

The Trajectory of United Nations and Regional Organisations Peacekeeping in Africa: Theory and Practice

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Abstract

An increase in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa since independence has elicited the responses of the international community to resolve or manage them through the mechanism of peacekeeping operations initiated by the United Nations or regional organizations in Africa. The degrees of success or otherwise of peacekeeping operations has also varied. And since armed conflicts are inescapable, endemic and it's also an integral part of human existence, then efforts at resolving them through peacekeeping are likely to endure. Hence, it is imperative to take a critical look at peacekeeping operations in Africa with a view to improve better performance in the future. It is against this background that this article examines the nature, pattern, impact and efficacy of the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) peacekeeping operations in Africa and maintains that the prospect of successful peacekeeping operations in Africa lies in a tremendous collaboration between regional organizations in Africa and the United Nations. It concludes that the United Nations should provide required finance and expertise to complement Africans' knowledge and mastering of the environment for successful future peacekeeping operation.

Introduction

Since the end of World War II and the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, peacekeeping operation has remained a pivotal security strategy to resolve incident of unrest and intractable armed conflict within and among states by the global body and regional organizations. Though, the "term" peacekeeping is nowhere mentioned in the UN Charter, the objective is consistent with the global institution's ideals and purposes of bringing about an end to the scourge of war and converting 'sword into ploughshares'. Undeniably, the UN has adopted this model of conflict resolution in over seventy major armed conflicts around the world. This paper examines the gradual evolution of peacekeeping as a strategy for conflict resolution, the theoretical justification as well as UN, AU, ECOWAS and SADC peacekeeping operations and the degrees of success within Africa.

ORIGIN OF UN PEACEKEEPING

The United Nations was established in 1945 shortly after the Second World War. It was the second multipurpose international organization established in the twentieth century that is worldwide in scope and membership (Bennett, 1995:49-54). The first was the League of Nations established by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The history of the United Nations peacekeeping operation began in 1948. Its first mission was to the Middle East to observe and maintain a ceasefire during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War (ibid). Since then, the global institution has taken part in over Seventy (70) peacekeeping missions across the globe in almost all the continent in the world: Africa, Asia, and South America just to mention a few.

Some specific places the United Nations had conducted and directed peacekeeping operations are: the United Nations Emergency Force, created in 1956 to secure the Suez Canal following Egypt-Israel War, the Golan Height War of 1974, the Iraq-Kuwait dispute of 1991, the Indian-Pakistan War of 1949, the Congo Crisis of 1960, the Kosovo War of 1999 among others (Roper, 2003:23). The United Nations peacekeeping operations may be divided into two categories: observer mission and operations involving the use of armed troops for the purpose of conflict resolution.

The fact is that peacekeeping has become an indispensable tool in conflict resolution and crisis management that it won the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize (The Blue Helmet, 1990:5). Indeed, it is with the aim of bringing about an end to the scourge of war and converting "sword into ploughshares" that the United Nations was established in 1945. One of the primary purposes for which the United Nations was established, as stated in Article 1 of the UN Charter is to maintain international peace and security and to take a collective measure for the prevention and removal of threats to peace (The Blue Helmet, 1990:6-7). It is in view of this fundamental role of the United Nations, and against the background of the failure of the League of Nations to maintain peace that the role of the United Nations in peacekeeping as a method of conflict management can best be understood.

The founding fathers of the United Nations envisioned that the organization would act to prevent war between and among nation-states and to make future wars impossible. Accordingly, the United Nations through Article 24 of Chapter Seven, empower the Security Council with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security with military sanctions, as well as the use of military force to resolve dispute (ibid). The provision in Chapter Seven of the United Nations Charter is for peace-enforcement and not peacekeeping, which is essentially the exclusive power of the Security Council. In fact, the term "peacekeeping" is not found in the Charter and nowhere in the Charter is there a provision for the establishment of a permanent peacekeeping force for the United Nations.

