security complex, which corresponds roughly, to all the members of SADC. Relations with the regional power/hegemon - South Africa, have shaped this security complex. In the Liberia and Sierra Leone cases, the regional power/hegemon - Nigeria's ability to mobilize the other ECOWAS members into an intervention force to intervene in Liberia and single handedly intervened militarily in Sierra Leone has mapped out the contours of a regional security complex in the West African sub-region. Besides it is quite clear that to a certain degree the conflict in Sierra Leone was fanned by the war in Liberia.

Conflict resolution mechanisms

The regional conflicts discussed have certain variables in common. All the conflicts have been intra state rather than inter state. The Lesotho crisis and the DR Congo conflict were all conflicts within the borders of the two states. When conflicts break reactions to them from the regional groupings usually involved mediation, use of good offices, preventive diplomacy and the use of an intervention force. A distinction is made between conflict resolution and conflict management. Conflict resolution refers to the elimination of the causes of the underlying

conflict, generally with the agreement of the parties. Conflict management refers to the elimination, neutralization or control of the means of pursuing either the conflict or the crisis. Conflict resolution is a tall order. It is rarely accomplished by direct action and is more frequently achieved only over long periods of time although the proximate aspects of conflict can sometimes be eliminated by agreement among the parties (Zartman, 1985: 8). The conflict resolution mechanisms that the regional grouping may use would include formal conflict resolution structures such as standing or ad hoc committees or informal (ad hoc) mechanism to try and resolve the conflict. The conflict resolution mechanism used also depends on the power relations within the region concerned. The power relations may be symmetrical or asymmetrical. A symmetric power relationship involves states with virtual equal power relationships with no particular state wielding much power both militarily and economically. An asymmetric relationship would involve the existence of one state within the region with overwhelmming military and economic power. The outcome of the conflict resolution effort might be conflict prevention, management or resolution. Kieh (2002: 13) notes three types of conflict resolution theories, peace-making, peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Peace-making theories revolve around peaceful methods of conflict resolution-inquiry, good offices, negotiation, mediation, arbitration and adjudication. Good offices entail an impartial third party serving as a conduit for the transmission of information between or among the parties to the conflict. In an Inquiry, the third party does not offer proposals for the settlement of the conflict. In negotiation theory there is the holding of face to face discussions between or among the parties to the conflict. When there is mediation there is the intervention of a neutral third party in the conflict for the purpose of proffering solutions for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. When there is peacekeeping there is legitimate collective intervention aimed at avoiding the outbreak or resurgence of violent conflict between the disputants. These elements of the regional conflict mechanism would be used in assessing the extent to which the region has been successful or otherwise in dealing with the conflicts that have arisen in the regions.

Regional intervention

When conflicts break out, one of the conflict resolution mechanisms is regional intervention. This may either be by mediation or peacekeeping forces. Looking at the conditions under which third parties intervene in intrastate conflicts, Reagan (1996: 340) notes that they do so in order to bring an end to the violence associated with the underlying dispute. The intervener tries sufficiently to bolster one side to compel the opposing side to quit fighting. Continued fighting is rarely, if ever, the goal of a contending group. The interests of the intervener, further-

more, revolve largely around ensuring political stability in a specific region of the globe; one way to facilitate this is to help contain overt military violence-be it by orchestrating a cease-fire or facilitating the defeat of the opposing group. It is assumed that third parties do not intervene to exacerbate or prolong the fighting. This also consciously excludes the role of trying to resolve the underlying issues involved in the dispute from the motivations behind the decision to intervene.

Carment and Rowlands (1998: 572) argue that a general perception now prevails that the fundamental nature of third-party intervention in conflicts has changed. They note that controversial tasks that third parties are now required to perform appear to some observers to be incompatible with traditional forms of multilateral intervention such as peacekeeping and preventive deployment. These perceptions have been reinforced by the negative results yielded from some recent operations. They argue that recent missions have outwardly adhered to traditional principles of peacekeeping such as belligerent consent, impartiality and the use of force in self-defense only. In reality, many of these missions have moved away from these principles toward the large- scale and often disproportionate use of force to induce a de-escalation in violence. When conflicts go awry, peacekeepers must be able to respond to events in the theater. Situations in which consent is unobtainable or the belligerents are not easily separated are not amenable to static exogenous solutions. Unless a peacekeeping mission quickly adapts to changes on the ground or is prepared to take preemptive action, the associated peace process is doomed to failure. Third parties must not only be aware of the ramifications of escalation, they must also be capable of deciding when withdrawal is a prudent course of action. They wonder when it is in the interests of third parties not to intervene and under what conditions will low- intensity missions be successful? They argue that the use of force by peacekeepers in the context of widespread intra-state violence is almost entirely a function of medium -term strategic interactions between peacekeepers and belligerents. Our analysis of the conflict resolution mechanisms would look at the extent to which third party intervention has been successful or otherwise in the two security complex case studies.

The Southern African Regional Security Complex

The members of the southern African security complex are the fourteen countries that also constitute the members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).[1] The evolution of this complex has been shaped by several historical, political and economic factors (Olsen and Stademan, 1994). From the historical point of

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[1] The 14 member states are: Angola, Botswana, DR Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

view, most economies of the region were incorporated into the world capitalist system as peripheries of the South African regional economic center. Consequently, nearly all the economies of the region are tied to the South African economy in an asymmetric fashion. Secondly, independent African states in the region forged strong bonds of cooperation during the process of liberation from white minority rule. This is something that a number of observers think can provide a basis for developing regional conflict resolution mechanisms. Lastly, the fact that all the countries in the security complex are also members of the same regional economic grouping is also a source of guarded optimism for the success of regional security building measures. The close interdependence binding the southern African countries together and the fact that most of them are ruled by "weak" and "divided" states is what qualifies them as members of the same regional security complex. Conflict in any one-member state is very likely to spill over into the neighboring countries. It is this fact that is recognized by many commentators to be the driving force towards a regional approach to conflict resolution. Conflict in the security complex is usually intra rather than inter state and they have largely been as a result of various struggles for power by various groups within the state rather than conflicts between and among states.

