The Limits of Peace-Keeping by a Regional Organization: The OAU Peace-Keeping Force in Chad

by
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INTRODUCTION

The decision by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to send a peace-keeping force to separate the warring factions of Goukhouni Weddeye and Hissene Habre in Chad in November 1981, marked an important milestone in the history of the Pan-African body for a variety of reasons. First, it was seen by many observers as paving the way for the fulfilment of Kwame Nkrumah's (ex-President of Ghana) dream of an African High Command, which had been jettisoned by the founding conference in 1963. Second, and closely related to the first, many believed that the Organization was moving away from its egalitarian and voluntaristic nature towards some form of supranationalism. Third, the decision was interpreted as an attempt by the OAU to arm itself with some teeth having been accused in the past of behaving like a "toothless bulldog" which could only bark and not bite. The Chad force was thus seen as a belated attempt by the Organization to respond effectively to the needs of its members with regard to conflict management. Finally, the establishment of the peace-keeping force was seen as a solid demonstration of the determination by African states to find "African solutions to African problems," to "try Africa first,"[1] so to speak, and shield the continent from Great Power intervention and rivalry.

In spite of such high hopes and expectations, the OAU peace-keeping operation in Chad was a total failure. It not only failed to bring an end to the fighting but it also paved the way for the successful overthrow of the "legal" authority in Chad.[2] With that, the first attempt by the OAU to carve for itself a respectable image and something "of a figure in the world," came to an abrupt end.[3] This article examines the genesis of the peace force, the reasons for its failure, and finally, tries to identify the lessons that can be learned from its failure.

THE CHADIAN CONFLICT: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Chad is the fifth largest country in Africa as well as one of the continent's poorest. It is not only completely landlocked, but much of its territory, especially in the north, is located in the Sahel and Sahara Desert. As a result of these geographical factors, the northern region was referred to as "useless Chad" by the French in contrast to "useful Chad," the southern 10% of the country.[4]

Chad was one of the last territories to be colonized by a European power, France, on 22 April 1900. "Thus, Chad's colonial borders were drawn more hastily than most" others in Africa. In fact, it was not until 1914 that the French

successfully pacified the northern region commonly known as BET (Borkou, Ennedi and Tibesti). (see map) Besides, although most of the territory became independent in 1960 along with other French possessions in Africa, it was not until 1965 that France formally handed over the administration of BET to the central government at N'Djamena.[5] The BET province is populated by pre-dominantly Muslim Arabs while the south is inhabited by black Africans, the majority of whom are Christians and animists. According to 1975 statistics, 81.4% of the northern population was illiterate compared with 72.5% in the south. In general, much of the "benefits of western education were extended mostly to the Sara people of the South. Not surprisingly, from 1960 to 1979, politics, the civil service and the army were largely dominated by the Sara."[6]
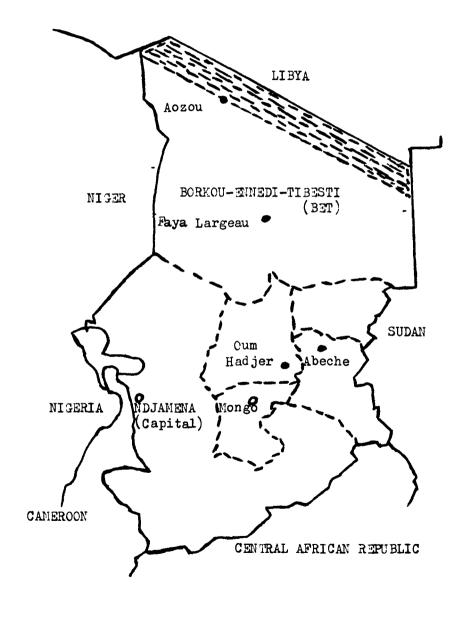
Francois Tombalbaye, the country's first President (1960-1975), was a Sara. His government placed ill-trained bureaucrats drawn mainly from the south in key administrative positions in the north. Their "administrative mismanagement and excesses, as well as their insensitivity to local custom and grievances led, starting from 1964, to a number of revolts, initially located in the central-eastern provinces and extending (after January 1965), to BET in the north."[7] Thus, in June 1966, the *Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad* (Frolinat), was formed to redress the grievances of the east-central province of the country. Predictably, the central government of Tombalbaye was unable to contain the revolts and in 1969, he was compelled to call upon France to send troops to N'Djamena to shore up his tenuous hold on the country. However, it was his decision to "impose the 'yondo' initiation ceremony on all Sara males and aspiring civil servants," that led to his overthrow and death in a coup led by Colonel Felix Malloum, who later became President on 13 April 1975.[8] Malloum could not, however, restore peace in the country and in 1979, full-scale civil war broke out between his troops and the Armed Forces of the North (FAN) led by Hissene Habre, his erstwhile Prime Minister. On 10 November 1979, a Transitional Government of National Unity (GUNT), was formed with Goukhouni Weddeye as interim President, and Habre as his Defence Minister. As both men were from the north of the country, 1979 accordingly saw the beginning of northern control of Chadian politics and the central government and, by implication, the end of Sara dominance in the country.[9]

