

**NIGERIA'S MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN LIBERIA 1990-1997:
A REALIST ASSESSMENT**

EUGENE OBIORA EUGENE

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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**NIGERIA'S MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN LIBERIA 1990-1997:
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by

EUGENE OBIORA EUGENE

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for the award of Doctor of Philosophy**

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DEDICATION

This PhD thesis is dedicated to my late father, Chief, Sir, Eugene Ogoegbunam Nwabufo (Akunne N' Ogidi, Onye Nkuzi Grammar School) of blessed memory, a chronologist of European History and civilisation, an English language lexicologist, a musicologist/organist, an artist/sculptor, a traditional medical gynaecologist, an intellectual titan and sage of his age, a renowned educationist in the old Eastern Region of Nigeria, a great philanthropist, and indeed, a man of many parts, for his extra-ordinary paternal efforts (through his adopted son, and distinguished personality/professional who mentored me, Chief, Sir, Pharmacist A. O. Ezegbo, Akuchukwu of Ogidi, Anambra State, Nigeria) in inculcating in me the principles of intellectual/academic enhancement, discipline and moral ethics. May his gentle soul continue to rest in perfect, permanent peace in God's glorious bosom, Amen.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACO – Army Chief of Operations

AFL – Armed Forces of Liberia

AFRC – Armed Forces Ruling Council

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

APEC – Asia Pacific Economic Council

AU – African Union

CAS – Combat Air Support

CBN – Central Bank of Nigeria

CDS – Chief of Defence Staff

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

COAS – Chief of Army Staff

COS – Chief of Staff

COWA – Coalition of the Willing and Able

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

ECOMOG – Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group

ECOMOG-FC – Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group

Field Commander

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

EU – European Union

FEM – Foreign Exchange Market

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HIMO – High Intensity Military Operation

HIV – Human Immuno-deficiency Virus

IGNU – Interim Government of National Unity

IGOs – Intergovernmental Organisations

INPFL – Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia

ISAF – International Stabilisation and Assistance Force

KIA – Killed in Action

MAD – Mutual Assured Destruction

MIA – Missing in Action

MPRI – Military Professional Resource Initiative

MPR – Military Participation Ratio

NAF – Nigeria Air Force

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NCS – Non-Conventional Security

NFI – Negative Functional Indicators

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organisations

NIBATT – Nigerian Battalion

NIGCON – Nigerian Contingent

NPFL – National Patriotic Front of Liberia

OAU – Organisation of African Unity

PAL – Progressive Alliance of Liberia

ROE – Rules of Engagement

RUF – Revolutionary United Front

SMC – Standing Mediation Committee

SAP – Structural Adjustment Programme

SIPRI – Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

ULIMO-J – United Liberation Movement

ULIMO-K – United Liberation Movement

UN – United Nations

UNAMID – United Nations African Mission in Darfur

UNAMIR – United Nations African Mission in Rwanda

UNAMSIL – United Nations African Mission in Sierra-Leone

UNAVEM – United Nations Angolan Verification Mission

UNDP – United Nations' Development Programme

UNIFIL – United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

UNOMIL – United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

UNOSOM – United Nations Observers in Somalia

UNPROFOR – United Nations Provisional Force in Yugoslavia

UNTAG – United Nations Transitional Assistance Group

WIA – Wounded in Action

CAMPUR TANGAN TENTERA NIGERIA DI LIBERIA 1990-1997:

SATU PENILAIAN REALIS

ABSTRAK

Negara Liberia terjerumus ke dalam kancah perang saudara antara tahun 1990 hingga 1997. Kerajaan Nigeria pada masa itu telah melancarkan dan mengetuai campur tangan ketenteraan dengan dominasi tentera Nigeria dalam cubaan menamatkan perang saudara tersebut. Campur tangan ketenteraan Nigeria ini, dari perspektif realis, dilakukan untuk mempertahankan kepentingan nasionalnya dengan mengembalikan keamanan di Liberia melalui mekanisme yang dipersetujui secara multilateral. Namun, hal ini tidak dibuktikan dalam penulisan sedia ada setakat ini. Oleh itu, satu kajian yang cuba mengisi lompong ilmu dalam penulisan sedia ada perlu dibuat. Maka, objektif kajian ini adalah pertama untuk mengenal pasti sama ada penglibatan tentera Nigeria di Liberia memenuhi kepentingan nasional Nigeria; dan kedua, menentukan sama ada campur tangan yang dipimpin Nigeria ini merupakan inisiatif antarabangsa hasil muafakat multilateral yang patut dicontohi, atau satu duluan berbahaya dalam hubungan antarabangsa. Di samping data sekunder, kajian ini menggunakan maklumbalas daripada temubual mendalam dengan penggubal dan pelaksana dasar Nigeria semasa campur tangan ketenteraan tersebut. Teori realisme telah diaplikasi untuk menganalisis campur tangan ini. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa sepanjang tempoh kajian, campur tangan ketenteraan Nigeria di Liberia bukanlah untuk menjaga kepentingan nasional Nigeria dan juga bukan dipersetujui secara multilateral. Negara-bangsa disaran untuk lebih rasional dan berhati-hati dalam menggunakan mekanisme campur tangan ketenteraan di persada antarabangsa. Kajian lanjut dari perspektif teoritikal lain disyorkan juga dibuat bagi memenuhi jurang kelopongan pengetahuan dalam penulisan sedia ada.

