

# African Solutions for African Problems: The Changing Face of African-Mandated Peace Operations

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## **African Solutions for African Problems: The Changing Face of African-Mandated Peace Operations**

*by*  
*Terry M. Mays*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana recognized the need for some type of African regional security arrangement as early as the 1960s. Although his proposal for an African High Command to coordinate regional security efforts failed to materialize, African leaders have continued to acknowledge the requirement for crisis management on the continent. In particular, African states have called for African solutions for African problems.

At independence, African states found themselves with poor prospects for sustained economic growth. Most exported primary commodities whose values were determined by world markets. The new states inherited colonial boundaries that grouped many diverse ethnicities into single artificial countries. These internal differences among the population often resulted in civil wars leading to even greater economic and social misery for the people. Conflict and misery in one state tended to spill over into its neighbors' due to refugees, trans-border movement of guerrilla groups, the disruption of transportation routes, or the involvement of external governments in the "internal affairs" of another country. African leaders realize that conflict in one state affects many more states on its borders.

What solutions are available to manage conflict within Africa? Peace negotiations supported by peace operations are important tools in the conflict management process. Peace operations are an umbrella for the more familiar peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions. Peace operations are normally mandated by an international organization, tend to be multinational in composition, and deploy with the intention of restoring (peace enforcement) or preserving (peacekeeping) the status quo while separate peace negotiations seek a solution among the belligerents.

Peace operations have been undergoing an evolutionary change on the African continent. Originally, the United Nations (UN) or European countries

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organized and/or led peace operations onto the African continent. However, an increasing number of African-mandated and/or African-manned peace operations have emerged since 1990. This article will briefly explore the reasons behind the shift from Western to African-mandated and/or African-manned peace operations, the trends related to the Africanization of these missions, and the results of this change.

## **FACTORS BEHIND THE TRANSITION TO AFRICAN SOLUTIONS**

At least three factors have guided the transition to “African solutions for African problems.” First, African states prefer to solve their own problems and reduce the influence of external actors in continental affairs. Second, Western states initiated a withdrawal from African conflict management after the disasters in Somalia and Rwanda leaving a vacuum for African contingents to fill. Third, the rise of African sub-regional hegemons provided the jumpstart sub-regional international organizations required to mandate and field peace operations forces.

### **The Preference of African Solutions for African Problems**

There is a preference among African states for “African solutions to African problems.” The Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) stated that members should “Try Africa First” when appealing to an international organization for conflict management assistance. External military interventions on the continent, even under the banner of the UN, tend to bring non-African political influence and its associated problems to the continent.

The UN fielded one of its first peace operations, the UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC) in 1960. The mission proved to be a very costly attempt to solve the many ethnic differences in the Congo and to this day more peacekeepers died in ONUC than in any other UN peace operation. The experience resulted in reluctance for UN peacekeeping on the continent for 25 years. African states sought alternative solutions to security crises on the continent. However, until 1980, African states proved to be reluctant and/or unable to help themselves by organizing peace operations with continental assets. Major General Martin Luther Agwai, the former Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMISL), informed participants at a July 2001 meeting on the “Future of Peace Operations,” that African states want to participate in peace operations on the continent. However, many are not able to deploy peacekeepers because they require logistical and financial assistance to accomplish the task.<sup>1</sup>

Western mandated and led peace operations, including UN and unilateral interventions, tend to include many problems related to the influence that accompanies the missions. Western states and coalitions have intervened when their interests were at stake and not always simply because thousands of Africans

faced death, dismemberment, rape, or destruction of property. For example, French troops have intervened in francophone coups when the interests of Paris were at stake. Some internationally recognized governments were propped up by French troops while others were allowed to fall to the coupists. Other Western interventions often arrived with Western influence. For example, the United States, France, and Belgium utilized various military and economic resources to keep President Mobutu of Zaire in power even though he was recognized as a corrupt autocratic ruler. In return for the assistance, Mobutu continued to support the West throughout the Cold War. An African scholar once remarked to the author during a discussion in Nigeria on Western influence on the continent, “He who pays the piper, calls the tunes.”<sup>2</sup>

The heavy participation of African troops in ONUC demonstrated an early desire by African states to be a part of the conflict management process on their own continent. The enthusiasm of African states 40 years ago can be seen today in the large number of African contingents pledged for UN operations in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Ethiopia/Eritrea as well as sub-regionally mandated missions. The Constitutive Act establishing the African Union (AU) continues the “Try Africa First” theme from its predecessor, the OAU. The AU, an attempt to re-energize a continental organization in Africa, includes provisions for a Peace and Security Council to coordinate and handle African responses to African crises.

### **Political Will and the Western Withdrawal from Africa**

UN mandated peace operations returned to Africa in 1989 with the UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia. The mission proved to be a tremendous success due to the cooperation of the belligerents and was even accomplished under its original budget. The success of UNTAG along with the end of the Cold War prompted Western states to become more engaged in peace operations on the African continent. However, negative Western experiences in the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) between 1993 and 1994 weakened the political will of many states to participate in peace operations on the African continent.