There were broadly two dimensions to the Chadian conflict which were also closely intertwined. First, it was a case of internal strife among rival ethnic and religious factions. It started in 1965 and initially posed a serious challenge and threat only to the integrity of the regime in power in the country. With time, however, even the integrity of the Chadian state came under serious threat.[10]

The second dimension was the intervention by African and non-African states. The African state that directly intervened in Chad was Libya, a member of the OAU, which sent troops to the territory to occupy the disputed Aozou strip in 1972. In 1980, Libya sent troops to fight side-by-side with the forces of Weddeye. The non-African states that intervened both directly and indirectly in the conflict were first, the ex-colonial metropolitan power, France, and later the United States.

The conflict brought into bold relief, at least initially, the constitutional

MAP OF CHAD SHOWING POLITICAL BOUNDARIES
WITH NEIGHBOURS

limitations of the OAU. Because it was essentially an internal conflict, the OAU could not intervene for fear of contravening Article III of the Charter which proscribes interference in the internal affairs of members.[11] The conflict did come before the Organization in 1977 but it was rather in the form of a complaint by the Chadian Head of State, Malloum, against what he described as Libyan support for Frolinat, which was then trying to overthrow his regime. The OAU on that occasion employed its more widely used technique of conflict management. It set up an ad hoc committee of six states[12] to mediate in the dispute. Unfortunately, the committee was unable to persuade the combatants to either observe a ceasefire, which would have paved the way for a peaceful settlement, or go straight to the peace table.[13]

Some African states, mainly those which shared common borders with Chad, initiated peace moves to end the strife. The most notable of these interventions were those made by Nigeria, Chad's most populous and (potentially) most powerful neighbor. The Nigerian mediation efforts produced two agreements, known subsequently as the Lagos and Kano Accords after the names of the cities where the meetings were held. In pursuance of the two Accords, Nigeria also dispatched a peace-keeping force to Chad in 1979. The force was unable to ensure an end to hostilities and was forced to withdraw suddenly because of serious disagreement between the Chadian President, Weddeye, and the authorities in Lagos.[14]

The role of the OAU throughout the Nigerian peace initiatives was that of a legitimizer,[15] throwing its weight behind all the agreements worked out by the Nigerian government. It was obvious, however, that Nigeria did not possess either the prestige or political, economic and military leverage needed to impose peace on the factions in Chad. Thus, by 1980, full-scale civil war broke out once again in the country between factions led by the two major actors: Weddeye and Habre.

The special economic summit of the OAU held in Lagos in April 1980 did consider the issue of setting up an African force in Chad. However, no serious attempts were made to work out the modalities of the force although the suggestion had the support of GUNT and its President, Weddeye. By July 1980, the OAU was compelled to admit failure in setting up the force. It would appear at the time that the major constraint was financial, because the African Group at the UN hinted at about the same time that it had been mandated to seek financial assistance from the world body since the OAU was unable to raise enough funds to finance the force.[16] To be sure, the OAU did appeal to its members for funds individually, but none of them volunteered any assistance.