The role of SADC in the Regional Security Complex

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was created by members of the Front Line states coordinating the support of the international community against white racist rule in Southern Africa for two principal reasons. First, it was aimed at minimizing the member countries' economic dependence on South Africa in order to reduce the latter's blackmail on their economies. Second, it was also seen as a way of complimenting the international community's economic sanctions against South Africa. At the political level, members of the Front Line states consulted regularly, exchanged information, adopted common strategies and positions concerning the politico-military situation and organized various forms of assistance for the liberation movements in the region (Khadiagala, 1994).

During the cold war period, conflicts in southern Africa were largely influenced by the super-power overlay. In this context, the Front Line states proved very useful in reporting matters to the wider international fora namely, the OAU, the Non Aligned Movement and the UN. The end of the cold war lifted the super-power overlay from the southern African regional security complex. This and the successful staging of the first all-race multiparty elections in South Africa in 1994 ushered the region into a new phase of cooperation. This has created an enabling environment for the creation of regional security enhancing mechanisms. The shift towards multiparty systems

of government and market centered economic reforms in most countries of the region gave further impetus to the above process. This, however, is not to understate the overwhelming obstacles which southern African states must overcome before they can reap the benefits of multifaceted cooperation.

One problem that still remains, for example, is how to overcome their narrow national interests for the higher regional good. But the fact that southern African countries have recognized their mutual security concerns can be evidenced from the proposal to create the Association of Southern African States (ASA). Without celebration the Front Line States (FLS) were quietly transformed into the little known Association of Southern African States (ASAS) in early 1996. This was so despite the alliance's historical role in the thirty years preceding the multi-party election in South Africa in 1994. The quietness symbolizes the end of apartheid and the significance given to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (Khadiagala, 1994). This organization was envisaged to carry on from where the Front Line states left off, but with a more sharply focused security concern. ASAS has yet to create the appropriate organs for dealing formally with conflicts in the region. But the case of the conflict that took place in Lesotho in 1994 is probably illustrative of how this organization, once fully established, is going to function.

Regional intervention in the Lesotho crisis

In January 1994, fighting erupted between rival factions of the Lesotho army. Due to Lesotho's history of political instability and military intervention in politics, this development worried neighboring countries. The fear was that the problem might spill over into South Africa at a time when the latter was walking a tight rope towards the first all race elections scheduled for April 1994. An emergency meeting of southern African states was called to search for immediate ways to diffuse the tension. The meeting moved a motion to support the democratically elected Basuto Congress Party (BCP) and was unanimously supported. There was a proposal to send a combined military contingent if the situation did not quickly return to normal. On May 23 1998 a general election was held in Lesotho the result of which was rejected by the opposition which claimed that it was rigged in favour of the ruling party. The SADC set up a commission of inquiry to investigate the opposition allegation but found no evidence of fraud. The opposition refused to accept the verdict and turned to the army for support. There was an attempted coup and the situation prompted the SADC to intervene on September 22, 1998 with an SADC force led by South Africa. The force was made up of the South African defense force (SADF) and the Botswana defense force (BDF). In this way order was restored to Lesotho. Although the Lesotho case may

provide pointers to the shape of things to come, the case's generalisability is limited. This is primarily because Lesotho is a small country that is completely encapsulated by and dependent on, South Africa. It is thus highly vulnerable to pressure from the other, more powerful members of the region. It is doubtful that similar tactics could be applied to a bigger and stronger country like South Africa. The case of Lesotho nonetheless, still remains instructive because of the resolve demonstrated by members of the region to find a quick solution to a conflict that had the potential of blowing out of proportions.

The Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Since 1996 a regional war has raged in and around the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). What began as an internal crisis for the troubled Central African state, expanded to take in an assortment of military players – from a medley of marauding armed groups to government armies fighting extraterritorial wars. The war which brought Laurent-Desire Kabila and the AFDL (Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo-Zaire) to power in the DRC, in May 1997, was actually embedded in the larger context of three hostilities: the Great Lakes conflict, the rebellion in Southern Sudan and the Angolan civil war. Zaire, as the DRC was then known constituted the junction where the various paths of this undeclared war zone converged. Two reasons account for this.

First the Zairean state under Mobutu had virtually collapsed thus leaving a "black hole." Its borders were crossed with impunity. There was almost no effective national army or administration; communications between the centre and the periphery were very poor. The country subsisted essentially on an informal economy. Kabila came to power as a result of a combination of two main factors: on the one hand was the extreme weakness of Mobutu's Forces Armees Zairoises (FAZ) which mirrored the collapsed state, on the other, was the formidable regional coalition which supported Kabila's rebellion. Five out of Zaire's nine immediate neighbours actively contributed to the downfall of the Mobutu regime. But it was a fragile alliance that ran the risk of losing its cohesion, once the common objective - the overthrow of Mobutu - was achieved. That is exactly what happened. Contrary to the expectation of Kabila's sponsors, the new regime in Kinshasa proved unable or unwilling to solve the two problems closest to their hearts: the security of the DRC's eastern neighbours and the status of the Congolese Tutsi. Although security arrangements were signed between the Kabila regime and Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, the Congo did not only remain a source of insecurity, its territory deteriorated into an even easier facility for attacks against these neighbours. Frustrated

by what was perceived as "Tutsi hegemony" in the region, increasing numbers of local militia, such as the Mai-Mai and the Bembe, lent a helping hand to the Ugandan, Rwandan and Burundian rebel groups. On a number of occasions, elements of Kabila's new Congolese army gave support to insurgents, e.g. by escorting them to the Rwandan border on commando raids.

The unresolved issue of the status of the Banyarwanda and the Congolese Tutsi in particular was the second enduring problem. The anti-Rwandan feelings in existence before the war have since grown worse. The problem is attributed to the attitude of a number of Rwandan and Congolese Tutsi, civilians and military alike. They were said to behave as if they are operating in occupied territory. Local populations have been harassed, insulted and humiliated. Soon after taking power, Kabila faced a major dilemma. During the rebellion, it was clear that his own military and political base was small and that he needed the material support of external forces. Rwanda and Uganda supplied this support in the first phase of the war and Angola (in part through the Katangese Gendarmes) during the second phase. Kabila was initially well received for toppling Mobutu, his dependence on the Rwandan forces soon became a liability for domestic legitimacy. The continued presence of foreign troops and officers, mainly of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) gave rise to accusations that Kabila was a mere puppet of Rwanda and to a lesser extent of Uganda.