International organizations lack their own military forces and are dependent upon their member states to field personnel and equipment in support of mandates. For example in the UN, the funding of a peace operation mandated by the organization is theoretically mandatory. However, states are not required to provide personnel or equipment for the mission. Participation in a peace operation requires political will – the willingness of the country to become involved in the conflict management aspects of a crisis despite the potential costs in casualties, monetary expenditures, and domestic public approval.

Western states had become engaged in UN peace operations in the former Yugoslavia shortly before Somalia collapsed into anarchy. The inability of

humanitarian organizations to curb the rising number of deaths from starvation and murder prompted the UN into action. However, the initial call by UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for a peace operation was met by silence in the West. Continued pleading finally persuaded many Western states to become at least minimally involved in a UN attempt to stem the growing tide of death and hunger in Somalia. The initial contingents of UNOSOM, led by Pakistan, met considerable opposition by some clans within Somalia. The United States and other Western powers dispatched combat troops under the umbrella of the Unified Task Force to protect the UNOSOM peacekeepers and assist their mission. Clashes with warlords, including Mohammed Farah Aidid, eventually led to the battle deaths of 18 American soldiers. Americans were shocked to see film of an American soldier's body being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu and to learn that another was being held hostage.

For the American public and government, the costs of trying to stop people who did not want to quit fighting proved to be too high. The American reaction to Somalia resulted in the preparation of Presidential Decision Directive 25 – a document detailing the specific circumstances under which the United States would commit combat troops short of war. National interests highlighted the list as the first requirement when considering the deployment of American soldiers with multinational peace operations. The document made it clear that the United States would not simply dispatch combat troops as the world's policeman whenever someone blew a whistle. Other contingents, Western and non-Western, also initiated a slow withdrawal from Somalia.

The Rwanda crisis of 1994-95 proved to be as troublesome for the UN. Despite the presence of the small UNAMIR peacekeeping operation on the ground and a ceasefire, the civil war in Rwanda quickly flared up after the murder of the country's president, a Hutu. Hutu extremists blamed the Tutsis within the state and initiated a bloody reprisal against them as well as moderate Hutus who supported reconciliation between the two groups. UNAMIR peacekeepers, caught in the middle of the crisis, faced the challenging question of what to do as people died around them. Many individual peacekeepers risked, and some gave, their lives to protect Rwandan citizens during the outbreak of genocide in Rwanda. However, some contingent-providing states viewed the conflict as being too costly for the political will necessary to remain in Rwanda. Belgium, citing the generally perceived lack of a mandate to use force in the conflict, withdrew its contingent following the murder of Belgian soldiers assigned to protect a Rwandan government leader. Other smaller contingents followed the Belgian lead and departed the country.

Recent memories of the crisis in Somalia had a tremendous impact on Western states as they faced the opening of the genocide in Rwanda. Iqbal Riza, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Chief of Staff, noted this point when he declared that Western states lacked the political will to become involved in

Rwanda due to their experiences in Somalia. Riza commented:

It comes back to political will. If the political will is there, yes, anything can be done. If the political will is there, troops, APCs [armored personnel carriers], and tanks can be airlifted in a matter of two days. This is not to criticize the Security Council. It is understandable that after what had happened just a few months before in Somalia, there was no will to take another such risk and have more casualties.<sup>3</sup>

The April 1994 outbreak of violence in Rwanda did not immediately become an item of American national interest. James Woods, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the Department of Defense (1986-94), supported this view when he commented:

I put Rwanda-Burundi on the list [a compilation of areas that could develop into serious crises for the Clinton Administration]. I won't go into personalities, but I received guidance from higher authorities, 'Look, if something happens in Rwanda-Burundi, we don't care. Take it off the list. US national interest is not involved and we can't put all these silly humanitarian issues on lists . . . Just make it go away.' And it was pretty clear to me, given the fiasco in Somalia, that we probably wouldn't react.<sup>4</sup>

The United States was not alone when it came to ignoring the unfolding genocide in Rwanda. Great Britain, along with the majority of the Security Council, opted to support a decrease in UNAMIR's strength and proved reluctant to contribute a contingent when the body re-mandated UNAMIR later in the summer. Simon Hoggart of the *Guardian* attempted to explain the British government's attitude and unwillingness to send soldiers to Rwanda when he wrote: "Rwandans are thousands of miles away. Nobody you know has ever been on holiday in Rwanda. And Rwandans don't look like us. They have less clout [in the international community] than Bosnian Muslims."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Niels Helveg Petersen, the Foreign Minister of Denmark, defending his government's decision not to participate in UNAMIR II, remarked: "Denmark already contributes United Nations soldiers to many other places. The basis for the Rwandan mission is somewhat uncertain. The question is whether the UN soldiers will have a reasonable chance to fulfill their mission."<sup>6</sup> In other words, Denmark did not believe it was within its national interests to contribute soldiers to a peacekeeping force that might not be able to complete its mission.