Another attempt to find a solution to the Chadian problem occurred in December 1980 when an emergency summit convened in Lagos. In all, eleven countries attended the meeting including many of Chad's neighbor.[17] The final communique "urged that no foreign troops be stationed in the territory of Chad except an OAU Peace-Keeping force." The summit also observed that any interference in the internal affairs of Chad would only serve to undermine the peace which had been established in the country by the relative military

superiority of the GUNT force with Libyan support.[18] The Libyan enforced peace lasted until late in 1981 when the troops suddenly withdrew from the country.

GENESIS OF THE OAU PEACE-KEEPING FORCE

The idea of sending a buffer force to separate antagonistic factions in a state or territory is not entirely new in international politics. It was first developed by the UN in 1956 when it sent troops to Suez to separate Egyptian and Israeli forces there.[19]

Although the OAU Charter does not contain any provision for an "obstruction force,"[20] it could be argued that raising the force for Chad was within its competence and in line with Article 33 of the UN Charter which empowers members to take disputes that are likely to endanger international peace and security, first "to regional agencies or arrangements." It must be stated here also that long before the conflict in Chad broke out, the OAU had developed its own modes of conflict resolution, i.e., ad hoc committees, conference diplomacy, good offices and "presidential mediation."[21] The peace force in Chad could therefore be regarded as the last weapon in the Organization's conflict resolution and management arsenal.

The immediate occasion for the eventual decision to raise and send the peace force to Chad was external to the Organization. The first and perhaps the most important factor was the visit by Weddeye to Libya from 2-6 January 1981, not long after the Lagos emergency summit on Chad. On 6 January 1981, Col. Muammar Qaddafi and Weddeye announced to a startled world the merger of their two countries. Specifically, their joint communique stated that they had agreed to "work [together] to achieve full unity between the two countries with the authority, arms and resources vested in the hands of the people; and to regard any aggression on one country as aggression on the other, both being prepared to fight alongside the other."[22] Although Libya has had a long history of fruitless attempts at merging with neighboring countries in the Maghreb, e.g. Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, many African states, especially those under conservative leaderships, viewed the prospects of a successful merger between Tripoli and N'Djamena with alarm. They believed —and this view was shared by some western countries, particularly France and the US — that it would be the first step towards the fulfilment of Qaddafi's long-standing ambition of creating a "greater Islamic State" in West and Central Africa. The United States and France, especially, believed that some of Libya's African policies were a direct threat to friendly regimes in the continent.[23] America under the conservative Reagan Administration also believed that Qaddafi was nothing but a surrogate for the Soviets. He must therefore be resisted and, if possible, humiliated. Accordingly, the United States rushed military hardware to Sudan as a precaution against what some US officials described as a "clear and present threat" from Tripoli. The urgency, it is believed, was occasioned by the perception at the Pentagon that Qaddafi's next target was President Gaffer Numiery, President of Sudan.[24]

France, the erstwhile colonial power of Chad, was equally concerned about the development of a Libyan-Chadian axis in North-West and Central Africa. French diplomats were accordingly despatched to African capitals to canvass support for the idea of a Pan-African peace force to replace the Libyans in Chad. The French "promised to pay most of the cost of the Force." Paris would also provide logistical support by way of transport and the communication equipment that would be needed by the force. With such an apparently attractive bargain, the way was paved for the Pan-African force — Nigeria was to provide 8,000 men, Senegal 2,000, and Ivory Coast 1,500.[25]

However, it would be wrong to give the impression that only external powers were concerned over the rapprochement between Libya and Chad. The anxiety of African states over the continued presence of Libyan troops in Chad was apparent at the 18th annual summit held in Nairobi in June 1981. The conference decided, not surprisingly, "to bury the past and look into the future." It also revived, with some urgency, the idea of sending a peace force to Chad to be made up of troops from Benin, the Congo, and Sekou Toure's Guinea. In anticipation of the force, members were enjoined not to "engage in acts of destabilisation or sabotage against Chad. Assistance would also be given to N'Djamena to rebuild its national army."[26] Surprisingly, however, the summit did not work out in detail the modalities of how such a force was to be financed; nor did it make serious arrangements concerning a ceasefire, transportation, and other logistical issues.