Towards the end of 1997 Kabila began trying to change his image, to convince the Congolese people that it had liberated itself from what public opinion increasingly perceived as Rwandan overrule. By early 1998 the signs of a worsening relationship between the Kabila regime and its Rwanda and Ugandan sponsors became increasingly apparent. In April of that year, civil society organizations in South Kivu warned against "threats of a foreign aggression" and noted "a strong concentration of foreign troops on the other side of the border as well as a massive infiltration of men" into the Uvira region. On July 11 1997 a Congolese officer Celestin Kifwa, replaced Col. James Kabari, a Rwandan, as Chief of Staff of the FAC. Four days later, the Ugandan army installed a headquarters base in Ntabi, 15 km inside Congolese territory. On July 26, Kabila ordered the Rwandan "and other foreign troops" out of the country. On August 2, fighting broke out in the eastern areas of Goma, Bukavu and Uvira and in Kinshasa where Rwandan and Banyamulenge troops attempted to seize military camps. A rebel movement, calling itself Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie (RCD), emerged. The rebellion spread in the East with Ugandan, Rwandan and Burundian troops spearheading the offensive. Rwandan Ugandan and Banyamulenge troops also seized the Kitona army base and captured a rapidly widening area, including the port of Matadi and the Inga power dam.

The new war however did not prove to be a simple repeat of the 1996 - 1997 rebellion. The frailty of the alliance, which had come together to overthrow Mobutu, was immediately exposed as the coalition started to disintegrate propelled by the reasoning that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" as former allies became enemies. On the Western front Kabila was saved by the intervention of an Angolan expeditionary force. The force had been dispatched to give him support in accordance with a decision taken in August in Harare when Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola responded positively to a request for assistance in the framework of the SADC, which the DRC had become a member. Both Angola and Zimbabwe poured in thousands of troops and Namibia sent a few hundred. By the end of September, Chad Libya and the Sudan and a number of francophone West African countries expressed political support for Kabila concerning the "aggression against the DRC" at a summit held in Libreville, Gabon in September. By early 1999 the conflict had stabilized. In the North a new rebel movement, the movement de liberation du Congo (MLC) supported by Uganda succeeded in occupying a large territory. The RCD had split into two factions, one initially based in Kisangani and later in Bunia, supported by Uganda, while the other supported by Rwanda maintained its headquarters in Goma. The differences between Uganda and Rwanda led to fighting between their armies in Kisangani in August 1999 and May 2000. Meanwhile the Congolese populations in the East passively and actively resisted what they perceive as a Rwandan occupation.

Third party intervention in the Congo conflict

At the start of the war in the DR Congo, attempts were made by African leaders to put an end to a conflict, which was seen as potentially damaging to the entire continent. Several conference and summits organized through 1998 and 1999 culminated in the signing of the Lusaka peace accord on July 10, 1999. The accord had two main parts, the military and political. The military part spells out the terms of a cease-fire, putting in place a Joint Military Commission (JMC) involving the warring parties. Another is the deployment of an international peacekeeping mission (MONUC) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the disarmament of the so-called "negative forces" and the withdrawal of foreign troops. The political part of the accord includes the convening of an "inter-Congolese dialogue" and the re-establishment of the authority of the Congolese state over the entire national territory. While the political part is essentially national in nature, the military part also involves the non- Congolese actors, which maintain troops in the country. One weakness of the accord was the lack of an implementation engine, a void that was filled at the end of 1999 by the appointment of the former Botswana President, Sir Ketumile Masire,

as facilitator. South Africa did not send troops to intervene in the DR Congo but played a facilitating role in organizing the Pretoria Accord which was signed by all remaining warring parties to end the fighting and establish a government of national unity. This paved the way for a transitional government set up in July 2003. Joseph Kabila remained the president and was joined by four vice presidents representing the former government, former rebel groups and the political opposition. The transitional government held a successful constitutional referendum in December 2005 and a series of elections in 2006 to determine the presidency and National Assembly seats. Joseph Kabila won the election to the presidency.

The SADC Regional Security Complex and the conflict in DR Congo

The problems of the regional security complex have been highlighted by scholars looking at globalization and new regionalism (MacLean in Grant and Soderbaum, 2003). She sees the new regionalism as an integrated feature of globalization and like globalization the new regionalism is not a singular or uni-directional process and the pro-cesses that constitute the new regionalism may be contradictory. This multi-dimensional and often contradic-tory character of the new regionalism is revealed in various contributions and reactions to conflict in Central Africa and top-down and bottom-up forces that are combining in the establishment of complex forms of political organization. This is demonstrated by the new emphasis on organizations like the SADC and on their more specialized peace-keeping and peace-building mechanisms such as the SADC's organ on Politics, Defence and Security, which was established in 1996. This organ has virtually not functioned since its creation. It is administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe and headed by President Robert Mugabe who was elected by his colleagues at the inaugural summit. There has been reluctance by a number of member states to begin the rotation of leadership before formal agreement on the mandate and functions of the Organ after disagreement over whether it should become an integral part of the SADC structure. After the military interventions in Lesotho by South Africa and Botswana and in the DR Congo by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, it was eventually agreed that those SADC states that felt able to intervene to assist a member state at the request of its government, should do so.

