

Security &
Developmental
Challenges for

AFRICA

in the 21st Century

Essays in Honour of
Prof. Thomas Akhigbe Imobighe

Editors:

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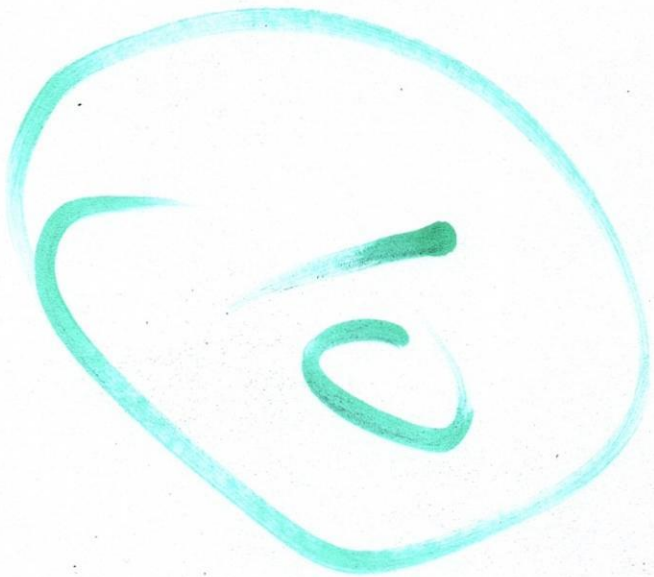


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Africa, the Cold War & After: Glimpses from West Africa

Amadu Sesay and Abosede Omowumi Babatunde

Introduction

The Cold War and post Cold War eras got Africa in a pincer hold. Both periods were directly and indirectly responsible for the unparalleled violence, political and socio-economic reversals in some countries on the African continent. It is no exaggeration, then, to say that the international system in the two periods was not only unfriendly to Africa and its people, but also marginalized the continent in diverse ways that would be made clear in the chapter. From such a point of view, the Cold War was in fact a "hot war" for Africa, while the first twenty years following the end of the Cold War did not bring respite to the continent and its people either. For instance, in 1993, less than five years after the collapse of

communism in Europe, "...there were 52 conflicts in 43 countries, while 37 others 'suffered from some form of political violence...' (Decalo, 1992) across the world. Most of them were in Africa. Post Cold War conflicts in Africa had several features in common: they were mainly internal to the African States; they were long drawn and involved the indiscriminate use of children as armed combatants, the so-called child soldiers or "baby soldiers" as they were called in Liberia (Sesay, 2003). The conflicts also led to complex humanitarian emergencies, large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees in several neighbouring countries.³

This is not to argue, however, that "...conflicts and other threats to peace and stability in Africa were exclusively a Cold War..." (Sesay, 1998: 46-47) or post Cold War phenomenon. Nevertheless, and at a level of analysis, the argument can be made that for Africa, which did not formally belong to any of the rival Cold War ideological and military alliances, the Cold War was a traumatic experience for its peoples, some of whose consequences they are trying to shake off, albeit with great difficulty as every facet of state activity and life of the people were deeply affected by the Cold War and post Cold War environments. Several factors are responsible for this situation.

First, the Great Powers directly and/or through proxies within and outside the continent, did not shy away promoting and stroking conflict and violence in many African countries. A few cursory examples will suffice; the brutal and long drawn apartheid regime's war of attrition against the anti-apartheid nationalist and resistance forces, had the tacit support of some of the Great Powers; the racist rebellion in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) led by Ian Smith and the violence it spawned, the vicious civil war in Angola following the unceremonious departure of Portuguese colonialists in late 1974; the equally brutal civil war in Mozambique, another former

Portuguese colonial outpost; the sustained destabilization policies of apartheid South Africa against several Southern Africa States opposed to the inhuman and oppressive apartheid policy in South Africa, etc, were all casualties of the Cold War. Another important implication of the Cold War environment for Africa is the emergence and recognition of the continent as a veritable sub-system of the international or global system. It is from such a perspective that we can situate the role and place of Africa in both the Cold War and post Cold War international politics and the consequences for African people.

The systems approach to international politics, which was made popular by scholars such as Modelski (1961) and Cantori (1970) among others, helps to explain the relationships between the global system, the "whole system" and the peripheries or sub-systems such as Africa. However, and without going into much detail, it is important to state here that the systems approach in international relations is an artificial construct designed to assist analysts in explaining developments within the international system and their impacts on the units or states that populate it, in this case African countries/ states in particular, and Africa as a continent in general. The breakdown of the global system into subsystems like Africa, the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, etc, was at a level, a reaction to the obsession with the dominant East-West System during the Cold War, to the exclusion of other regional and/or global actors that were significantly impacted upon by Cold War international and regional politics. The systems approach in explaining the impacts of the Cold War and post Cold War politics and international environments on Africa is particularly significant in an age of dizzying globalizations processes that have turned the world into a "global village" in which developments in one part are brought to the living rooms of citizens

in distant places real time, in glorious colour. A good example is the "Arab Spring" in some Northern Africa countries in 2011, and other forms of conflict with devastating consequences, for countries as far as West Africa. Another good example is the terrorist activities by Boko Haram insurgents which are beamed across the world in the print or electronic media, and in colour for maximum impact.

With 54 independent States, Africa boasts the largest number of actors or units in the global state system than any other region of the world. However majority of them are power vacuums that seldom in the global, regional or sub-regional lime light except for wrong reasons such as debilitating famine or 'uncivil' wars like those that swept across Africa in the two decades following the end of the Cold War. Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, Sudan, are just some of the more notorious ones. This is because with a few exceptions, majority of the states in Africa can be described as "dwarfs" and "Lilliputians". Those states that can be described as the continent's "Goliaths" like Nigeria are in fact 'slumbering giants'. Nonetheless, African states attracted a lot of attention before, during and after the Cold War, although sometimes for the wrong reasons.