A frustrated Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, referred to the Western reluctance to participate in a re-mandated UNAMIR as "the post-Somalia syndrome."<sup>7</sup> The search for new contingents fell on many deaf ears. The UN had earlier received pledges from 19 countries to place elements of their armed forces on "stand by" for short notice humanitarian missions. Each of these states initially refused to provide any soldiers for the re-mandated UNAMIR.<sup>8</sup> As a result

of the reluctance to provide contingents to UNAMIR, the Security Council gave its official endorsement to France, which saw the crisis as a threat to its interests in Africa, for a unilateral intervention to secure refugee camps in southwestern Rwanda. The introduction of this brief Western peace operation brought many claims that France protected many who committed genocidal crimes during the civil strife.

In March 1999, Annan called upon the global body to conduct a formal review of the Rwandan crisis. The panel chosen to conduct the Rwanda investigation, led by former Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, completed its work by December. The final document, known as the Carlsson Report, offered a thorough investigation of what went wrong in Rwanda and identified lack of political will as one of the most important factors. The Report noted:

The lack of will to act in response to the crisis in Rwanda becomes all the more deplorable in the light of the reluctance by key members of the International Community to acknowledge that the mass murder being pursued in front of global media was genocide . . . . It has been stated repeatedly during the course of the interviews conducted by the Inquiry . . . that Rwanda was not of strategic interest to third countries and that the international community exercised double standards when faced with the risk of a catastrophe there compared to action taken elsewhere.<sup>9</sup>

In 2000, the OAU conducted its own investigation of the Rwandan crisis. The resulting document, known as the OAU International Panel of Eminent Personalities, clearly blamed the weak political will of the Western States for the failure to react to the crisis. The final report of the Panel noted:

Who was responsible? The Carlsson Inquiry mostly focuses and puts the greater responsibility on the UN Secretariat, especially the Secretary-General and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations under Kofi Annan . . . . Others disagree profoundly and consider it 'scapegoating' to blame the UN civil service. Interestingly enough, this group actually includes General Dallaire. In his view, the real culprit is not even the Security Council, but certain members of that Council. 'The people who are guilty are fundamentally the world powers', he told the Panel. 'For their self-interest, they had decided at the very outset of the mission that Rwanda was unimportant.'<sup>10</sup>

Western states could not always be relied upon to intervene and halt genocidal conditions in African states unless the crises were within their national interests. In short, African problems required African solutions.

## Rise of Sub-Regional Hegemons

International organizations are not sovereign bodies in the political arena. Rather, they are dependent upon the states that form their membership. States determine the direction and decisions of international organizations. Secretariats, the permanent bureaucracies of the organizations, carry out the day-to-day functions of the body and do not initiate policy without the approval of member states. Peace operations are not the independent product of an international organization's bureaucracy; they represent the collective decision of independent sovereign states.<sup>11</sup>

International organizations do not have their own military forces and are dependent upon members to provide men and material for peace operations. Peace operations mandated by the AU require a minimum 2/3 majority vote within the Peace and Security Council along with the political will of countries with the resources to field contingents. African states are not immune from the discussion on political will. A crisis in Lesotho is of tremendous interest to South Africa but perhaps of little interest to Senegal. Thus, a state or states with interest in a particular conflict may not be able to mobilize the resources of the entire continent. However, they may be able to mobilize the states around them that share a similar interest in solving the crisis.

Membership in sub-regional international organizations includes countries known as hegemons – states that dominate the area politically, militarily, and/or economically. Hegemons and their allies attempt to utilize international organizations as means to achieve their foreign policy goals. Nigeria emerged early as a hegemon in the West African sub-region, replacing Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah, and competing with francophone Cote d'Ivoire. Kenya proved to be the hegemon of east central Africa. In fact, the demise of the first international organization known as the East African Community resulted from Uganda and Tanzania's reaction to Kenyan political and economic domination of the organization. South Africa stands out as the primary hegemon of the Southern African sub-region due to its economic domination of the area.

Hegemons often utilize their domination of sub-regional international organizations for military as well as economic influence. The lack of logistical resources, trained military units, funding, or public/international approval could deter a hegemon from acting on its own through a unilateral intervention and prompt an attempt at collective action under the nominal auspices of an international organization. James Rosenau and Mary Durfee aptly explained this point when they wrote: "Hegemons would not last long if they had to apply raw power at every turn. It is far better that they find ways of legitimating their power so that others will accept it more readily."<sup>12</sup>

What may not be possible by one state through overt force might be possible through the cooperative efforts of many states under the umbrella of a peace operation. Where overt military intervention may be questioned by a skeptical



public, a peace operation is frequently welcomed. The Liberian civil war prompted Nigeria to seek alternatives to unilateral intervention or a OAU peace-keeping operation to preserve the collapsing government of Samuel Doe. Nigeria turned to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and led a coalition of states that supported the introduction of a peace operation in Liberia. Although opposed by many of the francophone states in ECOWAS, the Nigerian-led coalition prevailed and the organization fielded the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Nigeria later proved instrumental in officially labeling the 1997 introduction of West African troops into Sierra Leone as another ECOMOG mission. South Africa was successful in organizing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to endorse its intervention into Lesotho. In 1998, South African and Botswanan soldiers, under a SADC mandate, deployed into Lesotho to restore order following an uprising of junior military officers in the state.