Sandra MacLean (2003: 117) argues that the SADC as a regional organization has been most affected by the conflict in the DRC and yet it has been largely silent on the issue. This she thinks largely explains the modest success in its conflict resolution efforts. Most of the peace efforts have been led by South Africa. In the months leading to the defeat of the former President of Zaire

Mobutu by Laurent Kabila in 1997, President Mandela tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a cease-fire agreement between the government and the rebels. When Kabila became embroiled soon thereafter in the civil and regional war, Mandela continued as ex-President and respected elder statesman, to press for a peaceful solution to the DRC conflict. Under Mbeki's leadership, the government of South Africa continued its efforts bilaterally and multilaterally through the SADC to bring the warring parties to the negotiating table. South Africa sent peacekeepers to support the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) that was established as part of the 1999 Lusaka Peace Accords. South Africa also hosted and played a central role in the Sun City meetings of March and April 2002 which concluded with the Accord signed by the Kinshasa government and several of the opposing factions. These efforts have been inadequate to establish conditions that will establish conditions that will enhance human security in the region. Several months after the Accord came into effect, a humanitarian crisis was developing as people were fleeing from the surge in fighting between government forces, renegade troops and rebels in the eastern DRC which uprooted more people with new waves expected to add to the over 100,000 who had already fled that latest conflict (Africa Research Bulletin: September 1 – 30, 2007).

The West African Regional Security Complex

The members of the West African security complex are the fifteen countries that also constitute the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)[2]. The evolution of this complex has been shaped by the decision of the fifteen states to form an economic union as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on May 28, 1975 in Lagos and a multiplicity of reasons was responsible for its formation including economic motivation that perceived ECOWAS integration as national and regional development strategy. Politically ECOWAS regionalism was assumed to serve as an instrument for foreign policy and a collective bargaining bloc and a motivation for south-south co- operation and collective solidarity the historic tradition of functional co-operation in the sub-region and factors relating to the maintenance of regional peace and security. (Francis, 2006: 145). The motivations for the formation of ECOWAS, according to Olatunde (1980) were economic development and regional security. Nigeria was instrumental in the formation of ECOWAS and provided politico-economic leadership in the effort to develop a collective regional peace and security system in West Africa (Francis, 2006: 147). Francis argues that despite its primary objective of regional economic development,

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[2] The 15 member states are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

ECOWAS countries challenges of regional security threats have been a constant concern of ECOWAS member countries. The uncertainty and hostility stemmed from the cold war environment of the post-independence period in which members were forced to operate and conduct international affairs which was a perennial threat to state security and regime survival. In the 1970s the sub-region was faced with the constant threats of violent and bloody military coups d'etats, inter state wars, border disputes, the Biafran civil war in Nigeria, extra regional interventions and foreign-backed mercenary activities that occurred in Cape Verde, Benin and Guinea. The international security environment was perceived as a threat to the survival of the regimes of the newly independent states.

These West African states like their Southern African counterparts were bound together by these threats of the international security environment and the fact that most of them are also ruled by "weak" and "divided" states is what qualifies them as members of the same regional security complex. Conflict in any one-member state is very likely to spill over into the neighboring countries as happened with the Liberian and Sierra Leone civil wars. Conflict in the West African security complex has been intra rather than inter state and they have largely been the result of various struggles for power by various groups within the state rather than conflicts between and among states. This has been true for the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The Liberian Conflict

From December 1989, Liberia was engulfed in a brutal civil war. The war led to the overthrow and assassination of the government of Master Sergeant Samuel Doe, who had himself come to power in a bloody military coup d'etat on April 12, 1980. The conflict led to the flight of refugees to neighboring countries like Sierra Leone, Guinea (Conakry) and Cote d'Ivoire and later to other countries in the sub region like Ghana, Nigeria and the Gambia. Apart from these, a large number of Liberians were internally displaced by the conflict. The civil war that engulfed Liberia can be traced to the politics of privilege and oppression that Liberia was subjected to as a result of the way it was colonized as a colony of freed slaves from America by the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1821. Between 1955 and 1980, a de-facto one party state existed with the True Whig Party (TWP) as the only party operating in the country. People were forced to join the party and portions of their salaries regularly taken without their consent to finance it. Economically, Liberia was poor and underdeveloped and members of the ruling party used the state to enrich themselves. Flagrant nepotism existed in public and private employment (Konneh in Kieh 2002: 76).

Prior to the April 12, 1980 coup d'etat, about 4% of the population controlled more than 65% of state wealth.

Similarly, the distribution of income was also skewed: the average annual income of urban dwellers was US$600, while that of their rural counterparts was US$70. (Kieh, 1992) It is instructive to note that the 1980 coup d'etat was touched off by riots due to an increase in the price of the staple food, rice.

Given the social, political and economic situation of the country, Liberians saw the April 1980 coup d'etat which brought Master Sergeant Samuel Doe to power, as the panacea to deal with the more than 133 years of political repression and socio economic malaise. This, however, was not to be, as the Doe regime continued to operate the corrupt and lopsided political and socio-economic system it had inherited. The coup therefore changed only the personnel that run the state, while the corrupt and lopsided political and socio-economic system remained intact. Politically, Doe became more repressive and those who opposed him were murdered. Doe capped a dismal political performance as a military leader by forming a political party and won a dubious election. Economically, the country's situation worsened. The economic growth rate dropped from 3.2% in 1978 to 0.9% in 1985; the country's foreign debt rose from US$652 million in 1978 to US$1.7 billion by 1988 and the GDP dropped from US$800 million in 1980 to less than US$700 million by 1988. Socially unemployment rose from 505 in 1980 to 58.2% in 1988. Illiteracy increased to 80% in 1985 and infant mortality rose to 145% by 1988. This dismal performance of the Doe regime, led to frustration, disappointment and consternation among the people and various abortive attempts were made to overthrow his regime. Liberians were willing to support any group that would dislodge the Doe regime from power. It was in this crisis of legitimacy of the Doe regime that Charles Taylor led his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in an armed rebellion to overthrow the Doe regime on December 24, 1989 (Kieh, 1992).

By the middle of 1990, the NPFL had captured about 90% of the country with only the capital, Monrovia, in the hands of the Doe government. Initially, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the regional economic grouping, adopted a wait and see attitude. What was to goad ECOWAS into action was the flow of refugees from Liberia and atrocities in the civil war that affected other ECOWAS citizens in Liberia. Refugee started pouring out of Nimba county which borders Cote d'Ivoire and where the NPFL started its invasion. Refugees also poured into all the neighboring countries, namely, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Guinea and other countries like Ghana, Nigeria and the Gambia. This was early conflict warning for ECOWAS. The NPFL also attacked ECOWAS citizens whose governments were perceived as supporting the Doe government and were against the NPFL. These were citizens from Ghana, Nigeria and Guinea. Ghana and Nigeria were thus forced to dispatch ships to Monrovia and Freetown to evacuate their stranded citizens. In so doing, the ships were also forced to pick up Liberian refugees as well.