Instead, as noted by Ademola Adeleke (1995:570), peacekeeping operations started on an *ad hoc* basis with the Security Council or the General Assembly passing enabling resolutions, which determine the purposes for establishing such peacekeeping forces as well as the general guidelines for their operations. Hence, the post-World War II social milieu and the realization of the turbulence nature of the international system compelled the evolution of peacekeeping as a security strategy imperative for managing and resolving conflicts in the world by the United Nations.

Consequently, peacekeeping operations were born out of necessity, largely improvised, a practical response to violent conflict in the post-World War II, which increased in volume and

nature in the areas of political, economic and socio issues following decolonization in Africa, Asia and Middle East that confronted the organisation. Hence, the United Nations peacekeeping operation evolved essentially to stop hostilities and to manage conflict so that they would not develop into broader conflagration.

However, during the Cold War period, agreement on the deployment of peacekeepers became extremely difficult due to division among the permanent Security Council members into hostile ideological camps. It was against this backdrop that the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 377A of 3 November, 1950, titled "Uniting for Peace" which was a response to the defunct Soviet Union strategy to prevent the Security Council from intervening in the North-South Korean War (Andrew, 1965:563). The "Uniting for Peace" resolution clearly shows how the General Assembly could circumvent the Security Council in the authorization of peacekeeping operation. But since the end of the Cold War in 1989, the division between and among the Security Council members have improved with respect to peacekeeping, thus making it easier for the United Nations to authorize and direct several peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War period.

However, because, the growing number of conflicts seem not only to be overstressing the energies of the global institution, coupled with the slow response of the United Nations to some crisis situations as was the case of the Liberian Civil War and the Rwanda Civil War of 1994, it has come to be realized that regional and sub-regional organizations, though not primarily established for the purposes of peacekeeping could complement the United Nations in maintaining peace and security within their regions (Etzioni, 1995:18). Therefore, regional organizations often invoke Chapter Eight of the UN Charter to intervene in violent conflict within region and sub region. The African Union, the Organisation of American States, the Economic Community of West African States among others though not established for the purposes of peacekeeping but are allowed to complement the United Nations in peacekeeping operations.

Theoretical Framework

Theories on conflict resolution are numerous and they have presented some of the very fascinating debates on how conflicts are managed. For our purpose however, the 'peacekeeping theory' is adopted for a comprehensive analysis of this essay, which provides us the understanding of the necessity for the United Nations and regional organisations' interventions in conflict resolution.

The peacekeeping theory is aimed at third party intervention through military operation that could stop or contain hostilities. The operation is capable of ending conflict, create the climate, buy time and promote the goodwill necessary for settlement through negotiation and other peaceful means of resolving the underlying causes of the conflict (Adisa and Aminu, 1996: 85-91). The intervention is also innovative, non-coercive even though military-driven, and has a high potential to encourage and promote conflict resolution between warring parties.

The basic assumption of this theory as presented by Rambotham and Wooldhouse (1996:158), Burton (1990:20-30) and Galtung (1990: 282-290), is that when a dispute breaks out, parties to the conflict often result to a zero-sum game, win-win mentality, which often culminate in carnage and wanton destruction of lives and properties. Such situations run counter to the ultimate goals of the preamble of the United Nations Charter, which reads:

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime brought untold sorrow to mankind, ...to promote social progress and better standard of life in larger freedom, and for these ends to promote tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in common interest and to employ international mercenary for the promotion of economic and social advancement of all peoples, have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims (The United Nations Charter, 1-2).

Hence, as principal world legitimiser, the UN may be said to represent the international community as a whole. Chapter VIII of the Charter empowers regional arrangement, such as the African Union, ECOWAS and SADC to complement the role of the United Nations if such actions are consistent with the purpose of the global institution (*ibid*). It is in reference to this provision that the African Union, Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community often intervened in civil wars in Africa. The reasons adduced for intervention in this theory include responsibility of the international community, institutional accountability, burden sharing, and personal responsibility to save humanity.