The systems approach seeks to find answers to central questions such as: what was the impact of the Cold War international system on Africa and its peoples? What were the effects of the end of the East-West ideological rivalry on the African continent and its peoples? What were the security implications of the Cold War and post Cold War international systems for Africa? Specifically, what were the consequences of both international systems for peace, stability and human security in Liberia and Sierra Leone? Answers to these questions are important because they will enable us to ascertain or identify the extent to which both eras were, and/or are

still implicated in Africa's past and present security challenges in general and those of Liberia and Sierra Leone in particular. Before then, however, it is important to map out very briefly, the evolution and development of the African subsystem in the global system.

Tracking the Evolution of the African Sub-system in Global Politics

Arguably, there has always been in existence an African subsystem in international politics even at the height of colonialism in Africa. Before the wave of independence in the 1960s, there existed an African "colonial subsystem" in the global system and politics of the time, which was tightly controlled and run by the colonial metropolises in Europe. By implication therefore, it was not an autonomous actor since it was tightly embedded in the "European subsystem". This is important because one of the most defining attributes of a subsystem is autonomy, which the colonial dominated African subsystem lacked.

However, the colonial peoples were not unmindful of the unwholesome consequences of the Cold War and its environment on their collective futures. Indeed, the nationalists were quick to articulate their positions on issues that were of primary interest such as colonialism, racism, and apartheid. This point was put poignantly by the former Prime Minister and later President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, at the epoch making Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955, two years before his country's formal independence in 1957: "For many generations our people were the voiceless in the world, disregarded... Today... they are no longer tools of others and playthings of forces which they cannot influence..." (Colin Legum, et al, 1958: 1). Nkrumah's speech at Bandung is important because the Ghanaian leader tried to claim

the agency of Africa in the Cold War international environment, even though most of its units dependent. Put differently, the full fledged African subsystem only emerged in the 1960s, when most of the colonial territories gained their political freedom from the colonizers. One important landmark in the evolution of the African sub-system was the debate on the best form of unity among the independent African States, the focus of the next couple of sections of the chapter.

The 1958 Accra Conference of Independent Africa States as "political baptism"

It is arguable that the formal intrusion of Cold War Politics in Africa took place at the Conference of Independent States in Africa, CISA, in Accra in April 1958, barely a year after the country's independence on March 7, 1957. The historic meeting is important because aside from bringing together the then independent African States, it also marked the beginning of the intrusion of Great Power Cold War ideological rivalry in African politics. The rivalry was essentially a replication of the East-West ideological divide as the meeting brought together States that were later to divide the independent states into moderate/conservative bloc on the one hand and the radical group of states on the other, on the best approach to African unity. Among those present in Accra in April 1958 was the ultra conservative William Tubman of Liberia, from the minority Americo-Liberian ruling elite, the most pro-America and anti-Soviet leader in Africa at the time. No wonder his country was widely perceived as America's step-child; Egypt, the 'radical' country from North Africa, Sudan, and of course, the host, Kwame Nkrumah, who was soon to bid for the ideological and political leadership of the continent. With regard to their foreign policies,

Ghana and Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser, were anti-colonialists and advocated, at best, a policy of equidistance between Africa and the Super Power ideological blocks, although in practice their sympathies were with the socialist countries. Also at Accra was Prince Haile Selassie, another arch conservative and pro-western leader, who would eventually provide the political compromise in the African unity debate, which signaled the victory of the conservative over the radical elements in the Unity Debate with the formation of the Organization of African Unity, OAU, in Addis Ababa in May 1963. Most importantly, Accra and Monrovia, both in West Africa, were to lead the radical and conservative groups in the Pan-African movement before and even after the formation of the OAU.

Some of the key resolutions at the Accra conference of Independent African States are significant for the light they shed not only the nascent foreign policies of the African states, but also in their unsuccessful attempt to shield the continent from the debilitating Cold War politics and environment: "respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of one another and condemned "all forms of outside interference directed against the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the independent African states". Colin Legum, et al (1958: 30-32). Unfortunately, the Great Powers were to undermine these key principles in their relations with Africa in the heat of the Cold War, sometimes with the active connivance of some independent African states. Policies of destabilization, coups and counter coups, civil war and support for the brutal policies of apartheid South Africa, all contributed to making Africa not only a conflict prone continent, but also the "football" of great power ideological rivalry with disastrous consequences for human security and political stability in Africa, in total disregard for the OAU's exalted principle of non-interference in

the internal affairs of other states by African and non-African state actors.

'Politics of African Unity' as a 'mirror' of the East-West ideological rivalry

There is no gainsaying the fact that the African Unity debate which started in earnest shortly after the independence of Ghana in 1957 mirrored what can be described as the 'Central East-West Cold War System' in international politics. Broadly, the newly independent states belonged to two ideological "camps" or blocs, which reflected the dominant ideological divide in the prevailing international system. On the one hand are those classified as "radicals", whose unofficial "leader" was Nkrumah of Ghana, while the other was the "moderates" whose unofficial leader, before Nigeria's independence in 1960, was President Tubman of Liberia. Nigeria, under the leadership of conservative Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was to assume this leadership mantle from 1960 when it gained political independence from Great Britain.