NIGERIA'S MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN LIBERIA 1990-1997:

A REALIST ASSESSMENT

ABSTRACT

The Liberian nation was plunged into civil war between 1990 and 1997. The Nigerian military government at the time, in its perceived attempt to stop the war, initiated and led a military intervention in the country predominantly using the Nigerian Army. In realist terms, Nigeria's military involvement was to defend her national interest by restoring peace to Liberia through a consensual multilateral mechanism. Indications from extant literature, so far, have not shown any convincing evidence of this expectation in the Nigerian involvement. This is a knowledge gap that needs to be filled. The objectives of this study, therefore, are first, to ascertain if the Nigerian military involvement in Liberia was in her national interest; and second, to clarify if the Nigerian-led intervention was a commendable, multilateral, consensual international initiative as assumed, or if it was a dangerous precedent in international relations. The study utilises oral responses from in-depth interviews with Nigerian policy makers and executors during the intervention, in conjunction with secondary data. The theory of realism is applied in analysing the Nigerian military involvement. The findings of the study are that first, the Nigerian military involvement in Liberia, in the period under study, was not in Nigeria's national interest; and second, it was not multilaterally consensual. The study suggests the need for rational and cautious use of the mechanism of military intervention by nation-states in their international behaviour; and recommends further research in the study area possibly from other theoretical perspectives in order to fill any perceived gaps in knowledge in the existing literature on Nigeria's military involvement in Liberia.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Several decades ago a former US Defence Secretary, Robert McNamara did reveal that from the years 1955-1966, 87% of the world's very poor nations and 48% of the world's middle income nations (according to World Bank categorisation) suffered serious internal violence and conflicts; and from records available, he opined that economic underdevelopment is a major causative factor fueling crises and conflicts in the developing world (McNamara, 1966). The implication is that it is possible to predict the highest incidence of violence and conflict in the most poverty-stricken countries of the World and these are, of course, found in the developing nations of the Third World including Liberia and Nigeria. Any exhibition of weakness, failure or inability by political leaders to prudently manage the human and material resources of the states (under the prevailing circumstances of evolving crisis and conflict) often, could lead to state abnormality or exhibition of symptoms of failure in the state. The four-decade period, especially in Africa, between 1960 and 1999 was characterised mostly by numerous deadly international crises and conflicts, some of genocidal proportions, culminating in millions of deaths and refugees/internally-displaced persons (Adebajo, 2002). A critical observation does reveal that causative factors to these crises and conflicts bordered on unstable economies, bad leadership, fragile political institutions as well as rabid corrupt practices – all of which are negative functional indicators in governance and government.

In the same vein, another observer stated, saying that the West African sub-region is “the (sic) symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real ‘strategic’ danger,” noting that it is “home to some of the ‘unsafest’ places in the world” (Kaplan, 1994: p. 44).



Figure 1: Map showing location of Liberia and Nigeria in Africa. Retrieved March 12, 2015 from <http://www.freeusandworldmaps.com/html/WorldRegions/WorldRegions.html>

To acknowledge the past of Liberia, is to acknowledge the history of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The geographic space known presently, as Liberia, in West Africa, as shown in **Figure 1** was originally inhabited by peoples of different ethnicities. However, in the first decade of the nineteenth century (with slave trade, de facto and de jure abrogated), anti-slavery societies began to return freed slaves

from North America and the West Indies (Maathai, 2009: p.5). In time, the descendants of these settlers formed a strong minority and became known as Americo-Liberians. The land on which this group settled was acquired by barter by the Americo-Liberians from the indigenous people of the area. Nonetheless, in 1847, the settlers declared independence while continuing the subjugation of the indigenous African people. However, as of the year 1990, when the Liberian civil war broke out, the entire population of both the descendents and the original settlers was about 2.5 million.

Liberia has a total land area of 96, 320 square kilometres, maritime area of 15, 050 square kilometres and a coastline of 579 kilometres (Retrieved January 28, 2014 from www.issafrika.org/af/profiles/Liberia/LIBERIA1.HTML#geography_Anchor). It is strategically situated on the coast of West Africa and is bound by Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone in the east and west respectively, Guinea to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Three major geographic regions delineate the country: a coastal belt of sandy beaches and lagoons, a plateau and a mountain region endowed with various minerals such as iron ore, gold, and diamonds. Its proximity to the ocean helps provide the water that supports the fertile soil and which in turn supports the subsistence agriculture of the peasant population. However, Liberia is largely known today because of its rich timber and vast rubber plantations.