Third Party Intervention in the Liberian Conflict

Before ECOWAS stepped into the Liberian conflict, the religious leaders of Liberia took the first steps to find a solution to the conflict. They issued an appeal to the NPFL and the Doe regime to settle their differences peacefully, but this was ignored. The religious leaders next developed a peace plan that called for a cease-fire, a peace conference and improvement in internal security to ensure the safety of the citizens. The plan was accepted by the Doe regime, but rejected by the NPFL. When the efforts of the religious leaders failed, there followed an increase in the level of violence and ECOWAS decided to intervene in the conflict. The decision was unprecedented in the politics of African international relations, because ECOWAS is basically an economic organization with a non-intervention clause in its treaty, which prohibits the involvement of member states in the internal affairs of members. Various reasons led to this decision: First, Liberia had degenerated into anarchy and carnage raged across the country as thousands of civilians were killed. Second ECOWAS members had their citizens stranded in Liberia as a result of the conflict. Furthermore, the NPFL included dissidents from several ECOWAS member states whose leaders were concerned that the conflict could have a domino effect on their countries. According to Dumbuya (2008), what moved ECOWAS to "invoke a right of humanitarian intervention" under customary international law were the gross human rights violations that took place during the Liberian civil war (1989-1997). In the absence of UN or OAU action to stop the carnage in Liberia, ECOWAS at its May 1990 meeting in Banjul, the Gambia, endorsed General Ibrahim Babangida's proposal and established the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) to mediate disputes and conflicts between member states. In July, military representatives met in Freetown, Sierra Leone, to explore the possibility of establishing a peacekeeping force for Liberia. At the SMC's first meeting in Banjul on August 6 - 7, the decision was taken to form ECOMOG, comprising troops drawn from the SMC states, in addition to Sierra Leone and Guinea. Among other things, the SMC urged all the parties to the conflict to cease all military or para-military activities and acts of violence and cooperate with ECOWAS in the effective maintenance of a cease-fire and the reestablishment of law and order. ECOWAS created a Special Emergency Fund for the Liberian operation with an initial amount of $50 million.

ECOWAS formulated a peace plan that called for the following: (a) a cease- fire (b) the formation of an ECOWAS peacekeeping force to intervene in Liberia to restore peace and order and (c) the establishment of an interim government. The plan was accepted by the Doe government and the Prince Johnson breakaway INPFL

but was rejected by Charles Taylor's NPFL. Despite this situation, the ECOWAS peacekeeping force, called the ECOWAS monitoring group (ECOMOG) was sent into Liberia in August 1990. ECOWAS by this decision gave itself the novel task of trying to resolve a regional conflict all by itself. They felt it was a regional conflict and should be resolved by the regional organization even though the organization is not equipped to deal with a conflict like that. On its arrival in Monrovia, ECOMOG was attacked by Charles Taylor's NPFL and the force had to fight its way to take control of Monrovia and pushed the NPFL to the outskirts of the capital.

To implement the rest of its peace plan, the ECOWAS convened an All Liberia Peace Conference in Banjul, Gambia, from August 27 to September 3, 1990 to form an interim government to rule Liberia until elections could be organized. All the major parties in the conflict namely, the Doe regime and Prince Johnson's INPFL attended except Charles Taylor's NPFL that refused to attend. The conference made the following decisions: (a) that the 1984 constitution would be kept in force with modify-cations (b) an interim government was elected (c) the various political parties and interest groups would be represented in the cabinet and in other public agencies. Charles Taylor's NPFL rejected the decisions of the conference but demanded the presidency of the interim government. The conference rejected the NPFL demand. The NPFL therefore established its own interim govern-ment in Gbarnga city, in the hinterland. This effectively divided Liberia in two, with the NPFL controlling about 90% of the country and the other 10% under the control of the interim government. The conflict was further complicated by the capture and assassination of Master Sergeant Samuel Doe by the forces of Prince Johnson's INPFL. Given the impasse, ECOWAS decided to pursue other options to resolve the conflict. These options were mainly the hosting of the warring factions by the various ECOWAS heads of state who tried to get them to reach a settlement. The various efforts included the following.

On November 30, 1990, at a meeting in Bamako, the warring factions, namely the NPFL, the INPFL and the remnants of Master Sergeant Doe's forces – the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), signed a formal cease-fire agreement to end the genocidal civil war. This was known as the Bamako Accord. On December 21 1990, the warring factions met in Banjul. The NPFL indicated a willingness to end the conflict if another All Liberia Conference were held in Liberia to elect a new interim government. The NPFL later went back on the agreement. From February 12-13 1991, members of the ECOWAS standing mediation committee, the president of the interim government of national unity (IGNU) of Liberia and the leaders of the three warring factions, met in Lome (Togo) to develop the modalities for implementing the cease-fire agreement. The NPFL leader, Mr. Charles Taylor, after signing the agreement later insisted that he did not accept it. From March 16 - April 2, 1991, Liberia's

political parties, interest groups, Liberians living abroad and the ECOWAS met in Monrovia. The meeting was to elect a new interim government as a way of overcoming the impasse that had prolonged the civil war. The NPFL leader Mr. Charles Taylor did not attend the conference, citing security reasons but sent a delegation. The meeting re-elected Dr. Amos Sawyer as the president of the interim government. Mr. Taylor's NPFL was allocated 40% of the seats in the interim legislature and three seats on the interim Supreme Court. The conference agreed that Mr. Taylor would be the only top official of the interim government to be eligible to contest the presidency in the ensuing national elections. Mr. Taylor again rejected the decisions of the conference and the political stalemate continued. Other accords were subsequently signed but they all failed to resolve the conflict. These accords were signed at meetings in Yamoussoukro in Cote d'Ivoire, under the auspices of President Houphuet Boigny. In July 1993 another accord was signed between the interim government, the NPFL and the United Liberation Move-ment of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) in Coutonou, under President Nicephore Soglo, who was the ECOWAS chairman. That accord was supplanted by the agreement signed in September 1994 in Akosombo (Ghana) between the NPFL, ULIMO and the AFL under the auspices of the ECOWAS chairman President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana. That agreement was thought to have all the ingredients for resolving the conflict. However, it came up against opposition from various groups in Liberia.