Broadly, then, there were two dominant strands in the African Unity ideological debate over the best and most feasible form of cooperation and unity among the new states. The radicals or progressives among Africa's first set of post-colonial leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Shekou Toure of Guinea and Modibo Keita of Mali, seemed to have preferred what is called the 'maximalist' option; a United States of Africa. The most relentless advocate of this position was Kwame Nkrumah who was willing, at least on paper, to defer his country's independence if that would pave way for the proposed United States of Africa. The 'progressive states' later belonged to what became known as the Casablanca Group, named after the Moroccan capital. The Casablanca States

were noted for their vocal and relentless campaign against colonialism, imperialism and unwavering commitment to the anti-apartheid struggles in white minority ruled territories in Southern Africa. The 'progressive' States invested a lot of resources, human, material and financial, to the liberation cause and suffered hostile acts of destabilization such as bombings on their territories, kidnappings, and assassination of liberation struggle leaders in exile on their soil. In West Africa, Ghana, Guinea, Mali became targets of destabilization by the Western powers and their African proxies. For example, Nkrumah was overthrown by the top hierarchy of his armed forces, inspired by western propaganda against him while he was on a peace mission to China in an effort aimed at bringing the Vietnam War to an end. In 1970, Portugal launched an abortive invasion of Conakry, the Guinean capital, to topple Shekou Toure for his unflinching support for the liberation struggles in Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, under the leadership of Amílcar Cabral. Another important strand in the foreign policies of the progressives was their commitment to a policy of non-alignment in respect of the East-West ideological alliances. Joined later by countries like Tanzania under Julius Nyerere, the 'progressives' were critical of the Africa policy of their former colonial masters; Britain, France and Portugal in Africa.

The second 'ideological group', an antidote to the radical or maximalist stance of the Casablanca on African unity, comprised the 'moderates' or 'conservative' African leaders and political elite. They advocated a gradualist approach to African unity starting with areas that were uncontroversial and which they believed were also priority sectors such as health, education, culture, etc. Two of the major proponents of this incrementalist approach were Nigeria's Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa and President William Tubman of

Liberia, maintained very close ties with two of the major actors in the Cold War; the United Kingdom and the States of America respectively. The "African Cold War" was damaging to the peace and stability of the continent because it promoted what can be described as 'political warfare' among the rival blocs in the continent. However Africa's Cold War ideological 'alliances', unlike their counterparts in the dominant East-West Cold War system, were not rigid or cast in stone because countries/leaders were able to move in and out of the 'alliances'. A clear indication of this was Morocco's brief membership of the Casablanca Group. A monarchist and conservative kingdom, Morocco joined the "radical" Casablanca Group to protest the inclusion of Mauritania, whose territory it laid claim to, in the Monrovia Group of moderate African States and leaders. The formation of the OAU in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, on May 25, 1963, was significant in that respect for at least two important reasons: it marked the final triumph of the moderates over the radicals in the African unity debate, and drove the ideological competition literally underground. The creation of the conservative OAU led to the "dissolution" of the ideological camps or blocs in Africa, although African states and leaders continued to tread different paths to development in their national and foreign policies.

Although Africa was, and remains, a power vacuum during, and after the Cold War, its leaders were courted by the Super Powers essentially for their vote at local and global fora because the Cold War was a unique phenomenon in global politics. For instance, unlike previous Great Power rivalries and competitions in the colonial era in Africa, the Cold War was not about possession of territory but for the minds of men and women and political support especially at important multilateral fora within and outside Africa

such as the UN and the Non-Aligned Movement. This situation explains the overvalued strategic importance of all African states during the Cold War era, and why its unexpected end prompted the temporary withdrawal of Great Power interest in Africa. That singular event, more than any other, was perhaps the major factor responsible for the unparalleled political upheavals, conflicts and bloodshed in the continent and West Africa specifically during and after the collapse of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The total absence of a 'lead', 'big brother' or 'protector' state in Africa at the time also meant that its security and that of its people, peace and stability, among others, cannot be guaranteed by a local actor or actors. This reality also explains the palpable absence of good governance, transparency and accountability as well as respect for basic human rights in majority of independent states in this period. Indeed, with a few exceptions, it marked the triumph of the one party system and 'presidents for life', since the Great Powers were not to all intent and purpose, interested in ideological correctness, but mere support for their competing positions and logic in international politics.

The Cold War and post Cold War environments as background factors to Conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Much of the violence and turbulence witnessed in Africa during and after the Cold War can be traced, arguably, to the ideological contest between the former Soviet Union (now Russia) and its East European allies on the one hand, and on the other hand, the United States of America, USA, and its West European allies. The Cold War dates back roughly to 1945 following the end of the Second World War and the creation of the United Nations, UN, that year. It would be recalled that the Soviet Union, the United States of America and

their allies in Europe, fought side by side against the Axis Powers; Germany, Italy and Japan, and emerged victorious in 1945. The 'United Nations', as the anti Axis coalition was called, devoted a lot of time during the war working on and refining strategies on how best to secure the world after the hostilities with a view to putting in place a new post World War II political and global order. The most important outcome of this endeavour was the creation of what is now popularly known as the United Nations Organization, UNO, or UN for short. The major goal of the new organization was "...to make the world safe for succeeding generations" (UN Charter:) and avoid another global cataclysm. To that end, the new organization designed an elaborate 'Collective Security System' complete with a Standby Force arrangement, whose major plank was the 'indivisibility' of peace; an attack on any Member State is an attack on all the members. Collective Security was believed to be the perfect answer to threats to global security since the indeterminate aggressor was assured of certain defeat in the hands of the majority.