### **TRENDS RELATED TO THE AFRICANIZATION OF PEACE OPERATIONS**

Three trends can be seen in the Africanization of peace operations. First, since 1990, the largest African mandated peace operations have emerged from sub-regional international organizations rather than the OAU. At the same time, there has been a proliferation of sub-regional international organizations with security protocols providing for peace operation options for their members. Second, continental cooperation in security and small peace operations have increased since 1990 under the auspices of the OAU and now the AU. Third, Western states have initiated a series of peace operation training and funding programs for African states since 1996.

#### **Proliferation of Sub-Regional International Organizations with Security Protocols**

The OAU's first attempts at a peace mission, the aborted 1980 and then the 1981-82 operations in Chad, proved to be failures for the organization and its member states. Despite verbal pledges, very few OAU members contributed to the costs of the operations leaving the contingent providing states paying for the mission out of their own pockets and/or requesting funds and equipment from Western backers. This situation granted France, the United States, and Great Britain influence in an operation that should have been strictly African under the "Try Africa First" principle.

The Chadian belligerents refused to abide by several OAU negotiated ceasefires leaving the peacekeepers in a vulnerable position between the two hostile factions. The Chadian government went as far as to use the OAU peacekeepers as a shield as they assaulted the rebel positions and then retreated behind the OAU lines, daring their opponents to retaliate and risk casualties. The OAU

secretariat and the contingent providing states quickly tired of this refusal to adhere to ceasefires and calls for free elections in Chad. The OAU withdrew from Chad as the rebel faction seized the capital.<sup>13</sup> Other than small, normally less than 100 men, observation missions, the OAU did not return to mandating peace operations leaving a political vacuum for states wanting to form a multinational peacekeeping force. Several sub-regional international organizations have filled this gap by developing defense protocols that include provisions for mandating peace operations. In the case of SADC, the organization members have rejected a defense protocol but still permits the endorsement of sub-regional peace operations.

*Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS):* ECOWAS emerged as the first sub-regional organization to exploit the new initiative with its Nigerian dominated ECOMOG in Liberia. The controversial ECOMOG moved into Liberia in August 1990 and almost immediately engaged the anti-government factions. ECOMOG remained in some form of existence as a sub-regional peace force for over 10 years. From Liberia, ECOMOG peacekeepers deployed to Sierra Leone where they remained until being replaced by the UN in 2000.<sup>14</sup> Other ECOWAS mandated peacekeeping contingents have included a 1999 deployment to replace an intervention force in Guinea-Bissau by soldiers from Senegal and Guinea; a 2001 operation mandated but not deployed to Guinea; and a 2002 mission tentatively mandated to replace French troops positioned between government and rebel forces in Cote d'Ivoire.

In June 2001, ECOWAS modified its security protocol known as the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security in West Africa. The new arrangement established a Security Council similar in many ways to the body of the same name in the UN. The European Union agreed to fund the new body for at least the near future. A Security Council will provide member states with a greater voice in security related decisions of the organization. One of the first acts of the organization was to establish a Standby Force of peacekeepers from ECOWAS members. Like the UN standby arrangement system, each participating state is requested to earmark a contingent of soldiers for training and potential rapid deployment within the sub-region in support of peacekeeping operations when called upon by the international organization. Each participant is not required to field a contingent when requested by the international organization. An ECOWAS Standby Force does at least demonstrate the sub-regional organization's intention to maintain the assets to field future peacekeeping operations.

*Southern African Development Community (SADC):* Some SADC members attempted to ratify a defense pact in October 2002 but failed due to a political confrontation between South Africa and Zimbabwe, the competing hegemons of the organization. The document would have included provisions for collective

action when an internal crisis in a member state demands the intervention of a peace operation.<sup>15</sup> Despite the rejection of a formal defense pact, SADC has supported peace operations by its members. In 1998, the organization endorsed a South African and Botswanan intervention to restore order in Lesotho following a military uprising.