Up until the Nigerian-initiated-and-led Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) military intervention in Liberia in 1990, her natural resources have not translated the country into any kind of serious economic or infra-structural development. English is the official language of Liberia but Bassa, Krahn and Kru are widely spoken. Liberia has a composition of ethnic

groups such as the Bassa, Vai, Mano, Mende, Belle, Dey, Gbande, Gio, Gda, Grebo, Kissi, Kpelle, Kru, Loma and Mandingo (Oni, 2002).

Liberia's crises and conflict do not fit into the prototype of conflicts in Africa emanating from artificial geographic entities, called countries or nations, created by European colonists. However, Liberia experienced similar European attitude in terms of colonial exploitation. The multi-national organisation, Firestone Company, while decimating the timber and rubber in Liberia, did nothing to improve the lot of the exploited Liberians. Similarly, their actions of relating more with the minority Americo-Liberians widened the economic gap amongst the indigenous populations and the settled Liberians and promoted inter-ethnic feud. Before long, disenchanted and disgruntled political elites began playing on ethnic and cultural sentiments on selfish political and pecuniary goals. Furthermore, these relatively modern political gamblers coercively began institutionalising themselves in power. The authoritarian and ruthless character of these political rulers, coupled with avarice and corruption, not only retrogressed their country, but also created opposition in the form of political parties, warlords, or incessant riots and demonstrations. More so, the disgruntled and dispossessed had an amalgam of jobless and hapless youths with which to build their ranks and engage in violence and war. Bangura (1997, pp 117-148), with reference to African countries, was of the opinion that the last decade of the last century, after the demise of the Cold War, witnessed more of intra-national conflicts than international wars; indicating that in the emergent scenario where ideological rivalry between the West and the East was no more prevalent, the proliferation of illegal small weapons across national borders precipitated a lot of wars. This development created a situation where civilians and non-conventional

military infrastructure were targeted resulting in mass civilian killings and displacements.

In states endowed with vast valuable economic resources like gold, diamond and fossil fuel, competition for control of these resources became a do-or-die affair. Hence, what could have been a blessing for national development, became a major cause of conflict, fuelling wars. As posited by Bangura (1997), it was more or less a state of organised anarchy. In his words:

Most wars of the 1990s have been fought within countries rather than, as was hitherto the case, between states; the narratives or doctrines of major world powers no longer define the ideologies and objectives of warring groups; small, highly mobile weapons, often supplied by illicit private dealers, seem to play a much longer role than heavy conventional weapons in fueling wars; combatants deliberately target civilians rather than armed opponents in prosecuting goals; and atrocities are freely committed as part of strategies aimed at publicising political statements. ... In countries that are rich in mineral resources, such as diamonds, gold, timber, agricultural produce, drug-generating plants and oil, the political goals of wars often interact with the multiple logics of resource appropriation, the drug trade, the looting of private property, and vandalism. Such complicated outcomes have led many commentators to portray contemporary wars as being basically anarchical (p.117).

In Liberia, the story was not that different. The multi-ethnic composition of the country bred disgust amongst the ethnic groups. But it was the antagonism and discriminatory policies of the settler descendants, the Americo-Liberians, that created almost an apartheid system in the country. The settlers dominated all the political, social, and economic realms of government and the privileges. Political power and development was lopsided in the rural areas which was the economic mainstay

lacking in amenities, while the urban areas had the basic amenities. Such lopsided development, for the most part, led to urban drift with its own social problems. These problems became accentuated with unbridled corruption. It was one thing looting the treasury; it was another displaying the ill gotten wealth with reckless abandon. Because of corrupt practices, civil servants were mistrusted by the public which would go to any length to have them eliminated.

What is more, the Liberian Armed Forces was anything but professional and national. Recruitment and training were ethnic/class-based and did not conform or represent the best practices in the military world. Citizens were arbitrarily picked up, beaten, women violated, properties looted and some killed. This created so many enemies that citizens joined the rebel forces to avenge the brutality of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). It is no wonder then that the lives lost in the civil war ranged from 150,000 (Frontline World, May 2005. Retrieved August 29, 2015 from www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/liberia/facts.html) to 250,000 (Liberian Country Profile Overview. Retrieved August 29, 2015 from www.bbc.com/news/world-africa13729504), from a population of over 2.3 million.

However, the immediate causes of the civil war derive from the Rice riots of 1979. William Tolbert, who replaced William Tubman as President, began the process of integrating Liberians in the political programme by allowing for political parties to be formed. One of such parties, comprising educated indigenous Liberians was the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL). It later changed its name to the United Peoples Party and began condemning government policies such as the increase in the price of imported rice. The widespread riots and the calls of resignation created a fertile ground for a coup. On the 12th of April, 1980 a group of

non-commissioned soldiers, led by Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe, assassinated William Tolbert, the President, and assumed power.