Collective security as envisaged in the UN Charter did not materialize for several important reasons. However, the most important is the breakdown of wartime cooperation and understanding between America and its allies on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other. More importantly, the onset of the Cold War made nonsense of most, if not all, the premises upon which collective security had been anchored as a strategy for maintaining global peace and security (Claude, 1965). Above all, however, the worldwide ideological rivalry between Western countries and the Soviet Union made it impossible for any country to remain neutral, irrespective of their foreign policy pronouncements, platforms including arrangements such as the Non-Aligned Movement NAM, (Ojo and Sesay, 1981: 289), or

geographical location. The Cold War was an unprecedented phenomenon in international relations. Not only did it divide the world into two solid ideological blocs. Cold War international politics was also characterized by extreme tension and uncertainty especially in relations between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. The two countries also presided over the most formidable and destructive military alliances ever witnessed in modern history; the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, and the Warsaw Pact Treaty, respectively. The two Super Powers also put in place strategies, which we need not go into here, aimed at avoiding direct military confrontation between them in Europe in particular, and in any part of the world in general. However, they did not shy away from engaging in proxy wars in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, to checkmate or embarrass one another: Congo, Vietnam, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Angola and Southern Africa - especially during the bitter struggle against apartheid in the latter.

America and the Soviet placed a lot of premium on securing the allegiance of 'neutral' States in Africa, Asia, Middle East, Latin America, etc. with varying degrees of success. This state of affairs explains why Africa became a major Cold War theatre, and why we argued in this chapter that from such a viewpoint, it is not implausible to conclude that the Cold War was directly, indirectly and deeply implicated in the violent conflicts and civil wars that broke out in several African countries in the 1990s. In particular, the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone were not only classic examples of this phenomenon, they also marked a significant phase in the evolution and development of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, from a purely economic integration project into an organization that has increasingly become a security community (Sesay, Forthcoming). The deployment of the ECOWAS

Monitoring Group, ECOMOG, was credited with restoring peace and stability in both countries (Sesay, 2014).¹ It is significant to note that ECOMOG, now rechristened ECOWAS Standby Force, ESF, has been restructured and institutionalized as the main mechanism for maintaining peace and security in West Africa. The ESF has been re-designed in such a way that it would intervene in any serious conflict situation in West Africa to restore stability, law and order. The ESF will also be deployed to a Member States in the event of major natural or manmade disaster. Finally the mechanism could be deployed in any other part of Africa at the behest of the UN, the African Union or any other relevant international organization.²

¹There is a huge literature on the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil Wars and the interventions in the two countries by ECOWAS in the 1990s to restore law and order. Among the more interesting are: ²ECOWAS is presently undertaking a comprehensive review of the 1999 Mechanism and the 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance to enhance the institutionalization of Peace Support Operations by the ECOWAS Standby Force, in which the author is Lead Expert. ³Aboagye, F. (1999) ECOMOG. A Sub-Regional Experience in Conflict Resolution, Management and Peacekeeping in Liberia, Accra: SEDCO, 1999, Margaret Vogt, ⁴(1992) ECOMOG and the Liberian Crisis: A Bold Attempt at Regional Conflict management, Lagos: GABUMO Publishing Company, 1992, ⁵Adebajo, A. (2002). Liberia's Civil War: Nigeria, ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa, Boulder Co.: Lynne Rienner, (2002), ⁶Mackinlay, J & Alao, A. (1994). Liberia 1994: ⁷ECOMOG and UNOMIL Response to a Complex Emergency, Occasional Paper Series 2, United Nations University, 1994, Olonisakin, F. (2000). ⁸Reinventing Peacekeeping in Africa. Conceptual and Legal Issues in ECOMOG Operations, Hague/London/Boston, Kluwer Law International, 2000, Amadu Sesay, "Between the Olive Branch and the AK-47: Paradoxes of Recent Military Interventions in West Africa", in Bulletin, Institute of Strategic Studies, University of Pretoria, June 1999, among numerous others.

Although a lot has been written on the causes of the two civil wars and the role of ECOWAS/ECOMOG in resolving them, they have not, to the best of our knowledge, been directly or indirectly situated within the Cold War and post-Cold War international politics and environments. We argue that such oversight tends to put the blame for the political implosion and state collapse in both countries almost exclusively, on domestic factors, to the neglect of the real political machinations of the Super Powers during the Cold War. The bi-polar Cold War international system did not leave much room for maneuver for African states: Rather, the continent and states became mere objects in the politics of the Great Powers. Thus the stage was for the conflict and violence that erupted in Africa long before the collapse of Berlin Wall in October 1989. The rest of the of the chapter identifies and discusses some of the salient reasons why the Cold War and post Cold War environments are important contributory factors in the collapse of central authority in Liberia, especially, which prompted the Nigeria led ECOWAS/ECOMOG intervention in that country in 1990.

From such a perspective, it is trite to say that one of the most profound consequences of the Cold War foreign policies of the major protagonists, especially the US, was their absolute contempt for the basic principles that underpinned democracy and good governance in their relations with African countries as was the case elsewhere in the developing world. This reality is also one of the biggest ironies of the ideological competition between the Soviet Union and America. With specific reference to America, the avowed bastion of global capitalism, democracy and good governance, successive governments in Washington ignored these very fundamental tenets in their interactions with African countries and leaders. America and its European allies freely and openly embraced some of the

most hideous autocrats, 'sit tight' leaders and 'presidents for life' on the African continent. Western powers also had no scruples dealing with regimes that came to power through undemocratic means, most notably through the coup d'état, a phenomenon that was very rampant in West Africa, more than any other region of the African continent, as Table 5.1 clearly shows.

There were a total of 40 successful military take-overs or coups d'état in West Africa alone in the 47-year period covered in the study.