The proposition of the peacekeeping theory is relevant to this essay for the fact that it explains the obligatory imperative on the international community to intervene in conflict situation. Peacekeeping thus has the capacity to limit armed conflict. An assessment of the peacekeeping theory in relation to conflict resolution provides justifications for third party intervention in providing an environment conducive for negotiation and resolution of the issues that culminated in the conflict. This theory is relevant to the extent that it encourages the international community to employ peacekeeping and peace-enforcement as a strategy to resolve conflict. It is against this background that this essay analyses peacekeeping operation in Africa.

THE PRACTICE OF PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA

UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN AFRICA

The practice of the United Nations peacekeeping operations as a strategy for conflict resolution in Africa began with the Congo Civil War of 1960. The Congo Civil War started under the regime of Patrice Lumumba, following a mutiny by 25,000 strong Congolese National Army, accompanied by administrative collapse, Belgian military intervention to protect its citizens, and secession by the mineral-rich Katanga province under Kassavubu (Akinyeye, 2005: 244). The Belgian supported the secessionist group because of the richness of the Katanga province in diamond and the hatred for the perceived radical government of Lumumba.

Belgium, being the former colonial master acted under a military agreement, which requires Congo to call for military assistance from her, came into the country unsolicited, which further escalated the civil war and the already deteriorating situation. During this period, there were widespread carnage, killings and the destruction of properties, which were made possible due to the inability of internal mechanism to restore law and order.

This obvious development compelled the government to call for the United Nations' intervention. Recognizing the possibility of the superpowers exploiting the conflict to further their

interest in the Cold War period, the danger faced by the Congolese, coupled with the request for intervention by the government, the global institution deployed peacekeepers to resolve the conflict. The peacekeeping was established by Security Council Resolution 143 of 14th July 1960.

The initial mandate of United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) was to ensure the withdrawal of Belgian forces from the Republic of Congo, assist the government in maintaining law and order and to provide technical assistance (Galadema, 2006: 301-302). The function of the ONUC was subsequently modified to include, maintaining the territorial integrity and political independence of the Congo, preventing the escalation and the intensification of civil war, and securing the removal from the Congo of all foreign military, mercenaries and advisory personnel not under United Nations Command. At the termination of the operation on 30th December 1963 owing irreconcilable differences among the warring parties and misperception on the neutrality of the global body, the number of the peacekeepers stood at 5,871 all ranks, supported by international civilian and locally recruited staff.

UNITED NATIONS OPERATIONS IN SOMALIA

United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM I&II) were yet another attempt by the international community represented by the global body to resolve the Somalia Civil War through peacekeeping. This was against the background of the Somalia Civil War which resulted in anarchy and allowing the culture of warlords in many parts of the country, a clear failure of internal resolution mechanism. In April 1992, the Security Council adopted resolution 751 for establishing UNOSOM I. The Council asked the Secretary-General to deploy immediately fifty (50) unarmed United Nations military observers; and continue consultations with the parties to the armed conflict in Mogadishu, Somalia's capital.

These consultations took nearly two months: Thereafter, on 23rd June, 1992, the Secretary-General informed the Security Council that the principal factions in the civil war had agreed to the deployment of the unarmed observers. In Resolution 767 of 27th July 1992, the Security Council approved the proposal to establish four operational zones; Berbera, Bossasso, Mogadishu and Kismayo all strongly endorsed (Akindele and Oche, 2007: 306). On 24 August, 1992, the Secretary-General requested an increase in the authorized strength of UNOSOM for the four operational zones. The total strength of United Nations security personnel envisaged for Somalia thus rose to 3,500. On 28th August, the Security Council, by Resolution 775 of 1992, authorized the increase.

In early September, same year, it agreed to a further addition of three logistical units, raising the total authorized strength of UNOSOM to 4,219 troops and 50 military observers. The first group of security personnel called Unified Task Force (UNITAF) arrived in Mogadishu, on 14th September, 1992 (ibid). On 3rd December 1992, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 794 that welcomed the United States offer to help create a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid in Somalia, and authorized America to invoke Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the use of "all necessary means" to do so.