*Community of Sahel-Saharan States (COMESSA):* In December 2001, the 16-member COMESSA, prompted by Libya, mandated a peacekeeping operation for deployment to the Central African Republic (CAR) following a coup attempt. Despite opposition from neighboring countries and the AU, which has refused to endorse the mission, Libyan and Sudanese soldiers arrived in the CAR to enforce the mandate of protecting the government in power.<sup>16</sup>

*Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC):* In October 2002, CEMAC mandated a peacekeeping operation for deployment to the CAR following another coup attempt in that country despite the presence of Libyan and Sudanese soldiers under the COMESSA mandate. The CEMAC members, wary of the Libyan troops in the CAR, officially seek to replace the COMESSA operation with their own peacekeeping operation consisting of 350 soldiers from Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Mali.<sup>17</sup>

*Non-Aggression and Assistance Accord (ANAD):* In May 1997, members of ANAD endorsed a report detailing the procedures to establish the FPA (ANAD Peace Force) if required for the area. A communique released at the end of the meeting stated “the role of the FPA will mainly consist in the prevention, management, and settlement of conflicts, in humanitarian operations, in the protection of the environment and of our cultural and natural heritage.”<sup>18</sup> ANAD plans to organize joint peacekeeping maneuvers in the future. All ANAD members (Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Togo) are francophone members of ECOWAS.

*Community of Lusophone Countries (CPLP):* The CPLP unites Portugal and Brazil with the African states of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Sao Tome and Principe. In May 1999, the defense ministers of the CPLP agreed to establish the mechanisms required for mandating and fielding a peacekeeping force when required for security within member states. The mechanisms include provisions for the joint training of national units as a single peace force capable of conducting humanitarian operations. Member states participate in annual peacekeeping training exercises with the first to be held in Africa scheduled for 2003 in Mozambique.<sup>19</sup> Although the organization discussed intervening in Guinea-Bissau in 1998, it has yet to mandate and field a peacekeeping operation.

*East African Community (EAC)*: In January 2001, the members of the re-vitalized EAC (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania) celebrated the rebirth of the organization. Maintaining security within the EAC is one principle of the organization although discussions on the topic tend to be low key compared to other organizations. This is due to the EAC's recent rebirth as well as a desire by Uganda and Tanzania to ensure that Kenya does not dominate the organization as they perceived it did in the 1960s. Although the countries have pledged to cooperate in military training, little has been accomplished since 2001.<sup>20</sup>

### **Continued Continental Discussions on Security Cooperation**

Despite the dominance of sub-regionally mandated peace operations, African states continue to pursue continental security cooperation. Eight years after the 1982 OAU withdrawal from peace operations, the organization returned to coordinating missions in support of peace negotiations on the continent. An appeal from the states involved in the Arusha Peace process for Rwanda persuaded the OAU to field peacekeeping forces again but this time in the form of small peace observation missions. The OAU fielded the Military Observer Group (MOG) between 1990 and 1991; the Neutral Military Observer Group I (NMOG I) from August 1992 to July 1993; and the Neutral Military Observer Group II (NMOG II) from August 1993 to October 1993 in Rwanda. The international organization established a fourth operation, the OAU Mission in Burundi (OMIB), beginning in December 1993. The OAU has followed up with small observer missions in the Comoros, between Ethiopia and Eritrea and within the DRC since 1997.

The foundations of Nkrumah's concept of an African High Command emerged again in 1993. During the 1993 OAU summit, members discussed and endorsed a plan for the continental organization to mandate and oversee peace operations in Africa but utilizing sub-regional organizations, rather than the OAU itself, to provide the troops. This plan has the advantage of granting a peace operation the greater credibility associated with an OAU mandate while allowing states that have trained together at the sub-regional level to carry out the mission.

Army chiefs of staff from 16 OAU members met in Addis Ababa in June 1996 to further discuss peace mission proposals under OAU mandates. The officers reviewed the recommendations from the 1993 summit as well as the results of the OAU observer missions in Rwanda and Burundi. At the conclusion of the meeting, they proposed the establishment of a mission oversight office at the OAU headquarters and emphasized the requirement to place a civilian in overall charge of an operation.<sup>21</sup> Further discussions occurred in Burkina Faso (February 1998) and Gabon (June 1999). Although the OAU endorsed the mandate of ECOMOG in 1997, the continental organization has yet to mandate an operation under the provisions outlined in 1993 and 1996. A proposed peace operation for

Burundi with troops from Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa, could have been the first mission in this new category. Although pledged under the 2000 Arusha Agreement with an OAU endorsement, South Africa was the only state to field a contingent with the operation. The other countries declared that the ceasefire was not stable enough to permit the deployment of their contingents.

The accomplishments of these various meetings can be seen in the AU Constitutive Act and the Protocol of the AU Peace and Security Council. The Act calls for member states to respect the sovereignty of other members. However, the Act permits members to “request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security.” Thus, members may request the introduction of an AU mandated peace operation to restore order. In addition, the AU members may mandate a peace operation to counter a crisis when not requested by the host government. The Act declares “the right of the Union to intervene in a member state pursuant to a decision of the assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.”<sup>22</sup>

The proposed AU Peace and Security Council includes a lengthy provision for the establishment of an African Stand By Force. The AU envisions the Force to be a series of military units specifically designated by member states to react quickly to calls for a military intervention. The Protocol of the organization makes the following basic points with regard to the Stand By Force: first, the Force will provide the military muscle of the AU for humanitarian intervention in member states; and second, when mandated by the AU, the Stand By Force will have the authority to intervene without the approval of a state’s government.<sup>23</sup>

Based upon the AU Constitutive Act and the Protocol of the AU Peace and Security Council, the AU members have provided themselves, at least on paper, with the authorization and means of intervening in member states with peace operations. This includes the legal mandate, when approved by the Peace and Security Council, to intervene without the permission of a member state when the organization determines a humanitarian crisis warrants the action.