Table 5.1: Successful Coups d'état in West Africa, 1963-2010

Country	Number of Coups	Coup Years	Number of years of Military Rule
Benin	6	1963, 1967, 1969, 1970, 1972 & 1990	17
Burkina Faso	5	1966, 1980 & 1982, 1983, 1987	31
Cape Verde	-	-	-
Côte d'Ivoire	1	1999	1
Gambia	1	1994	2
Ghana	5	1966, 1972 & 1978, 1979 & 1981	20
Guinea	1	1984, 2004 & 2008	14
Guinea-Bissau	2	1980 & 1999	14
Liberia	1	1980	5
Mali	2	1968 & 1991	23
Niger	3	1974, 1996, 1999 & 2010	20
Nigeria	6	1966 (2), 1975, 1983, 1985 & 1993	29
Senegal	-	-	-
Sierra Leone	5	1967(2), 1968, 1992 & 1997	6
Togo	2	1963, 1967	23

Source: Jimmy Kande, 'Civil Military Relations' in Adekunle Adedajo and Ismail Rashid (eds.), 2004, *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishing Inc) P.148.

That is approximately a successful coup every twelve months. From the Table also, and significantly in the light of the latest developments in that country, which saw the flight of President Blaise Compaoré late in 2014, Burkina Faso experienced the longest years of military rule, 31, followed closely by Nigeria, with 29, then Togo, 23 years. The cumulative number of years spent by the military in government in West Africa in the period 1963 to 2010 was a whopping 205 years, confirmation of the fact that military rule was condoned by the Great Powers during the Cold War, with disastrous consequences for democracy, peace, stability and human security during and after the Cold War in the region. Western countries maintained diplomatic relations with all these countries and worked closely with some of them to frustrate Soviet policies or diplomatic inroads in the region.

America and its European allies, most notably France, but also the United Kingdom, did not only turn the other way when civilian régimes were toppled in the region, particularly those they perceived to be either neutral or pro-Soviet Union. Notorious examples include the CIA sponsored overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana in 1966, and the abortive Portuguese sponsored invasion of Guinea, Conakry, in 1972. Across the continent, the betrayal of Patrice Lumumba of Congo, now Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, in 1960, by Mobutu Sese Soko, was the first of such betrayals. Mobutu turned out to be one of the continent's most brutal, murderous, corrupt and 'sit-tight' dictators who presided over the affairs of his country with an iron fist for 31 years.²

² In spite of that former US President, Ronald Reagan, described Mobutu as 'one of America's closest and trusted friends', in his tribute to the former Zairean strongman, after his death in exile in Morocco in September 1997.

Close relations between Western countries and African dictators were in part attributable to the fact that Cold War international relations presented several stark contradictions to students of foreign policy in the behaviour of the Super Powers both in theory and practice. Although it was an ideological contest first and foremost, the leading protagonists (America and the Soviet Union) did not attach much premium to ideological orthodoxy or purity in their relations with African countries and indeed, the rest of the Third World. What was of most concern to both powers was ensuring that African countries/leaders toed their line³ by supporting them in international fora by voting for either Western or Soviet sponsored resolutions or those proposed by their allies at important multilateral fora such as the UN, the OAU, Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement, among several others. Every other consideration was secondary.

On their part, African countries/leaders were not averse to openly proclaiming their close alliance with, or allegiance to the West. The most notable example of this phenomenon was Liberia under the long presidency of William Tubman, 1943 to 1971, maintained exceptionally close ties with America. The ruling America-Liberian elite consider the US as their 'motherland'. As would be expected, Tubman refrained from establishing diplomatic relations with, accepting assistance from Russia even when it was offered, and refrained from visiting Moscow so as not to antagonize the US, his country's 'benefactor'.³ At an official dinner in honour of visiting then US Vice President Richard Nixon, Tubman described America as "our strongest, closest and most reliable friend," and

³The President had a Yacht, which he used to travel to friendly countries, however.

"our closest ally" (Sesay, 1978). He assured the American Vice President and other dignitaries present of Liberia's "loyalty and adherence to the principles of democracy and freedom...we stand firmly for freedom, liberty and justice." To the Liberian President and his government, non-alignment was a mere charade and it "should never be seen (or misconstrued) as a refusal to choose between good and evil, moral and immoral..." (Sesay, 1978). Also important, however, is the fact that even African countries that claimed to be socialist never openly pledged allegiance to, or applied for membership of the Warsaw Pact alliance which was led by the Soviet Union, but they did not hesitate to receive assistance directly from Moscow. Good examples in West Africa are Ghana under Nkrumah and Sheku Toure's Guinea.

As it turned out in some countries, open declarations of ideological steadfastness, and support for western countries in general and the US in particular, were in many important ways a subterfuge for papering over and/or deflecting attention from the appalling human rights record of the some conservative West African leaders. In Liberia, Tubman presided over an incredibly elitist, intolerant and asphyxiating political system that successfully drove political dissent underground, a veritable contributory factor to the country's unexpected implosion in 1989. Yet, he remained the most favoured protégés of the United States in the continent south of the Sahara in this period. In the process, democracy, good governance, transparency, accountability, etc, became major victims of the exceptionally cordial and close relations between the two countries. His deliberate policy of Co-opting promising young indigenous Liberians into the elaborate, corrupt and selfish Liberian political system, successfully drove a wedge between these 'favoured' indigenes and their peers and communities. The divide

and rule' policy was a major reason his regime was credited with maintaining peace and stability in Liberia, and why the country was regarded as a bulwark against communism, at a time when its neighbours in Sierra Leone and Guinea were going through destabilizing political turmoil. More importantly, as long as Tubman could count on the staunch support of the US for his regime, he made no serious effort to reform the political system or put in place a more inclusive government that would substantially accommodate the interest of the disenfranchised majority citizens, most especially the educated indigenous young men and women, who were getting increasingly impatient with the 'old way' of doing business in the country.