The sudden withdrawal of Libyan forces from Chad in early November 1981, took many observers by surprise and created some strategic problems for the OAU, the GUNT government in Chad, and those extra-African states which had been worried by the Libyan presence in the country. First, it created a security vacuum in the country since the OAU peace force had not been assembled. This was a serious problem as the Chadian army was in a shambles and could not be relied upon to defend the GUNT regime. Second, to prevent an outbreak of civil war and the possible collapse of the GUNT administration, which was backed by the OAU, the Pan-African force had to be raised quickly to separate the armies of the GUNT and FAN. This was given added urgency since fierce fighting had already broken out between the forces of Habre and those of Ahmat Acyl, an ally of Weddeye, on 11 November 1981, in the eastern part of the country.

CREATION OF THE OAU FORCE

The deteriorating security situation in N'Djamena coupled with the "favourable" response of some of the major western powers to meet all or most of the cost of the peace force, were some of the factors that eventually led to its creation in November 1981. This hypothesis is plausible because it is conceivable that without such financial promise or, if the western powers had come out openly in opposition to such a force, many of the African countries — which are also dependent on them for economic and military assistance — would have opposed its creation at the Nairobi summit.

When it came time to assemble the force, the total number of troops was to be drastically streamlined. Nigeria, which was to provide 8,000, would now send only 2,000 men. The remaining five contributing states were to contribute 600 men each, making a total of 5,000 troops. However, in the end, only three countries contributed troops: Nigeria, Senegal and Zaire. Adopting the UN tradition, the force was to be under the authority of the Secretary-General who in turn appointed the Ethiopian, Gebre Egziaber Dawitt, as his personal representative in N'Djamena. Dawitt was also to head a Committee made up of representatives from Benin, Congo, Guinea and Kenya to oversee the activities of the force. A Nigerian, Major-General Geoffrey Ejiga, was to command the force. It would appear from this arrangement that the commander of the force would be accountable to the Secretary-General through his representative in N'Djamena. Chad was divided into three zones for the purpose of troop deployment: north, east and central. Zairean troops were to take the northern zone at Faya Largeau; the Nigerian contingent was to man the eastern sector at Abeche; while the Senegalese were to take control of the central region at Mongo.[27] (see map) The main task of the force was to separate the armies of the GUNT and FAN which were engaged in the civil war.

On 14 November 1981, the OAU and Weddeye signed a formal agreement in Paris establishing the force. The venue for the agreement was much more than symbolic. It was proof that the main driving force behind the formation of the force was France and its western allies. This fact was resented by some OAU members who were worried about the negative psychological impact which the "French connection" or "western factor" could have on Pan-African unity and the effectiveness of the force. The Vice- President of Nigeria, Alex Ekwueme, remarked that by signing the agreement in Paris, "the OAU sold itself cheaply to France and degraded the true meaning of African Unity."[28] It was also believed that apart from financial constraints, Sekou Toure's Guinea refused to take part in the peace force because of the French role in its creation.

Whatever the reasons for signing the agreement in Paris may have been, one thing that was obviously clear is that many African states felt sufficiently concerned and embarrassed to convince the OAU Chairman, Arap Moi of Kenya, to get Weddeye and the Organization to sign another agreement in Nairobi on 28 November 1981. The agreement covered various aspects of the force including its mandate, which was to keep the peace in Chad; supervise elections that were to be fixed at a date agreed upon by all factions in the country; and, assist in the integration of the Chadian army.[29]

THE FORCE IN CHAD — PROBLEMS

For analytical clarity and ease, these problems can be grouped into three inter-related categories: (i) theoretical, that is, those which are related to the whole concept of peace-keeping in an African environment and by an African Organization; (ii) institutional problems related to the OAU itself as an international organization; and, (iii) technical problems.