Apart from the bloody nature of the coup, Doe and his supporters went on to confiscate properties of the Americo-Liberians and continued the corruption that was entrenched in the Liberian political system under the previous administrations. He went on to stifle opposition through killings and imprisonments. Before long, opposition to his administration began to swell. In 1983, an unsuccessful coup was attempted by the former Commanding General of the Armed Forces of Liberia, Brigadier-General Thomas G. Quiwonkpa. His second attempt in 1985 was ill-fated. This time, however, he was captured and executed alongside his colleagues. At this point, the power play took on an ethnic dimension. The Krahn-dominated AFL (loyal to the President, Samuel Doe) went on rampage, killing Quiwonkpa's ethnic group members, the Gio and Mano in and around Monrovia and Nimba County. Master Sergeant Samuel Doe continued to overreach with his orgy of violence until Charles Taylor appeared on the scene in December 1989.

Feeding on the disenchantment of the people, Charles Taylor, an Americo-Liberian, organised the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) to wade into the misgovernment and violence which President Doe and his supporters were meting out to Liberians. Supported by Franco-phone West African countries of Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso and with an army of 150 men, Charles Taylor invaded Liberia from Ivory Coast first landing in Nimba County. Nimba County was home to many Quiwonkpa's ethnic group members and had a significant number of anti-Doe supporters. Thus began the Liberian civil war (Oni, 2002).

Nigeria, on its part, is the most populated black country on earth with the largest standing army in West Africa in the 1990s (Military Balance, 1996/1997). The country had also been variously referred to as the “giant of Africa”, “giant in the tropics”, “spokesman of the blacks all over the world”, “a frontline state in Africa”, among others (Adelemo & Baba, 1993). As just one of the five Anglophone countries in the 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Nigeria’s military power in the West Africa sub-region coupled with her dominant influence in the area, attracts scholarly interest. Perceived from a demographic prism, the country, as at 1997, hosted about half of the entire population of the West African sub-region (West Africa, June 1997: p.1038). With a total GDP then at 173.7 billion US dollars in relation to those of the entire West African sub-region estimated at about 374.927 US billion dollars, Nigeria held about 46.33%. This made it, apparently, the largest economy in West Africa in the 1990s and the largest economy in Africa as at 2015.

However, Nigeria’s internal dynamics as at 1990 when it militarily intervened in Liberia, was not enviable, to say the least. The economy was shaky, there were coup attempts by army officers to topple the Nigerian military government, and the civil-military relations was not cordial as well. In addition, there was apparent complicity by some of the West African Franco-phone state in fueling the internal crisis in Liberia. It was in the midst and haze of these developments that Nigeria initiated and led a military intervention into Liberia, supposedly under ECOWAS mandate.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the conceptualisation, mobilisation and operations of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) which intervened militarily in the Liberian Civil War between 1990 and 1999, Nigeria contributed and lost most in terms of men, material and money (Omede, 2004). And even recently as at 2009, Nigeria has had 43 peacekeeping missions and 17,000 military personnel across the world. This is a legacy inherited during the British colonial rule when the British colonial government used the mechanism of military intervention and coercion in both its foreign and domestic policies especially in Africa (Lugard, 1965; Mbaeyi, 1978). Even though this was the case, there appeared to be no international consensus among ECOWAS member-states on intervening militarily in the Liberian Civil War. The ECOWAS regional organisation is made up of 15 member-states. Of this number, only four - Ghana, Gambia, Sierra-Leone (Anglophone) and Guinea (Francophone) joined Nigeria in the military intervention.

The use of military power by Nigeria to intervene in the Liberian civil war was expected to win for her considerable material gain and respect necessary for establishing, projecting and enhancing her status and image in the comity of nations generally and in the West Africa sub-region in particular. Despite the huge human and material resources spent in Liberia by Nigeria, it is yet to be ascertained if the country went to Liberia “to keep the peace” in its national interest, and whether the military involvement was multilaterally consensual. Furthermore, (and in contrast to the experience of some states such as United States, Britain, Russia, China among others which predicate their external military engagements to anticipated material gains) it remains to be seen if Nigeria achieved any material gains from the military involvement. What is known, acknowledged and assumed is the fact that Nigeria

went to Liberia to keep the peace supposedly in her national interest; but what is not known is if the military adventure was actually advantageous to Nigeria's national interest or not. This is the knowledge gap which this study wants to fill. In addition, a situation where some Nigeria's African neighbours in general and some in West Africa in particular perceive Nigeria's "overwhelming military influence" and power in West Africa with great suspicion had always prevailed and apparently continues to prevail. Consequently the rationality of the entire military involvement by Nigeria in Liberia is called into question. This situation raises vital questions.

1.3 Research Questions

The essence of research question in this study is to unveil the dimensional thrusts of enquiry in establishing the hitherto unclarified issues surrounding Nigeria's military involvement in the Liberian civil war. Two fundamental questions in this regard, have therefore, been identified namely:

1. Was Nigeria's military involvement in the Liberian civil war between 1990 and 1997 in her national interest?
2. Was the involvement a consensual multilateral initiative by Nigeria, or was it a dangerous precedent in international relations?

It is hoped that these questions will throw more light on the study.

1.4 Research Objectives

Dovetailing from the research questions are the research objectives. These objectives are meant to determine the focus and trajectory of the study. As a result,

two objectives derived from the research questions, have also been identified. These are:

1. To ascertain if Nigeria's military involvement in Liberia was in Nigeria's national interest.
2. To clarify if the expedition was a consensual international initiative by Nigeria or if it was a dangerous precedent in international relations.