The intractable nature of that conflict seemed to lie with an apparent lack of confidence in the capability of the ECOWAS standing mediation committee by nearly all the factions in Liberia. Nigeria, the major economic and military power in ECOWAS, was seen by Charles Taylor's NPFL as being the cause of its inability to take over Monrovia and thus take control of the whole country. They also saw Nigeria as supporting the AFL in the conflict. The other factions perceived Ghana as leaning towards Charles Taylor's NPFL and Nigeria was reported not too pleased with that. It was not possible to get the US and the UN to be fully committed to the resolution of the conflict. The UN Security Council did impose an arms embargo on all the warring factions. Libya was believed to be the main arms supplier to Charles Taylor's NPFL through Burkina Faso and the Francophone countries of ECOWAS were believed to be supporting Charles Taylor's NPFL because they perceived Nigeria as trying to impose its will and influence in Liberia. The UN also supported an expanded ECOMOG, which was demanded by Charles Taylor as a condition for agreeing to disarm his forces. This led to the UN paying for the inclusion of troops from Uganda and Tanzania in an expanded ECOMOG. All this did not translate into a bag of carrots and sticks, because ECOWAS does not have the economic resources to offer as carrots to any of the factions. At best ECOWAS offered only sticks by way of a

threat that if the factions did not agree to peace, they might consider a withdrawal of the peacekeeping force; ECOMOG, because it was draining their meager economic resources. This threat came from the ECOWAS chairman at the time President Rawlings of Ghana in his acceptance speech as ECOWS chairman in August 1994 in Abuja, Nigeria. That was seen as an empty threat because some of the warring factions would have seen it as good riddance as it would have enabled them to settle the conflict on the battlefield.

ECOWAS and the Sierra Leone conflict

The Sierra Leone war started when a small group of RUF rebels invaded the country from Liberia on 23 March, 1991 and occupied the eastern border village of Bomaru. The invasion was seen then as Charles Taylor's revenge against the decision of the All People's Congress (APC) government to support ECOMOG's operation in Liberia. However, current research suggests that the invasion could have happened even if Sierra Leone had not participated in the Liberian conflict (Abdullah, 1997; Abdullah and Muana, 1998). Foday Sankoh's RUF and Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) had resolved to assist each other in their plans to overthrow their respective governments. In April 1992, young soldiers who were active in the war front against the RUF overthrew the APC government after twenty-four years in office. They proceeded to form the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) under the leadership of Captain Valentine Strasser. With the state's inability to contain the rebellion, civilians in the east and south organized a people's militia (Kamajor) to supplement the efforts of the army. Relations between the army and this militia were acrimonious but manageable (Bangura, 2000). Pressures for democratic rule intensified in 1995 as citizens came to associate the problems of the war with the army itself. Strasser's deputy, Brigadier Maada Bio, overthrew him in January 1996, opened negotiations with the RUF and held elections in February 1996, which were won by the SLPP, led by Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. He signed a peace agreement with the RUF in Abidjan in November 1996, but Sankoh later reneged on it (Bangura, 2000). The army overthrew the Kabbah government on 25 May 1997 and a major, Johnny Paul Koroma, who was awaiting trial for an attempted coup, was asked to head the regime. The new Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) invited the RUF to join their regime; Sankoh was made deputy president and several RUF members were given posts. Politicians, civil servants, lawyers, business persons and other members of the elite who felt alienated from the Kabbah government joined or supported the AFRC. A large proportion of these Area origin. ECOMOG largely led by Nigerian troops individuals were of northern and Western got rid of the violent and predatory AFRC/RUF regime on 12 February, 1998, after six days

of battle in Freetown and Kabbah was returned to power on 10 March.

Dependence on ECOMOG

Before the military overthrew the elected Sierra Leonean government on 25 May 1997, ECOMOG (which had been formed as a peacekeeping force in the Liberian conflict) was not engaged in Sierra Leone. At the time of the coup, the only foreign soldiers in Sierra Leone were a small contingent of Nigerian troops stationed at the presidential lodge. These soldiers had been posted to Sierra Leone under a bilateral agreement between Nigeria and Sierra Leone (Status of Forces Agreement). Nigerian troops were transported from Liberia to protect its endangered soldiers in Freetown and at the same time to attempt to overturn the coup. A meeting in Conakry of ECOWAS foreign ministers on 27 June 1997 supported a three-pronged strategy to overturn the coup - dialogue, sanctions and the ultimate use of force. At the ECOWAS Summit meeting at Abuja on 28 - 29 August, 1997 a decision was taken to extend ECOMOG action to Sierra Leone. The UN Security Council later endorsed ECOMOG's policies on the comprehensive embargo against the AFRC/RUF in its Resolution 1132 (1997).

The main troop contributors to the ECOMOG force were Nigeria and Guinea. Many Francophone countries and Ghana were critical of the military operation but supported the embargo. ECOMOG initially tried to broker a peace settlement in Conakry in October 1997, but the failure of the AFRC/RUF regime to honour the Conakry commitments led ECOMOG to eject it from power in February 1998. Nigerian military power was to be the centerpiece of the restored Kabbah government's strategic policy. The hero of the ECOMOG operation, Max Khobe, was given the post of chief of defence staff, since the army of the restored government had defected to the rebels, thus placing Nigerian military officials in the driving seat of strategic policy-making. Khobe's relations with the deputy defence minister, Hinga Norman, were not always cordial given the fact that Norman was the leader of the Kamajors the traditional hunters who had risen to be a quasi military force in the fight against the RUF rebels. The success of the ECOMOG component of the government's policy depended on continued Nigerian support and notably on the willingness of Nigerian policy-makers and soldiers to absorb high human and financial costs if the war dragged on (Bangura, 2000).