Resolution 794 requested member states to provide military forces and to contribute in cash or kind for the operation. The Secretary-General and states participating in the operation also established appropriate mechanisms for coordination between the United Nations and those military forces. United States President, George Bush, responded to Security Council resolution 794 with

a decision on 4 December to initiate Operation Restore Hope, under which the United States would assume the unified command of the new operation in accordance with the resolution.

The number of United States forces were expected to build to approximately 28,000 personnel, to be augmented by some 17,000 UNITAF troops from over 20 countries. In addition to United States forces, UNITAF included military units from Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Zimbabwe (ibid). Despite these efforts, condition in Somalia did not improve, thus necessitating further Council resolution.

UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA (UNOSOM II)

It was established by the Security Council in resolution 814 on 26 March 1993, following recommendations by the Secretary-General on 3rd March 1993. However, despite those improvements, there was still no effective functioning government in the country, no organized civilian police and no disciplined national army. The mandate of UNOSOM II, as approved by the Security Council in resolution 814 of 1993, covered the whole territory of Somalia, including; monitoring all factions to the armed conflict to respect the cessation of hostilities. Other agreements to which they had consented included; preventing any resumption of violence and, if necessary, taking appropriate action in maintaining and controlling of the heavy weapons of the organized factions. Seizing of all small arms of all authorized armed elements, securing all ports, airports and lines of communications required for the delivery of humanitarian assistance; and protecting the personnel, installations and equipment of the United Nations and its agencies (ibid). However, because of incompatible dissimilarities among the warring parties as well as misunderstanding of the neutrality of the global body, the peacekeeping operation failed to secure Somalia from further bloodshed.

THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN COTE D'IVOIRE (UNOCI)

United Nations mission in Cote d'Ivoire was established by Security Council resolution 1479 of 13th May 2003, with a mandate to facilitate the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Accord (LMA), which France helped to negotiate between General Robert Guie and Laurent Gbagbo after the post-election violence of October 2000 (Meyungbe-Olufunmilade, 2011: 185-186). And following the bloodshed that greeted the disputed presidential election between Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara in November 2010, the global body subsequently passed resolutions 1775, in March, 1980 in April and 1981 on 13th May 2011 respectively for peacekeeping operation that brought the conflict to an end. The mandate was to complement military operations of the French and ECOWAS forces in Cote d'Ivoire (Malone, 2004: 304).

In addition, the Council approved the establishment of a small staff unit to support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on political, legal, elections, media and public relations and humanitarian issues. The United Nations peacekeeping operation in Cote d'Ivoire, with support of ECOWAS brought in stability, reflected in the successful conduct of parliamentary election in the country on 11 December, 2011.

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN RWANDA (UNAMIR)

The global body mission in Rwanda, was established by Security Council Resolution 872 of 5th October, 1993 to help implement the Arusha Peace Agreement signed by the Rwandese on 4th August, 1993 (Adelman and Suhrke, 2004:490-492). UNAMIR's mandate was to assist in ensuring the security of Rwanda's capital city, Kigali. The mandate also include: monitor the ceasefire, including establishment of an expanded demilitarized zone and demobilization procedures; monitor the security situation during the final period of the transitional government's mandate leading up to elections; assist with mine-clearance; and assist in the coordination of humanitarian assistance activities in conjunction with relief operations.

However, after renewed fighting in April 1994, the mandate of UNAMIR was adjusted by Security Council Resolution 912 of 21st April 1994, so that it could act as an intermediary between the warring factions in Rwanda as well as to monitor developments in the country, including the safety and security of civilians who sought refuge with UNAMIR.