Theoretical Problems

The theoretical arguments that informed the creation of the OAU force were faulty. The OAU had patterned its force along the lines of those of the United Nations; that is, it was to act as a buffer or an "obstruction force," to separate two rival factions. However, the concept of an "obstruction force" also assumes that the entities to be separated, be they factions or states, are more or less clearly demarcated and identifiable. Furthermore, it is also assumed that "while relatively small, it may serve as something of a barrier to the outbreak of violence."[30] The expectation is that its presence in the disputed territory and/or state alone would be enough to pave the way for either political reconciliation or, at least, to keep the warring factions separated. It is also assumed that the mere presence of the force signifies the peaceful intentions of the disputants to give peace a try.

It is doubtful, however, if these conditions were adequately met in the case of Chad. It cannot be said for sure that Habre, one of the key actors in the conflict, had any intention of settling the problem peacefully. Besides, he did not participate in putting the force together. Finally, it did not command the authority and prestige of the UN among its own members. It was wrong for the Organization, then, to have patterned its force along the lines of UN forces.

Institutional Problems

By far the most potent of all the problems that confronted the force are those that fall within the rubric of institutional factors. First, is the absence of a provision in the OAU Charter for a peace-keeping force. The founding conference had totally rejected Nkrumah's call for an African High Command which could have paved the way for a force such as the one that was sent to Chad. Although Article XX of the Charter made reference to a Defence Commission which meets occasionally, it has not been able to work out the modalities of either the African High Command, or a peace-keeping force.[31]

A second institutional problem relates to the newness of the venture itself. The OAU had never before embarked upon any peace-keeping activity. The lack of experience was evident in the way the Organization treated the factions in the conflict. For instance, the OAU Standing Committee on Chad met in Nairobi, Kenya, in early February 1982 ostensibly to arrange for a ceasefire in the territory without the representative of the GUNT. The resolution passed at the close of the meeting simply called on all the factions in the conflict to observe a ceasefire and open negotiations aimed at national reconciliation by the 28th of the month.[32]

The resolution had several implications for the success and even the future of the force in Chad. First, it was the beginning of a process which eventually saw the de facto withdrawal of OAU recognition from the GUNT. Second, by asking all factions to come to the peace table, it was apparent that Weddeye, who until that time was the interim President of Chad, was regarded as just the head of a faction in the conflict. By the same token, Habre was

recognized as a major force in the Chad political game. Third, it was a tacit acknowledgement by the OAU that it was losing hope of ever finding a lasting peaceful solution to the conflict.

Another result of the lack of experience was the failure by the OAU to arrange a ceasefire in the territory before the deployment of the force. The entry of the force was delayed by several weeks, in part, because of fierce fighting between the forces of the GUNT and Habre. This compared poorly with UN experience. For instance, it took the UN only two weeks to raise and deploy its force in Suez in 1956.

Aside from the delay and inability to arrange a ceasefire, the mandate of the African force was ambiguous. These issues shall be explored in detail below. Suffice it to say here, that the different interpretations of its mandate by Habre and Weddeye, in particular, added greatly to the problems of the force.

A third institutional issue deals with the OAU's apparent lack of political leverage. The Organization scored very low on this. Obviously some of its members, especially Egypt and Sudan, did not believe that they should be bound by either its resolutions or identify with its peace-keeping efforts in Chad which they were busy undermining. Khartoum not only acted as a conduit for external assistance to Habre, but it also provided rear bases for his Armed Forces of the North. This support was largely responsible for his triumphant entry into N'Djamena in June 1982, even while OAU peace-keepers were still in the country.