### **Western Support for African Peace Operation Training**

During spring and summer 1994, approximately 800,000 people died as Hutus initiated a massacre of Tutsi men, women, and children. Contingents of UNAMIR, suffering casualties among their own number, withdrew from Rwanda declaring their mandate did not authorize the use of force to restore order in the country. In November 1995, the UN Secretary General called upon the international community to solve crises at a regional level before they had to be debated by the global organization. African leaders supported the Secretary General but reminded him that their militaries required funding and logistical assistance. The vast majority of African militaries are equipped for domestic security rather than military intervention in neighboring states.

This offered a win-win situation for the West and African states. African states were willing to police their own continent if the West was willing to fund, train, and equip their military units. The United States, France, and Great Britain, meeting in a special summit, proposed loosely coordinated programs to assist African states if they would solve their own continental problems. Although the Western programs would differ, they would complement each other in the preparation of African military units for peace operations on the continent. African states participating in the programs have the option of fielding their military units in peace operations mandated by the UN, AU, or sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS. In other words, participation in the programs and the fielding of contingents in peace operations are optional.

The joint initiative of the three Western states is based on four principles:

1. The three countries will work to enhance the peacekeeping capacity of African states including the capability to mount rapid collective responses to crises within the continent. The training methods include efforts to increase interoperability through training, joint exercises, and the development of common doctrine.
2. The training programs are coordinated with the UN and African Union.
3. All African states are eligible to participate with the exception of countries subject to UN imposed sanctions. The Western states are permitted to select the states they will assist in the training.
4. All training and coordination is performed openly. This helps to alleviate any doubts by other states about the nature and intention of the training.<sup>24</sup>

The four points offer a clear overview of the goals behind the training as well as explain why the United States can be seen training Senegalese troops while France is coordinating a peacekeeping exercise in an anglophone region. The cooperation between the United States, France, and the United Kingdom across traditional lines of influence offers an optimistic outlook for Western peacekeeping assistance in Africa.

The United States has developed what is known as the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). This program is designed to train battalion size units for the rigors of peace operations on the African continent. The initial training for an entire unit is conducted by Special Forces teams and includes such basic military skills as marksmanship and land navigation as well as specialized instruction on human rights, international law, and negotiation/mediation. Six months later, American military personnel return for additional training for commanders and staff members in a "train the trainer" format. This continues every six months for two-and-a-half years. Following the training and exercising of battalion-sized units, the United States then moves to overseeing brigade level operations consisting of battalions from different countries. An important aim of

the program is to develop the ability of these units to work together as an integrated team.<sup>25</sup>

The United States proposed the ACRI program in 1996 and began training African units the following year. Training has been conducted for Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda. The American military conducted the first brigade-level peacekeeping training exercise in Senegal during July 2001. Originally, Ethiopia had been tapped to supply the brigade-level headquarters for ACRI-trained peacekeeping units. However, the outbreak of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea negated this plan. Twelve American military and 40 American contract personnel were involved in the training in Senegal. The United States also conducted a joint peacekeeping training exercise with Ghana in November 2001 and a separate exercise with Kenya the same month. The United States has provided the militaries of these states with non-lethal equipment, including uniforms, generators, communications equipment, mine detectors, water purification equipment, and night vision devices, for use in peace operations.

Operation FOCUS RELIEF is related to but separate from the regular ACRI training program. This operation is a special American training program for African peacekeepers earmarked for service with the UN operation in Sierra Leone. Phase 1 was completed in 2000; phase 2, in May 2001, trained battalions from Ghana and Nigeria; and phase 3, in September 2001, trained battalions from Nigeria. The units were provided with training in basic military and peacekeeping skills under the program before being deployed to Sierra Leone with the UN.

The French program is a different interpretation of the Western initiative. Known as *Renforcement des Capacites Africaines de Maintien de la Paix* (RECAMP), the French program provides individual training at regional centers rather than intensive training of entire units. The African soldiers are expected to return to their units and conduct training based on what they have learned at the regional center. France has established peacekeeping training centers in Cote d'Ivoire and Benin.

To test the effectiveness of the program, France hosts large multinational peacekeeping exercises, including special RECAMP operations, every two years for states participating in RECAMP as well as ACRI. Recent French-led exercises include Operation COHESION KOZAH in April 2001. This exercise included peacekeepers from Togo, Ghana, and Benin and was financially and logistically supported by numerous Western states in cooperation with France. In February 2002, France coordinated RECAMP 3, known as Operation TANZANITE, in Tanzania. RECAMP 3, supported by 20 Western states, was specially earmarked for members of SADC and was the first RECAMP exercise outside of the traditional French sphere of influence in Africa.