The fundamental expectation in these objectives is that they will help in evolving a thesis for this study on Nigeria's military involvement in Liberia between 1990 – 1997.

1.5 Scope of Study

It is important at this point to indicate that the Liberian civil war had two segments namely – the first segment (1990 – 1997), and the second segment from 1997 – 2003. The study period 1990 – 1997 commenced during the presidency of Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe and the rebellions of the opposition armed groups, the principal of which was Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). This period witnessed Nigeria's overwhelming military involvement in Liberia, the fall of Doe's regime and the inauguration of Charles Taylor as the democratically elected President of Liberia by 1997. The period 1997 – 2003, in the Liberian civil conflict, on the other hand, commenced with Taylor's ascendancy to power in 1997, and then a resumption of the second Liberian civil war which is outside the study period of this research.

The reason for choosing 1990 – 1997 is that it was a period that witnessed the Nigeria-initiated-and-led ECOMOG intervention in Liberia – a phenomenon that

revealed Nigeria's display of overwhelming military power and demagoguery under an assumed ECOWAS mandate. The perception in this study is that the internal dynamics of the 1990 – 1997 period in Nigeria were complex to the extent that an attempt to extend this study of Nigeria's involvement in Liberia outside the period of study, in detail, could result in, "chasing many rabbits in the wild at the same time and ending up catching none", in words of a proverb. The thrust of this study, therefore, is to narrow the study area and do greater detailed in-depth study. This is what has informed the choice of 1990 – 1997 as the period of study.

1.6 Research Methodology

The study is a qualitative research based on primary and secondary data. Primary data-gathering was carried out in Nigeria and it involved in-depth interviews with 10 principal respondents who were either policy makers or policy executors during Nigeria's military involvement in Liberia. The in-depth interviews, which were carried out on eight principal Nigerian military government officials during the country's military intervention in Liberia and two intergovernmental organisation (IGO) officials, were conducted from February until May 2014 as indicated in the following **Table 1**.

Table 1: List of Interviews and Respondents on Nigeria’s Military Involvement in Liberia 1990 – 1997

Date	Name of interviewee/ respondent	Title or status of interviewee/ respondent	Place of interview	Official of
6 th February 2014	Ogbole Amedu Ode.	Spokesperson, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria.	Office of the Spokesperson, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Federal Secretariat, Abuja, Nigeria.	Nigerian Government
20 th February 2014	Lieutenant-General Salihu Ibrahim (Retired)	Lieutenant-General (Retired) and former Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Nigerian Army during the Military intervention.	General Ibrahim Villa, Malali Estate, Kaduna, Nigeria.	Nigerian Government
27 th February 2014	Major E.M Jallo (Retired)	Major (Retired) Sierra-Leone Army, Information Officer, Department of Peace Keeping, ECOWAS Commission.	Office of the Directorate, Department of Peace Keeping, ECOWAS Commission Headquarters Abuja, Nigeria	IGO
28 th February 2014	Major- General K.C Osuji	Major-General; Former Staff Officer, ECOMOG Headquarters Liberia during the military intervention; Director of Administration, Defence Headquarters, Abuja Nigeria; and presently the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 1 Division, Nigerian Army, Kaduna, Nigeria.	Office of the Director, Directorate of Administration, Defence Headquarters, Abuja, Nigeria.	Nigerian Government
7 th March 2014	Major General Ishaya Bakut (Retired)	Major General (Retired) and former ECOMOG Field Commander in Liberia during the military intervention.	No. 25A, Suez Crescent, Ibrahim Abacha Estate, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja, Nigeria.	Nigerian Government
14 th March 2014	Major-General, (Dr). J. Shagaya PhD (Retired).	Major-General (Retired) and former ECOMOG Field Commander during the intervention.	General Shagaya Villa, Abuja, Nigeria Via electronic link at Major-General TL Ashei’s House, No. 36 Tafuki Road, Kabala West, Kaduna, Nigeria.	Nigerian Government
27 th March 2014	Brigadier-General P.T. Boroh (Retired)	Brigadier-General (Retired), Security and Defence Consultant, UN Office, Abuja, Nigeria.	Selem Guest Inn, Maitama, Abuja, Nigeria	IGO
21 st April 2014	Major-General C.C. Iweze (Retired)	Major-General (Retired) and former Chief of Staff, ECOMOG Headquarters Liberia during the intervention.	No. 1 Obudu Close, Osborne Foreshore Estate, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria.	Nigerian Government
19 th May 2014	NAF Group-Captain Isa Bala (Retired)	Group-Captain (Retired) and former Assistant Director of Operations, Nigerian Airforce during the military intervention.	No. 12 Isa Bala Close, Kurmin-Mashi Quaters, Kaduna, Nigeria.	Nigerian Government
24 th May 2014	Major-General T.L. Ashei (Retired)	Major-General (Retired); former Commandant, Nigerian Defence Academy and former Chief of Operations, Nigerian Army during the military Intervention in Liberia.	No. 36 Tafuki Road, Kabala West, Kaduna, Nigeria.	Nigerian Government