America was not the only major western power that condoned undemocratic regimes in West Africa or indeed the rest of the continent in the Cold War era. Britain maintained close ties with Sierra Leone during the long years in power of the now discredited Siaka Stevens' presidency under the All Peoples' Congress, APC, in Sierra Leone. More than any other regime, the APC government under Siaka Stevens deliberately undermined and succeeded in destroying the young democratic institutions he inherited from the Margai brothers in 1968 (Sesay, 1989). The high point of Stevens' self perpetuation and dictatorship came in 1978 when he bulldozed through a pliant Parliament, a one party Republic Constitution, effectively killing the opposition in the country. Under the new political dispensation every citizen was in theory, obliged to join the APC. Public officers: high ranking civil servants and members of the armed forces were required to be card carrying members of the APC.

To ensure that the military, which had intervened several times in the country's politics, remained in their barracks, Stevens assumed powers that enabled him to appoint the Force Commander into parliament and was given the portfolio of Deputy Minister of Defence. This strange arrangement held sway until his death in 1985, which paved way for Major-General Saidu Momoh to routinely succeed him. Under Siaka Stevens, the economy, infrastructure and critical social sectors like health, education and power, had completely collapsed. Even the banking system was not spared as the functions of the central bank were taken over by a three man cabal comprising the President (Stevens), Minister of Finance and an Afro-Lebanese called Jamil Saheed Mohammed. The three were in charge of allocating foreign exchange to sectors and individuals in the country. The one party system also enabled Stevens to create an ethnic army made up of officers, men and women from his minority Limba ethnic group. More disturbing was the neglect of the welfare of the armed forces thereafter. The situation was so bad that soldiers who had been used to receiving their salary and bags of rice regularly at the end of every month, became so desperate and unprofessional that they resorted to self-help; looting the central bank to pay themselves. In the prevailing political situation in the country, professionalism in the armed and security forces was sacrificed at the altar blind loyalty, as corruption ate deep into the every sector of society in the country. Relations between the armed forces and the civilian population reached an all time low during the APC's long years in powers, and continued during the regime of Stevens' hand-picked successor, Joseph Momoh, a man who was really not cut for the presidency and under his regime the country finally imploded.

A detailed discussion on the background to the Sierra Leone civil

war which broke out in 1991, and the government's inept response to the insurgency by a motley rebel forces under the control of army deserter Foday Sankoh, is outside the scope of this Chapter. Suffice to say that among the more critical causes, are; the long years of disregard for, and marginalization of the teeming youth population who were either unemployed, underemployed or unemployable; crass corruption by the minority ruling elite and their cronies, nepotism, tribalism, and utter neglect of the countryside where majority of the citizens lived. Even the diamond rich South-east, the goose that laid the proverbial "golden egg", which accounted for much of the country's foreign exchange earnings was not spared by the rapacious APC regime. According to Joe Alie (2000), from independence in 1961 up to the outbreak of civil war in March 1991, the diamond producing areas remained isolated from the centre of political power, Freetown, where the municipal facilities and other modern infrastructure were located. According to a retired Colonel in the Sierra Leone armed forces, this fact was not lost to the people of diamond rich Kono District;

...the people in the East of the country accepted the rebellion because they also had a lot of grudge against the APC government. The main issue in contention was that the APC had been in power for so long and had neglected the needs of the people and political leaders only cared about themselves and their immediate families and friends at the expense of the majority of the people (Saura, 2007).

Even the amateurish manifesto of Foday Sankoh's rebel Revolutionary United Front, RUF, "Footpaths to Democracy: Towards a new Sierra Leone," was not unaware of the depth of the country's

political, social, economic and cultural retrogression under the APC. Accordingly, one major goal of the rebellion, among many others, was to "save Sierra Leone from its corrupt, backward and oppressive (APC) regime."

It is important to bear in mind at this juncture, that major western powers, especially Britain, the erstwhile colonial master, maintained "correct" relations with Sierra Leone, while the US embassy in the country was the most imposing. The 'cordial' relations between America and major European countries with Africa was an important factor in West Africa's slide towards dictatorship and crass neglect of human security in the region, which proved to be disastrous at the end of the Cold War. More importantly, in the absence of regular, free, fair and credible elections, they were also unable to freely choose their representatives and leaders, or to replace nonperforming ones and their government. What were described as or what passed for elections in this period were mere 'selection processes' in majority of West African countries including Liberia and Sierra Leone. Unsurprisingly, opposition elements were driven underground or forced into exile in neighbouring countries in the region. In other words, directly and indirectly, the Cold War foreign policies of the Great Powers, including the Soviet Union, were among the salient factors that set the stage for the unprecedented turbulence in the region in the 1990s. that accompanied the end of the Cold War.

Important also, were the externally induced and driven political changes in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the region as a whole, in the guise of political, which eventually led to the collapse of both countries, which necessitated the ECOWAS/ECOMOG interventions to restore central political authority, and eventually their 'refloating', 'reformatting' or 'reconstruction' after the end of

hostilities in Sierra Leone in 2000 and Liberia in 2003. of both countries in the 1990s and early 2000s.