The British training program is similar to that of France. Rather than inten-

sive training of entire units as conducted under ACRI, the British have concentrated on training individual leaders at regional centers and then testing the effectiveness of the program via multinational peacekeeping exercises. British training is primarily directed toward the members of SADC although other anglo-phone countries also participate in the programs. Operation BLUE CRANE in 1999 is an example of a British-led peacekeeping exercise. The operation included the participation of 4,000 peacekeepers from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Denmark, France, Germany, and the United States contributed funding and/or logistical assistance to the exercise. The British helped establish peacekeeping training centers in Ghana and Zimbabwe and is funding a third center in Kenya.

American, British, and French-trained African units have seen action in UN and regional peace operations. Program participants who have deployed their peacekeepers include Benin (to Guinea-Bissau), Gabon (to Central African Republic), Ghana (to Sierra Leone), Mali (to Sierra Leone), Malawi (to Mozambique for flood relief), Nigeria (to Sierra Leone), Senegal (to Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau), and South Africa (to Burundi and the DRC).

## **RESULTS OF THE AFRICANIZATION OF PEACE OPERATIONS**

The Africanization of peace operations since 1990 has produced at least four results that should be examined. First, African states are participating in peace operations within the continent. Second, sub-regionally mandated peace operations have led to rifts within the organizations. Third, there is a possibility of a future clash between hegemonies of different sub-regions over peace operations. Fourth, there is a backlash from African states due to a perceived lack of support from Western states for African contingents earmarked for peace operations.

### **Active African Participation in Continental Peace Operations**

Rather than being an empty boast, we are seeing active African participation in UN and African mandated peace operations on the continent. As of January 2003, three of the six largest troop contributors to UN operations are African states (Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya). Of the 11,253 African military personnel serving in UN peace operations, 9,914 (88%) are in missions on the African continent.<sup>26</sup> African contingents not counted in these totals include the proposed ECOMOG operation mandated for Cote d'Ivoire (approximately 1,200 personnel); the COMESSA operation in CAR (approximately 300 personnel); the proposed CEMAC mission in CAR (approximately 350 personnel); and the South African peacekeepers in Burundi (approximately 700 personnel).

### **Rifts within Sub-Regional International Organizations**



The proliferation of peace operations at the sub-regional level has led to rifts within the mandating organizations as competing hegemony vie for domination or coalitions of smaller states attempt to challenge hegemony. The initial mandating and deployment of ECOMOG forces into Liberia led to a political confrontation between Nigeria (the dominant anglophone state in the sub-region) and Cote d'Ivoire (one of two dominant francophone states in the sub-region). Each assembled a coalition of supporting states from among the ECOWAS members. Nigeria managed to persuade the members of the organization to approve ECOMOG by a slim majority. Disagreement over mandating the ECOMOG intervention in Sierra Leone surfaced in 1997. These types of rifts between ECOWAS members led to the establishment of a Security Council in 2001. The development of this new body is an attempt to soothe some of the differences between the anglophone and francophone members of ECOWAS since the structure of the Security Council provides smaller members with greater voices in discussions over security related issues placed before the organization. It is yet to be seen if the new Security Council will be able to reduce tensions over collective ECOWAS military related decisions in West Africa.

SADC has faced similar divisions among its members in the security realm. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe assumed the chairmanship in 1996 of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security. South Africa refused to ratify the Protocol establishing the Organ citing concern that it would give Mugabe too much power in the sub-region. Two years later, Mugabe attempted to persuade SADC members to officially mandate his military intervention (along with Angola and Namibia) in the DRC as a peace operation. South Africa disagreed with the idea and organized a coalition of SADC members that managed to defeat Zimbabwe's proposal. Although Zimbabwe continued to refer to its DRC intervention as a SADC peace operation, the majority of the organization's members refused to acknowledge the claim. Mugabe continued to hold the chairmanship of the Organ until 2001 when a coalition of SADC states voted to rotate the chairmanship among all organization members. Rather than leaving the chairmanship as an independent body, the members also changed the structure of the Organ to ensure the chair would report to the SADC Secretary General. This move was seen as a defeat for Mugabe in SADC.<sup>27</sup>

### **Possibility of a Sub-Regional Hegemon Clash**

A fact of having sub-regional hegemony is that they are jealous of their perceived territorial interests and resent the encroachment of other hegemony. Nigeria is not going to tolerate South African meddling in West African conflicts and South Africa is not going to tolerate Nigerian intrusion in Southern African problems. Neither will be allowed into the other state's backyard without careful oversight and adherence to an unofficial set of rules for behavior. This issue must be considered carefully if the AU proposes any large-scale peace opera-

tions. Sub-regional missions, if they include non-members of the mandating organization, will not have hegemony from other regions or if they do, only token participation.