The respondents in the interviews were chosen based on the researcher’s knowledge of the principal policy makers and executors of government policy during the military intervention period. This is as a result of his being an academic staff of the Nigerian military organisation, the Nigerian Defence Academy. Another premise

for choosing the respondents is the snowball technique, in which selected principal respondents linked the researcher to another principal respondent. In this snowball technique, Respondent No.2 (a retired General who was the Chief of Staff, Nigerian Army during the Nigerian military intervention) linked the researcher up with Respondent No.8 – a retired Nigerian Army General who was the ECOMOG Chief of Staff in Liberia in the period under study. In the same snowball technique, Respondent No.10 (a retired General who was the Nigerian Army Chief of Operations during the Nigerian military intervention) referred the researcher to Respondent No.6 (a retired Nigerian Army General who was one of the ECOMOG Commanders in Liberia during Nigeria’s military involvement there).

All the respondents have Masters degrees or their equivalent qualifications from famous military institutions around the world. One of them, Respondent No.6, has a PhD degree, while Respondent 7 is a doctoral candidate in defence and security studies. Based on the aforementioned facts, the choice of respondents for the oral interview was made through a combination of the personal knowledge of the Nigerian *dramatis personae* in the Nigerian military involvement and the snowball technique. The choice of this combination of techniques is geared towards getting to the root of the dynamics of Nigeria’s military involvement in Liberia with the ultimate aim of making an original contribution to knowledge in the study area. There were 19 basic interview questions which are germane to the study (**Appendix 1**).

These in-depth interview questions were framed for the purpose of answering the two research questions in the study area. Interview questions 1-7 were based on the respondents’ demography which include name, age, highest education attainment, official ranks/designation while in service, tenure in office, participation

in the decision on Nigeria's military involvement as well as role in military operations during the intervention in Liberia.

Interview questions 8-12 were based on policy operational aspects of Nigeria's military involvement in Liberia which includes the timing of the involvement, reasons for the intervention, how the decision for intervention was made, experience in military operations during the intervention (if a combat official), and Nigeria's casualty figures. Interview questions 13-19 relate to an assessment of the Nigerian military involvement in Liberia bordering on the necessity or otherwise of the intervention; whether it was in Nigeria's national interest, that is, whether Nigeria benefited from the involvement; and whether Nigeria's involvement was a consensual multilateral action or whether it was a dangerous precedent and whether there was a positive or negative effect of the military involvement. The issue of whether internal security threats contributed to the Liberian war and the subsequent Nigerian involvement; and also whether Nigeria's military involvement minimised or exacerbated such internal security threats in Liberia and Nigeria are also contained in this assessment group of interview questions.

All the assessment interview questions are related and connected. However, Question 14 (Appendix 1), emphatically, demands an answer on whether Nigeria's military involvement was in her national interest or not. Interview Question 16 (Appendix1), in a similar vein, is to find out if the military intervention was a commendable consensual multilateral act or if it was a dangerous precedent. The interview questions were specifically framed as aforementioned in order to solicit for an answer to the two research questions with a view to fulfilling the two main objectives of the study.

Apart from primary data, secondary data gathered for this research include book and journal articles, seminar papers, monographs, newspaper articles as well as website articles from USM subscribed data bases such as JSTOR, EBSCOHOST, Scopus, among others. The primary data (in-depth interview responses), through sorting and coding, and also the secondary data, through content analysis, are conceptualised, using the theory of realism, as explained in Chapter 3 of this study which deals with the theoretical framework. The data are interpreted with a view of answering the three research questions in the study.

On the other hand, documented speeches, policy statements and government reports which include: Obasanjo, O. (1999), Post-Inauguration speech at the UN General Assembly session, New York; Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Final Report, June 2009; and Babangida, I.B. (1990) The imperative features of Nigerian foreign policy and the crisis in Liberia, *Contact*, 2 (3), were obtained from the Nigerian Defence Academy, the Nigerian Armed Forces Command And Staff College, and the Nigerian National Defence College libraries, as well as the personal collections of the researcher.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study is that it is only a qualitative research based on content analysis of the dynamics of Nigeria's military involvement in Liberia from 1990-1997 using the realist theory. The study is not a quantitative study involving mathematical models as obtains in systems and game theories. Perhaps, further studies based on other theoretical perspectives could compliment this realist study on Nigeria's military involvement in Liberia. Another constraint/limitation of this study is the reluctance by some serving officers of the Nigerian military who served in

Liberia during the civil war to disclose classified but vital information on Nigeria's military involvement in the Liberian civil war. In spite of this, efforts were made to interview and extract information from the key knowledgeable personnel who were willing to respond to the oral interviews.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The study is anticipated to be significant as it is an assessment study of Nigeria's use of military power in Liberia's civil war, considering, among other things, hitherto neglected NTS threats which partly contributed to the outbreak of the Liberian civil war. Based on the existing literature, it appears that emphases have not been laid on in-depth study, using in-depth interview as methodology, with regards to the use of military power by Nigeria in her involvement in Liberia from 1990 to 1997. This can be seen in the works of many scholars like Pitt (1999), Tuck (2000), Rizvanovic (2013), Ero (1995), Fawole (2001), Alli (2012), Rahman (2001), Paris (2001), Oni (2002), Adebajo (2002), Kieh (2009), Arowolo (2010), Gbor (2004), Omede (2004) and Afaha (2013).