The End of the Cold War as Causal Factor in the Violence Conflicts and Interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

As already noted, the demise of the Cold War, like the Cold War itself, was a direct and indirect cause of the impositions in Liberia and Sierra Leone that necessitated the ECOWAS/ECOMOG interventions in both countries.⁴ The reasons are not farfetched. In the first instance, the 'new world order' significantly 'rebased' Africa's strategic importance downwards for understandable reasons. For instance, although American leaders and officials did not admit that much publicly, the end of the Cold War must have relieved them of the heavy moral burden of hob-knobbing with undemocratic and killer regimes in Africa for more than four decades. It will be recalled that America and its west European allies maintained embarrassingly close ties with some of Africa's worst leaders, and were no doubt eager to distance themselves from them after the end of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. This was one reason the West imposed political and economic conditionalities in their post Cold War relations with African countries, to compel them to undertake political reform, preferably Western style democracies.

⁴ The two countries were perhaps only the most notorious examples as other African countries were equally traumatized and experienced large scale violence and conflicts that are still on-going. Another good example is Congo. DRC. It is believed that the collapse of the Berlin Wall separating East and West Berlin in October 1989, was the single most important physical evidence of the end of the Cold War.

Second, was the political turbulence and civil wars that broke out in the Baltic States immediately after the end of the Cold War and the diversion of Western attention - American especially - to that part of the world at the expense of Africa. The Balkan wars, coupled with Africa's temporary devaluation of its strategic relevance in the 1990s led to what can be described as the West's 'perestroika' or 'restructuring' of its relations with the continent, which was based on their perceived self interests in a world without the Soviet Union. Thus, for more than five years, the civil war in Liberia and other serious conflict across the continent were perceived as 'African problems for Africans to solve'.⁶ Third, the US emerged as the sole Super Power and the world's un-anointed 'policeman', bent on imposing a 'pax Americana' in global politics, above all, in peripheries like Africa.

Fourth, when America and its European allies eventually 'returned' to the continent to re-engage with African states and leaders, they vigorously 'pushed' for political and economic 'reforms' such as: respect for human rights and rule of law; multi-party political systems, peaceful, free, fair and credible elections,

⁶ That bitter experience paved way for the reform of the OAU which led to its replacement with the African Union in 2002. The AU is presently working on institutionalizing 'African Solutions in Peace and Security', AISO, for short. The author was co-chair of a continent-wide meeting on that in Addis Ababa in December 2010, and attended the inaugural meeting of experts based on the Report of the 2010 meeting, in Addis Ababa in September 2014. The Second meeting on AISO was held in Addis from 6-7 March, 2015. All this, points to the fact that Africans are more than ever, committed to finding African solutions to African problems, especially in peace and security.

etc; all hallowed values and tenets in Western democracies. Although these values are relatively new to Africa, they became the templates for Africa's political reform agenda. Ironically but understandably, these were also core values and political processes that were in very short supply in the continent, which African leaders were not used to. For as we have mentioned already, even when they held 'elections', the process was never fair, free, transparent or competitive. In other words, what passed for elections were mere public endorsements of sitting leaders (Eyiola, 2006). More importantly, for African leaders the 'new' conditionalities were to them obviously too sudden, drastic and traumatic a 'political u-turn', and a bitter 'political pill' for them to swallow. But since there was really no viable option given their political and economic dependence on the West, and their increasing vulnerability to political pressure at home, they were constrained to reluctantly carry out the suggested reforms. The consequences for several African countries, including Liberia and Sierra Leone, as already pointed out, was to simply worsen their already difficult and precarious political, economic and security challenges including their tenuous hold on power, thereby seriously undermining national, regional and continental peace and stability (Akinnade and Sesay, 1998).

The fifth consequence of the post Cold War international order for West Africa was the sudden end of the 'elaborate and deep-rooted 'protégé system' that once provided the façade of political stability and 'well-being' in many African states. The protégé system no doubt emboldened despotic and 'sit-tight' leaders on the continent to ignore the yearnings of their citizens, knowing they could count on their political 'benefactors' to come to their assistance when their authority is challenged from within. But with

the temporary retreat of Western countries from Africa and 'suspension' of political and economic support, African leaders were left to their fate at home and in the larger global arena. As would be expected, the "soft underbelly" of 'sit tight leaders' and 'presidents for life' was exposed and they were unable to effectively defend themselves, a reality that was not lost to local dissidents and their external backers. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, the opposition was emboldened to come out openly and bid for political power only to find that the 'strong man' façade was hollow, having been 'eaten' mortally from within by 'political termite' and ready to collapse without external backing. To the greatest surprise of Liberian political leaders and elite, even America, which they once perceived as the 'god father of Liberia', was not 'interested' in engaging the rebel factions, which in part accounted for the free fall of Samuel Doe's regime and eventual collapse of the Liberian State under pressure from Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia, NPFL, and the proliferation of rebel groups struggling for supremacy in the country.

In the absence of effective external assistance or interest in bringing the wars to a speedy end, West African countries were constrained to put into practice a popular refrain that became popular after the creation of the OAU in 1963 and after its demise; "try Africa first". Throughout the existence of the OAU, the concept was used to prevent African countries from externalizing their conflicts while the Organization search for solutions. The same principle, in a much more elaborate form, has found expression in the AU, the successor to the OAU, as 'African solutions in peace and security'.⁷ It was in the above circumstances that Nigeria, under determined and committed Nigerian military leadership, picked up the gauntlet and successfully rallied other members of the

Community to put in place the ECOWAS Monitoring Group, ECOMOG, first in Liberia and later in Sierra Leone. After a wobbly start in both countries, ECOMOG succeeded in restoring stability to the two countries and facilitated the extension and presence of central authority to areas outside of the capital cities. Although ECOWAS and Nigeria were unable for reasons beyond the focus of this chapter, to participate effectively in post conflict reconstruction processes in Liberia and Sierra Leone, their tenacious efforts in bringing the two "uncivil" wars to an end, enabled the international community under the leadership of the UN, to deploy, first, UNAMSIL, (United Nations' Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone, and UNMIL, United Nations Mission in Liberia, which played a major in refloating the two countries, and 'reformatted' them. Both countries subsequently organized competitive elections that saw the installation of civilian regimes.