### **African Backlash Due to the Perceived Lack of Western Support**

African states require logistical, training, and financial support if they are to participate in peace operations to solve their own continental problems. This necessity has led to a backlash due to a perceived lack of support from Western states. Although Western training programs are in place, many African states believe it is not enough support. Major General Agwai commented that African states know how to operate in an African environment better than countries external to the continent. However, where Africans are willing to field combat units with peace operations, the West should be willing to field logistical teams.<sup>28</sup> General Henry Kwami Anyidoho noted that Western states should be willing to form logistical and financial partnerships with African states deploying contingents with peace operations.<sup>29</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

The Africanization of peace operations is a win-win solution for Africa and the West. African states want to do more to solve continental problems and Western states are not eager to field combat troops into African “hot spots.” A final examination of the topic leads one to ponder three questions. First, are African states up to the task and can they police their own problems? Second, are Western states willing to provide the logistical and financial assistance required to allow African states to accomplish the mission? Finally, is there a future for cooperation between the West and African states in peace operations?

#### **Are African States Up to the Task?**

Although they are being trained and believe peace operations are in their interests, can African states perform when required? Initially, UNAMSIL was fielded with Third World participants, many of them from Africa. Rebel forces captured UN equipment and held entire units hostage until the military intervention of Great Britain into country. African states express a willingness to provide their own solutions to their own problems. Yet, are African contingents able and willing to prevent another Rwanda? Nigeria has definitely demonstrated the tenacity to take on formidable opponents if given the resources and a situation within its foreign policy interests. But what about other African states? Despite an October 2002 CEMAC mandate to field a peacekeeping operation into the CAR and a November 2002 ECOWAS mandate for Cote d’Ivoire, the contingent providers have been reluctant to actually deploy their soldiers into the crises. One thing is certain, African countries will not be able to meet the requirements of a dangerous operation without Western support and training.

#### **Is the West Prepared to Provide Greater Support?**

The West is eager to see African states take on the lion's share of peace operations on the continent. Every deployed African battalion means one less non-African battalion in a peace operation. After Somalia and Rwanda, Western states are reluctant to return to the quagmire of African conflict management. However, Western states must be willing to provide greater support for African contingents. Without help, African states will not be capable of deploying and sustaining themselves in the field. Assistance might include logistical teams from Western states as well as finances and transportation assets. Western states did pledge financial and logistical support for the ECOWAS peacekeeping operation mandated for Cote d'Ivoire.

Despite the existence of the ACRI and RECAMP programs, the future of Western support is questionable. During his presidential campaign, George W. Bush began criticizing the utilization of American soldiers to train African peacekeepers. Now that he is president, funding for ACRI in 2003 has been slashed by 50 percent to \$10 million.<sup>30</sup> African states, as shown by the ECOWAS peacekeeping mission mandated for Cote d'Ivoire, require Western assistance if they are going to tackle their own problems. Are the United States and other Western states willing to continue the funding if the African states are willing to police themselves?

The UN fully supports Western efforts to train, finance, and support African peace operations. In June 2001, the UN Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations released a report that offers the backing of the global organization for the establishment of regional peacekeeping training centers and cooperative peacekeeping training and logistics. This move offers official UN endorsement to existing programs of cooperation within African sub-regional organizations and between individual African states/sub-regional organizations with Western states, notably the United States, France, and Great Britain.

### **Is there a Future for Cooperation between the West and African States in Peace Operations?**

The Africanization of peace operations is a win-win situation for Africa and the West and the process will continue to evolve during this decade. Sub-regional international organizations, rather than the AU, will maintain the lead in mandating and deploying peace operations but only as long as Western states are willing to assist with the financing and logistics of the missions. Without this cooperation, the West could face an agonizing decision if another Rwanda-like genocide erupts. Should the West intervene and risk casualties to save lives or allow people to die without making an effort to protect them? It is in the interest of the West and African states to cooperate and find the formula that will make the Africanization of peace operations a success.



22. African Union Constitutive Act, Article 4 (h) and (j).
23. Protocol of the African Union Peace and Security Council.
24. United States Department of State, 30 November 2002, [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).
25. Ibid.
26. "Monthly Summary of Troop Contribution to United Nations Operations: as of 30 October 2002," [www.UN.org](http://www.UN.org).
27. Mathuthu, "Another Blow;" "Regional Defence Organ Wrested from Mugabe," *The Namibian*, 12 March 2001, [www.afrol.com](http://www.afrol.com), 1 December 2002.
28. Agwai.
29. Henry Kwami Anyidoho, discussion at the "The Future of Peace Operations," a joint conference of the National Intelligence Council, United States Institute of Peace, and the United Nations Association of the USA, 9-10 July 2001.
30. Michael O. Hanlon, "Help Africa Help Itself Militarily," 18 March 2002, [www.globalpolicy.org](http://www.globalpolicy.org), 30 November 2002.