The ECOWAS mechanism for conflict resolution

At a summit in Lome on December 10 1999, member states of ECOWAS adopted the protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The Mechanism

thus becomes the Organization's constitution on collective security in the West African- region. In a clear departure from the OAU/AU traditional principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states, the Mechanism empowers ECOWAS to intervene in internal conflicts of member states as a result of massive violation of human rights and a breakdown of the rule of law (Abass:2000). The Mechanism, which is yet to be ratified by the required 9 member states, has come after the ECOWAS interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone and it is in that context that we look at its provisions. The appearance of the term 'collective security' in the provisions of the Mechanism is indication of ECOWAS's determination to define at the onset the operational ambit of the Mechanism. Following the problems encountered by ECOMOG in its intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Mechanism notes that in the future, ECOWAS' interventions in the sub-regional conflicts will no longer be confined to peacekeeping, the main purpose for which its monitoring Group-ECOMOG-was esta-blished in 1990 (Abass, 2000: 213). Comparing the Mechanism to the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence (PMAD), Abass notes that article 16 of PMAD provides for intervention by ECOWAS in situations of armed threat or aggression directed against a Member State with the proviso that it must be at the request of the transgressed state. This provision thus limits the interventionist capacity of ECOWAS, compared to NATO where an attack on one member of the alliance is regarded as an attack on all.

Under the revised Treaty of ECOWAS the Authority, made up of the Heads of State and Government of Member State is the primary organ responsible for the general direction and control of the Community. Under subsequent provisions (Article 7) of the Treaty, the Authority mandates the Mediation and Security Council (MSC) to take on its behalf, appropriate decisions for the implementation of the provisions of the Mechanism. This invests the MSC with responsibility for deciding and implementing all policies for conflict prevention, manage-ment and resolution, peacekeeping and security. Article 17 also sets up the following organs to assist the MSC:
(a) The Defence and Security Commission (DSC), (b) The Council of Elders and (c) The ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Given the problem of provision of troops for most collective security systems, Chapter VI of the ECOWAS Mechanism requests Member States to agree to make available to ECOMOG, units, adequate resources for the army, navy, gendarme, police and other military, paramilitary or civil formation necessary for the accomplishment of the mission. The Mechanism thus places ECOMOG under the MSC as a standing force charged with the task of observing and monitoring, peacekeeping and restoration of peace, enforcement of sanctions, including embargo, preventive deployment, peacebuilding, disarmament and demobili-zation, policing activities including the control of organized

fraud and crime and any other operations as may be mandated by the MSC. ECOMOG is also empowered to undertake humanitarian intervention in support of hu-manitarian assistance. Apparently arising from the complications from its mission to Liberia, in which a cease-fire monitoring mandate quickly transformed into a fully fledged robust peacekeeping operation, the Mecha-nism authorizes intervention in the internal conflicts of member states and provides a list of other permissible interventions. Coming as it did after the ECOMOG interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Mechanism has done all it can to take on board the lessons from the experience of the bold decision to intervene in the conflicts of member states. It remains to be seen how the provisions of the Mechanism would be implemented when a new conflict erupts in a member state. A matrix of regional conflict mechanisms for the two regional security complexes is given in Table 1.

Interpreting the matrix Conflict

resolution mechanism

The interpretation of the matrix would now seek to answer the question posed in our introduction namely why does regional intervention work in some cases and not in others? It is clear from the four case studies in the two security complexes that there is a lack of formal institutional structures in the regional organizations to deal with conflicts even though ECOWAS has now set up a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The ECOWAS Defence and Security Commission in 2005 endorsed a five-year training programme, beginning in 2006, for the Community's Standby Force, to enable it meet the challenges of peace-support operations in the region. This is clearly in response to the problems arising from the ECOMOG intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The lack of a mechanism for conflict resolution in the SADC and ECOWAS security complexes is one factor that would explain the ineffectual regional interventions. The SADC's organ on Politics, Defence and Security, was established in 1996 but the organ has virtually not functioned since its creation. It was set up to be administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe and headed by President Robert Mugabe who was elected at the inaugural summit. Members have not been keen on getting this organ functional. On the nature of the conflicts, all the four examined have been intra-state even though the conflict in the DR Congo drew in forces from Rwanda, Uganda, Angola Zimbabwe and Namibia. The conflict in Liberia was regarded as having impacted the conflict in Sierra Leone in the form of Liberian support for the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Liberian forces however did not fight on the side of the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. On reactions to the conflicts

Table 1. Matrix of regional conflict mechanisms.

Type of conflict	ECOWAS	SADC
Inter State	No	No
Intra state	Yes: Liberia and Sierra Leone Civil Wars	Yes: Lesotho Crisis and DR Congo Civil war
Reactions to conflict		
Intervention Force	Yes	No
Good Offices	No	Yes
Mediation	Yes	No
Conflict resolution mechanism		
Formal	No	No
Informal (Ad Hoc)	Yes	Yes
Good offices	Yes	Yes
Power relations in the region		
Symmetrical	No	No
Asymmetrical	Yes - Nigeria	Yes - South Africa
Outcome		
Conflict Prevention	No	Yes - Lesotho No - DR Congo
Conflict Management	Yes	No
Conflict Resolution	No - Mixed	No - DR Congo Yes - Lesotho
Third Party Intervention	Yes	Yes

ECOWAS sent an intervention force - ECOMOG - as a peacekeeping force in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The mixed fortunes of ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone led to the addition of other forces from outside West Africa and eventually the missions were taken over by the UN. In the case of SADC an intervention force from South Africa and Botswana went to Lesotho but no SADC force was deployed in the DR Congo. The SADC left it to those members who felt able to intervene and thus troops from Angola Zimbabwe and Namibia went to DR Congo. Other non SADC members that intervened in the DR Congo were from Rwanda and Uganda. These countries went to support either the government or fought against it. On the use of good offices, the SADC appointed the former Botswana President, Sir Ketumile Masire, as facilitator in the DR Congo. South Africa also played a facilitating role in organizing the Pretoria Accord which was signed by the warring parties to end the fighting and establish a government of national unity. This paved the way for a transitional government set up in July 2003. ECOWAS combined the use of the intervention force with years of mediation for which several peace accords were signed in both the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts culminating in the eventual peace in the two countries. Thus no formal conflict resolution mechanisms existed in the two complexes prior to the eruption of the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone and DR Congo and Lesotho this led to the ad hoc arrangements to form ECOMOG to intervene in the conflicts in West Africa and in SADC the South African led intervention in Lesotho and the no

formal intervention in DR Congo.