Thus far, there is no sign that the two countries have not learned important lessons from their bitter civil war experiences. In Sierra Leone, political power has changed hands from President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah who supervised the end of the civil war in 2000, under his Sierra Leone Peoples' Party, SLP, government, to Ernest Bai Koroma of the APC in 2007. Koroma was re-elected for the second time in 2011, and the country is preparing for another election later in 2015. Helen Johnson-Sirleaf in Liberia is also in her second term as President of the Republic.⁶ Perhaps the greatest achievement of

the two countries is that they have avoided a relapse to civil war.⁷ This may testify to the fact of their commitment to address issues of marginalization, electoral violence, youth unemployment, bogus elections, bad governance, corruption, and widespread impunity, etc, which were among the major causes of the civil wars.

Postscript: Ebola Virus Disease and National Security in Liberia and Sierra Leone

By way of a conclusion, Liberia and Sierra Leone arguably faced the biggest threat to national and human security since the end of the civil wars, a decade and a half ago, in 2014, following the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease, EVD. The disease seemed to have exposed the misperception that critical social sectors such as health, were on their way to recovery after many years of neglect prior to the civil wars. In theory, the disease has the potential to wipe out whole populations, communities and families in both countries and definitely posed a much more security challenge than the civil wars. Not only did it reverse the little gains made in the economic sector after long years of debilitating hostilities, it completely overwhelmed and neutralized the health sector in both countries.

⁶ There are strong but unconfirmed rumours that Koroma is contemplating running for a third term in office, which may not be constitutional. He is however unlikely to get away with it given the Zero tolerance of changes in government brought about by undemocratic means, by the Economic Community of West Africa, ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

⁷ For more on civil war theory including causes, see; Timothy J. Besley and Torsten Persson, *The Incidence of Civil War: Theory and Evidence*, NBER Working Paper Series, 14585, on <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14585>, accessed on 23rd March 2015.

Progress in arresting and eliminating the disease at the time of writing was only possible after the massive interventions by America in Liberia, and the United Kingdom in Sierra Leone, a scenario that rekindled the arguments about the colonial legacy in Africa and the ability of African countries to tackle their challenges without recourse to external actors. In other words, the diseases seriously called into question the relevance of African solutions in peace and security, as both ECOWAS and the AU could not do much to tackle the epidemic in the two countries.

In that regard, Sierra Leone is/was perhaps the least prepared for the epidemic, proof of the neglect of critical social sectors like health and education by successive post conflict regimes. At the time of writing in March 2015, the last Ebola patient had left hospital in Liberia, while the Sierra Leone government had declared another lockdown scheduled for March 27 to 29 to arrest the rampaging disease. The death toll in Sierra Leone has been put at 3,700 and 4,117 in neighbouring Liberia. In Sierra Leone the disease got as close to the seat of power as the Vice President, who lost one of his body guards to the disease in late February 2015 while another tested positive. The Vice President was constrained to quarantine himself as a precautionary measure. Also important is

⁸ For more on this see; Amadu Sesay, Charles Ukeje, Osman Gbla and Wale Ismail, (2009). *Post War Regimes and State Reconstruction in Liberia and Sierra Leone*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 2009 and Sesay, A. (2011). "The role of external actors in post conflict reconstruction in Sierra Leone", unpublished manuscript/discussion paper prepared for the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI, 2011. Post conflict reconstruction efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone are extensively treated in my forthcoming book; *Fighting Bushfires: ECOWAS and Peacemaking in West Africa*, Abuja: ECOWAS Commission, forthcoming, 2015

the fact that the Ebola Virus Disease has confirmed the argument in favour of a shaft from "hard" traditional security concerned mainly with defence of the territorial integrity of the State and its institutions; to "soft" security which focuses on the well-being of the citizens or human security. On that score, both countries have performed woefully. More worrisome, perhaps, were reports of misapplication of about \$4million 'Ebola money' in Sierra Leone, (BBC, 2015), which raised the same old concerns and questions: bad governance, pernicious corruption, impunity and shameful dependence of seemingly 'sovereign' states on the rest of the world for 'salvation' in the Twenty-First Century. From such a perspective, the death of one of the body guards of the Vice President from Ebola and the positive test result of another close aide in February 2015, all point to the fact that not much has really changed in the country in so far as the quality of governance and commitment of the leaders to the human security of the citizens is concerned. Put differently, old governance habits die hard in West Africa, and in particular, Sierra Leone in this instance.

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6

Governance, Political Instability and Civil Wars

W. Alade Fawole

Introduction

Post-Cold War Africa has witnessed a prevalence of intra-state political crises of such immense proportions that have threatened the very survival of many African states, most especially in the early 1990s. The continent has also witnessed serial instabilities, state failures and outright state collapse; from Liberia to Somalia, Sierra Leone to Rwanda; Democratic Republic of Congo to Mali, the Central African Republic, and including the Arab-Spring-induced instabilities and violent regime changes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, to mention a few. These political instabilities, insurgencies, state failures and civil wars in Africa in the 21st Century are essentially products of bad governance. The phenomenon of bad governance had actually begun shortly after independence in the early 1960s