Implied in the above observation is the fact that, hitherto, there is an apparent lacuna of in-depth study based on oral interviews and responses from the relevant *dramatis personae* in the Nigerian military expedition in Liberia, incorporating the expedition's impact on Nigeria's national interest, and its multilateral consensuality. This is the reason why this study, incorporating responses from in-depth interviews of policy makers and practitioners in Nigeria's military involvement in Liberia, is important and significant. It is expected that findings from this study will make an original contribution not only to the prevailing knowledge of Nigeria's involvement

in the Liberian civil war, but also to the principle and practice of rational use of military power by states in international relations.

It is anticipated also that the suggestions and recommendations in this study will also be of immense benefit to research institutes, universities, policy makers in civil and military government departments within and outside Nigeria, as well as the general public.

1.9 Chapterisation

The research outlay of this study is as follows: Chapter 1 embodies a general introduction of the study, highlighting the geographical and historical backgrounds of Liberia and Nigeria; with emphasis on the socio-economic developments that led to the Liberian civil war which prompted Nigeria's military involvement. The chapter also highlights the problem statement of the study, the research questions, research objectives, scope of study, the research methodology, limitations of the study as well as the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review which highlights the extant literature in the study area and the perceived knowledge gaps that need to be filled therein. It discusses the opinions of relevant scholars who have written on Nigeria's military involvement in Liberia in books, journals and other print and electronic media; and ends up revealing the gap that needs to be filled in the area of the study.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical framework of the study, which is the realist theory. Two broad approaches in international relations, namely – the classical approach and the critical approach, are examined. The chapter examines these approaches, bearing in mind the philosophical roots, assumptions and criticisms

against the classical and critical theories. It also compares and contrasts these theories and ends up stating why realism theory was chosen for the study.

Chapters 4 and 5 (with differently itemised sub-themes) highlight the discussions and findings of the study, taking into considerations the two research objectives, namely – first, to find out if Nigeria’s military involvement in Liberia was in her national interest or not; and, second, to ascertain if the intervention was a commendable consensual multilateral action or if it was a dangerous precedent in international relations.

Chapter 6 is the conclusive part of the study. It presents a synopsis of the entire study, highlighting the research objectives, the discussions and the findings. Based on the aforementioned highlights, it also, presents a thesis which forms the conclusion. A brief recommendation is also made in this conclusive chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Military interventions in international peace support operations (PSOs) generally derive their legitimacy and legality from Article 42 of the UN Charter which states that the Security Council of the UN “may take such action by air, sea or land as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such actions may include demonstration, blockade and other operations by air, sea or land forces of members of the UN”. In fact, the UN Security Council, acting under Article 39 of its charter can intervene in any member state’s territory to restore internal peace and order if necessary by military force as soon as there is credible threat to peace.

Since the end of the first Liberian civil war in the late 1990s, there has been proliferation of literature on Nigeria’s military involvement in the West African state. Most of these works of literature emphasise the narratives of either the modus operandi or the international efforts made to stop the war or the specific legal instruments aimed at stopping the war, among other things. Little or not much attention has been devoted to finding out the actual intent of Nigeria’s military involvement between 1990 and 1997. Ideas and arguments have also been put forward in the extant literature on Nigeria’s military involvement in Liberia between 1990 and 1997. One group of scholars claimed that the military intervention was, *ab-initio*, controversial. Pitt (1999) posited that the world community, apparently, adopted a zero response approach to Liberia despite the grave genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out by the belligerent factions in the civil war;

saying that the Nigerian Army-led ECOMOG was therefore formed to address the conflict. He further observed that even though critics and pessimists perceive the intervention in Liberia as of limited effectiveness, it portrays an African solution to an African problem. However, the analyst posited further that the Nigerian-led military intervention was a colossal failure maintaining that the Nigerian-initiated-and-led ECOMOG military involvement in Liberia did not have majority support and authorisation from among the West African states (Pitt, 1999). In Pitt's opinion, Nigerian troops dominated the ECOMOG force thereby, making the military intervention controversial and unsuccessful.

Put differently, internal differences and disagreements among ECOWAS member states triggered off what could be termed a Nigerian-led Coalition of the Willing and Able (COWA). According to Pitt, Nigerian troops accounted for about 70% of the ECOMOG force. This was why the NPFL leader, Charles Taylor, perceived the Nigeria Army-led ECOMOG military intervention in Liberia as an exercise in Nigerian hegemony. The observer noted, finally, that by giving room for Nigeria's prejudice to influence the policy of military intervention in Liberia, the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) created an obstacle to the overall success of the operation.