Power relations in the regions

Power relations within a security complex are either symmetric or asymmetric. Where power relations is symmetric then there are many states in the security complex with similar power and no one state has a preponderance of power to tip power relations in its favour. In an asymmetric power relationship one country in the complex has a preponderance of power giving such a state hegemonic influence. The asymmetry in the two regional security complexes serves as a stumbling bloc in the realization of conflict resolution in the two groupings; for example in both cases we could identify regional powers or hegemons – Nigeria for ECOWAS and South Africa for SADC. However notwithstanding the preponderance of power of the two hegemons, power relations within the complex did not make it easy to reach decisions. In the case of the ECOWAS intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone through the use of ECOMOG, some francophone members of ECOWAS were not very keen and that complicated the effectiveness of the mission amid charges of Nigerian bias towards some of the warring factions in Liberia. This culminated in the need for UN peacekeepers and some neutral troops from Tanzania and Uganda. In the case of Sierra Leone, Nigeria single handedly led the ECOMOG intervention before other forces could join. In SADC South Africa with

some support from Botswana made the difference in the intervention in Lesotho even though this could not be replicated in the DR Congo.

Outcome of regional intervention

It is clear from the matrix that where the disputes or conflicts are low key, such as the Lesotho case, the regional organization seems to be able to at least contain if not resolve the potential conflict. It is worth noting that the nature and evolution of the regional organizations themselves has been a factor in their present predicament. Both the ECOWAS and SADC were formed primarily as economic organizations, but they now see themselves forced by changing international relations, particularly at the end of the cold war and the removal of the overlay provided by the superpowers, to assume functions they were not set up to deal with. They have had to deal with conflicts, which had to some extent been suppressed by the cold war. The record of conflict resolution of the two security complexes has been mixed. The SADC intervention in Lesotho was botched and its peace-making efforts in the DR Congo failed and this was the only authentic SADC attempts to forestall conflict in its region. In this regard ECOWAS's diplomatic and military missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were arguably better. In the case of Liberia, it may be argued that ECOWAS prolonged the Liberia civil war causing more harm than good to displaced persons. However the ECOWAS intervention in Sierra Leone saved thousands of lives by providing a buffer between the combatants and hundreds of displaced persons.

THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION AND GOOD OFFICES

Third–party intervention in the case of SADC was effective with the South Africa led intervention in the Lesotho crisis even though this was criticized. The intervention in the DR Congo was ineffective and in the long run it was left to those SADC members who felt able to do so and it had to resort to the good offices role of former Botswana President, Sir Ketumile Masire, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki who hosted the all-party talks of the Congolese warring factions. In the case of the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone various West African leaders hosted peace talks ending in various peace accords and in the case of Liberia it finally took President Obasanjo of Nigeria to offer President Charles Taylor exile in Nigeria which was to pave the way for the final peace accord for Liberia which brought the conflict to an end.

Conclusion

This paper has looked at various inter-state and intra-state conflicts, using G. Kent's concept of conflict as an incompatibility of preferences in a situation with several different possible outcomes. Time and the number of acute conflicts have shown that the UN is not capable of resolving all international conflicts. For this reason, regional organizations have to be prepared to face and resolve these conflicts. They will only be able to do this if they acquire a broader and stronger role. In this regard we should not forget either the idea of a new international division of labor that will permit a successful combination of efforts (Elliason, 1995). At the same time, the preventive action of regional organizations should be defined and considered with more seriousness as well as the institutionalization of mechanisms for conflict resolution. In the post cold war world order, regional organizations require more power, both in the degree and amplitude of their activities. New structures have to be built, which to some extent makes the concept of new regionalism quite useful in the current second wave of Regional Cooperation. (Hettne Bjorn, 1994).

The new regionalism puts more emphasis on the political dimensions as well as in civil society choosing regional solutions for local and national difficulties. Besides, being a multi-dimensional process of integration, it includes the economic, political, social and cultural aspects, always aiming at a better conflict resolution. The success of this enterprise will be shown by a higher degree of regionness. At the same we could not consider the strength of regions without the complete framework of the whole process of globalization since they are intrinsically related and are a way to ensure a peaceful future. Therefore, regional organizations can become stronger but this does not mean they will be closed within themselves, as coordination among them and with the UN will be required. We are looking for a new regionalism with the competence to provide solutions to different kinds of problems, that is, ecology, development, ethnicity, financial resources, etc., a regionalism with the ability to build security structures and also solve some national conflicts that could be more usefully treated within the regional structure. The highest level of regionness means that the region has achieved a certain degree of cohesion is legitimate and is provided with the necessary complex of decision-making. In a regional security complex, where the national securities of the member states are interwoven, the institutional mechanism should eliminate all possible forms of the use of force for conflict resolution and should also create the necessary structures for peaceful conflict resolution both inter-states and intra-states; one of the priorities will be to find new ways to increase or create the cooperation in all fields between countries of the same region.

The conflict resolution mechanism of ECOWAS has not been very effective and the organization has put in place a Mechanism to deal with conflicts even though it is yet to be ratified by the required 9 members. SADC is yet to put in place its organ on Politics, Defence and Security into effect due to the lack of agreement on the mandate and functions of the Organ. In explaining why regional

intervention work in some cases and not in others it is our view that it is a function of the level of regionness of the regional security complex. The level of regionness of both SADC and ECOWAS is not high enough and both have not reached the degree of cohesion necessary for complex decision-making given the fact that both were set up as economic groupings with no mechanisms for conflict resolution.

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