After the situation in Rwanda deteriorated further, UNAMIR's mandate was expanded by Security Council Resolution 918 of 17th May, 1994, to enable it to contribute to the security and protection of refugees and civilians at risk, through the establishment and maintenance of secure humanitarian areas, and the provision of security for relief operations to the degree possible. Following the ceasefire and the installation of the new government, the tasks of UNAMIR were further adjusted by the Security Council to ensure stability and security in the northwestern and southwestern regions of Rwanda.

By resolution 997 of 9th June, 1995, the Council decided to further adjust the mandate of UNAMIR so that it would exercise its good offices to help achieve national reconciliation. The mandate of UNAMIR officially came to an end on 8th March, 1996. The withdrawal of the mission was completed in April 1996. The authorized strength between 5th October 1993 to 20th April, 1994 stood at 2,548 military personnel, including 2,217 troops and 331 military observers, and 60 civilian police; supported by international and locally recruited civilian staff (ibid). Notwithstanding the above modest success, the lukewarm attitude of the global body during the zenith of the Rwanda Civil War was responsible for the 1994 genocide committed in the country.

THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE (UNAMSIL)

On 22 October 1999, the Security Council Resolution 1270 of 1999, authorized the establishment of UNAMSIL, a complex "peace enforcement" operation which replaced a smaller UN observer mission (UNOMSIL). This follows the restoration of Ahm and Tijan Kabba, who was removed from office during the peak of the Sierra Leonean Civil War. UNAMSIL had a mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to provide security in key areas of the country; assist in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs; facilitate law enforcement work; and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The new and much larger mission with a maximum of 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers, was to assist the government and the parties to the conflict in carrying out the provisions of the Lome Peace Agreement that ended the internecine conflict.

On 7th February 2000, the Security Council by its Resolution 1289 decided to revise the mandate of UNAMSIL to include a number of additional tasks (Olonisakin, 2008: 1-4). It decided

to expand the military component to a maximum of 11,100 military personnel, including the 260 military observers already deployed. According to Security Council resolution 1270 of 22nd October, 1999, UNAMSIL had the authorized maximum strength of 17,500 military personnel, including 260 military observers and up to 170 civilian police personnel. As at June 2004, the total military personnel and civilian police to UNASMIL including 9,464 troops, 255 military observers and 116 civilian police officers were in Sierra Leone.

In the light of easing tensions, UNAMSIL was scheduled to withdraw fully by December 2004, but instead, the Security Council agreed to extend the mandate of UNAMSIL into 2005, while reducing the size of the force to 3,250 troops, 141 military observers and 80 civilian police by 28 February, 2005. The personnel strength as of 30th April, 2005 consists of 3,447 total uniformed personnel, including 3,230 troops, 138 military observers and 79 civilian police supported by 234 international civilian personnel, 450 local civilian staff and 91 United Nations volunteers (*ibid*). The peacekeeping operation ended in 2005 with success, thanks to tremendous contributions from ECOWAS.

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL PEACEKEEPING OPERATION IN AFRICA OAU PEACEKEEPING OPERATION IN CHAD

The AU (formally OAU) deployed a peacekeeping force in Chad in November 1981 in an attempt to find lasting solution to the Chadian Civil War, which started because of maladministration in 1975. Unfortunately, a number of the AU member states did not honour their financial commitment and pledge to contribute troops to the mission. The force at its maximum strength consisted of only five battalions, which was extremely inadequate to cover an area of 501,000 square miles. Indeed, the AU initiative ended in a fiasco (Imobighe, 1996:141-144). In fact, less than a year, the operation terminated amidst general failure, being unable to stop the fighting and soon became the object of attack. The AU-led peacekeeping operation was unique because it was contrary to the organization's principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of member states.

THE ECOWAS PEACEKEEPING OPERATION IN LIBERIA

ECOWAS peacekeeping operation in Liberia, was orchestrated by the local hegemon; Nigeria with troops from Ghana, Gambia and Sierra Leone. ECOMOG was at first, tasked with the responsibility of facilitating the evacuation of citizens mainly women and children of member-states and other Liberians that were trapped in the Liberian Civil War which broke out in 1989. The force was also to establish some form of order through effective policing, especially the country's capital, Monrovia, while arrangements were being made for the establishment of an Interim Government.