Referring comically to the Nigerian Army-led ECOMOG acronym as Every Car Or Moving Object Gone (in apparent indication of the alleged looting excesses committed by some ECOMOG soldiers in Monrovia during the Nigerian-led military intervention), Christopher Tuck (2000), with reference to the Liberian civil war, declared:

From the beginning of the war in 1989, to its formal conclusion in 1997, 200,000 died and 1.2 million were displaced out of a population of only 2.5 million....The conflict itself exhibited all the manifestations of post-Cold War intra-state conflict: state collapse, ethnic conflict, political fragmentation, warlordism and a late and inadequate response from the United Nations (Tuck; 2000: p.1).

Right from the onset, there appeared, in Tuck's view, to have been ambiguity in the Nigerian-led ECOMOG mandate to keep the peace or to enforce peace. This is evident in the disparate assertions by both the first ECOMOG Commander, General Arnold Quainoo of Ghana, and President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria. According to Arnold Quainoo, "The military situation is such that my forces now have no choice but to mount a limited offensive in order to protect their positions... and enforce a ceasefire" (p.6). A critical look at the statement shows a contrast between the Nigerian President's statement that "ECOMOG is a peace force.... Our mission there is clear, precise and attainable.... ECOMOG forces are soldiers without enemies or favoured faction in the conflicts; they can open fire only in self defence" (p.6). The ambiguity of the Nigerian-led ECOMOG was further highlighted when Tuck declared:

Even at its inception, ECOMOG was controversial.... The clearest problem resulted from the clash between the interest of Nigeria and those of other West African states, notably Cote D'Ivoire.... There existed considerable resentment of Nigeria's rather heavy-handed use of its influence.... ECOMOG is nothing but a convenient camouflage for an effective Nigerian war machine (p.5).

Concluding, Tuck noted that there has been a geometric rise in intra-state conflicts with humanitarian disasters and insecurity in the West Africa sub-region as consequences. In his opinion, the Nigerian Army-led ECOMOG military

involvement in Liberia has neither provided solution to peacekeeping problems or even identified or dealt with the conflict causative factors or conflictogens fueling conflicts in Liberia and elsewhere.

Another famous scholar who wrote extensively on Nigeria's military intervention in Liberia is Adekeye Adebajo. In his 2002 publication, he highlighted six main causative factors in the war namely: the exclusionary rule of the Liberian oligarchy; the brutal and inept rule of the Liberian President Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe; the deleterious effect which Doe's rule had on the Armed Forces of Liberia; the ethnic rivalries and personal ambitions that resulted from this rule; the sub-regional tensions and rivalries that resulted from Samuel Doe's bloody rise to power, and the destabilising effect of the sudden withdrawal of U.S. support for Doe who was a strategic Cold War ally of the United States. Linking the conflicts and wars in Liberia and elsewhere to internal negative factors, Adebajo posited that,

Between 1960 and 1990, eighteen civil wars in Africa resulted in about 7 million deaths, and spawned 5 million refugees.... Their roots were internal: inept political leadership that manipulated ethnicity to favour or suppress particular groups; Weak and unproductive economies; inefficient bureaucracies and fragile political authority (p.1).

Exposing the strategic flaws in the ECOMOG operations led by Nigeria, Adebajo quoted the then ECOMOG Chief of Staff, General Cyril Iweze as saying that even simple "Military maps were not available except the tourist maps of Monrovia which was (sic) what the initial planning was based on" (p.17). He conclusively asserted that between 1993 and 1994, Nigeria's military intervention in Liberia was termed "waging war to keep peace" (p.117).

Linking the Liberian Civil War and the subsequent Nigerian military intervention to the failure of successive Liberian governments to cater for the majority of its citizens, George Kieh was of the opinion that the first Liberian civil war of 1990-1997 was precipitated by the failure of the Liberian nation to meet the expectations of most Liberians who were from the indigenous tribes since 1847 when the country adopted its constitution after declaring independence from the American Colonisation Society (ACS). Added to this fact was that the major indigenous ethnic group members were not only marginalised in the societal scheme of things, they were also forced to pay taxes and also to perform menial jobs by the dominant minority Americo-Liberians (Kieh, 2009).

In the view of Kieh, resultant class stratification, subsequently, emerged from political economic and social inequalities and inequities between the dominant group - the Americo-Liberians and the dominated indigenous class. Based on available data, he revealed that a micro-minority of about 5% of the Liberian population, the Americo-Liberians, controlled about 68% of the entire national income of Liberia and also about 70% of the national wealth of the country. In such a fragile state, already paralysed by the symptoms of abnormality, the subsisting government at the time, fell prey to armed insurrection which plunged Liberia into a very bloody civil war (Kieh, 2009).

In Nigeria's military involvement in the Liberian crisis, ideology and power factors seem to have had much influence because of the absence of a rational position to explain the huge human, material and financial expenditure and losses incurred when weighed against Nigeria's national interest. In the view of Dare Arowolo, power and ideology, instead of rationality, determined the cause and the course of Nigeria's military involvement in Liberia (Arowolo, 2010). In his post-