Unable to get a cease-fire from the warring parties in Liberia, the ECOMOG force landed in Monrovia on 24th August 1990, under heavy attack from Charles Taylor's NPFL (Johnson, 1996:280). ECOMOG fought its way into Monrovia to create a base that enabled the evacuation of many trapped civilians of various nationalities. Within a month of landing, ECOMOG's strategy became offensive, with the aim of driving Taylor's rebels out of Monrovia and creating a protected buffer zone around the capital city.

By November 1990, ECOMOG took effective control of Monrovia, and a ceasefire was subsequently established. ECOMOG succeeded only in July 1997, after twelve (12) failed peace accords to end the fratricidal conflict in Liberia. For eight years, the force suffered a huge loss both in materials and men in the hands of an intransigent rebel movement. Of course, the rebels even lost more.

THE ECOWAS PEACEKEEPING OPERATION IN SIERRA LEONE

Just as the ECOWAS peacekeeping force was beginning to receive praises and credit for restoring peace to Liberia, some dissident elements of the Sierra Leonean Army, led by Major John Koromah, acting in consent with the Revolutionary United Front, (RUF), violently seized power and overthrew the democratic government of President Tejan Kabbah on 25th May, 1997 (Golwa, 2009: 277-284). Situation in Sierra Leone shortly after the coup degenerated into anarchy and threatened the peace and security of the sub-region. Furthermore, the unfolding developments in the country continued to pose serious threats to the fragile peace that was then subsisting in Liberia. ECOMOG intervened through a peacekeeping force, and thereafter flushed out the military junta and brought back the ousted civilian government.

The ECOMOG deployed about 13,000 troops in Sierra Leone that reinstated President Tejan Kabbah to power on Tuesday, 10th March, 1998. The development culminated in a colourful ceremony attended by some ECOWAS leaders. It is worthy of note that without ECOMOG's quick intervention in Sierra Leone, the armed conflict would have degenerated beyond imaginable proportions. However, as time went by, ECOMOG became saddled with the responsibility of defending the civilian government and the entire country by fighting a very complex, and an unending battle against a coalition of rebel forces.

The peacekeeping/peace-enforcement mission by ECOMOG, eventually turned out to be a war of attrition with the RUF, and became a very difficult operation. After eight years of fighting, however, all parties to the armed conflict signed an agreement in Lome, Togo in July 1999, signaling an end to hostilities. The United Nations was also involved in the Lome Peace Accord, and thereafter established a peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone previously discussed. The peacekeeping ended on a success note in 2005.

SADC PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The attempt to create a regional security in the Southern African sub-region began in the 1970s with the formation of the frontline states. By 1992, SADC had laid the legal framework for peace and security in its treaty. In 1998, SADC's peacekeepers were deployed to Lesotho and Democratic Republic of Congo (Rodrigo, 2009:57-61. Though, both peacekeeping operations recorded modest successes, it nevertheless demonstrated the SADC's capacity to resolve armed conflict through peacekeeping mechanism.

CONCLUSION

Without doubt, this paper has examined the evolution, justification and practice of peacekeeping as a strategy for conflict resolution by the United Nations and regional organizations in Africa. It's also demonstrated that the inability of internal security mechanism within and among states in

Africa have been one of the factors responsible for the adoption of peacekeeping/peace-enforcement in the resolution of violent conflicts within the continent. As the analysis reveal, while peacekeeping has been successful in many instances in Africa, the Somalia and the Chadian examples demonstrates that ambiguous mandate, misperception and lack of adequate finance would always been an impediment to future peacekeeping operations in the continent. Hence, there is need to improve funding, commitment from countries within Africa, in collaboration with the United Nations for successful peacekeeping operation in the future.

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