The fourth and perhaps the most potent institutional factor relates to the funding of the peace force. Although the OAU is numerically the largest regional institution in the world, it is also the poorest. Its budget in the three years 1986-1988, has been $25M, $23.5M and $23.2M respectively.[33] The OAU is not only irregularly funded, it is perhaps also the most under-funded organization of its type in the world.[34] Not surprisingly, it could not finance the force it had put together in Chad, estimated to cost between $150 - $300M annually.[35] But this is to be expected. After all, Africa has the majority of countries designated by the United Nations and the World Bank as the least (economically) developed in the world. The continent is also heavily indebted. By 1989, total African debt was over $230 billion.[36] In February 1983, less than four months after the force's deployment in Chad, the OAU admitted its inability to fund it when it appealed to the UN Security Council to come to its aid. However, such a move would have been unconstitutional as the world body has never taken over the funding of a peace force not under its control. Not to dash the hopes of the Africans entirely, the security council set up a special fund for the force based on voluntary contributions, to raise $35M.[37]

The effect of the financial squeeze on the activities of the force was immediate. First of all, Guinea and Togo, which were to contribute troops, could not do so partly because of lack of funds.[38] Second, and more important, once the contributing states were sure that the OAU was not in a position to fund the force, their attitude as well as commitment to the peace-keeping exercise changed. Significantly, Nigeria, potentially the most powerful and wealthiest

of the contributing states, was also the first to start withdrawing its troops in May 1982, a month before the OAU deadline of 30 June 1982.[39]

It is clear from all UN peace-keeping activities in the past and most recently in Namibia, that the availability of liquid cash is an important input in the peace-keeping process.[40] For the OAU to be able to successfully undertake a peace-keeping mission in the future, it must be able to raise funds for the operation locally, that is, among its members. It should also be possible for states external to the OAU to contribute if they so desire, on a voluntary basis. Such monies should be paid directly into the accounts of the force and should be centrally administered. This would minimize external manipulation of, and interference in the operations of the force.

It is, however, doubtful if the OAU would be in a position now or in the near future to raise an amount which would be four or five times its own annual budget. This is particularly pertinent given the continent's very poor economic status at the moment. Predictions for the future are equally bleak. Many of the members are implementing either IMF imposed or induced varieties of Structural Adjustment Programmes in a bid to revive their economic fortunes.[41] It is doubtful, then, if these countries would, in the near future, be willing to give out funds by way of increased annual subventions or a special levy for an OAU peace force.

There are two possible implications arising from this conclusion. First, it would not be feasible politically for the OAU to raise funds in the near future through an increase in membership dues and/or levies. Indeed, members would lag more and more behind in the payment of their annual subscriptions as the economic recession bites deeper into their economic lives.[42] Second, it is possible that African states would strive hard to avoid situations that would lead to military confrontations and/or civil strife, which could threaten the integrity of either their regimes or states. The attempt by the authorities in Rwanda to solve the country's ethnic problem by bringing into the government the representatives of the majority Hutus in late 1988 is perhaps a pointer to the future in that regard.[43]

Another issue that has to be seriously addressed in the future relates to the human resources at the disposal of the Organization. This would be considered at two levels: the resources of the secretariat; and the actual troops needed to send to the problem territory.

The OAU is currently thinly staffed with men and women who are highly skilled in military/political matters. This could in part be blamed on the recruitment procedure in the Organization, which is based to a large extent on national quotas. African states are reluctant to release highly skilled men and women to the OAU because of the shortage of such people at home and the need to retain the few that are available. Consequently, some appointees may not necessarily be the most skilled and competent to fill available vacancies. Besides, the salaries paid to OAU staff are still relatively low, although some efforts have been made to close the gap when compared with the salaries of staff of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), its neighbor.[44] There is there-

fore need for a recruitment procedure which is patterned on that of the UN. People should be recruited bearing in mind the "necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity."[45]

The second segment of the resources problem concerns the willingness of members to contribute troops towards an OAU peace-keeping assignment in future. It is now doubtful that they will be prepared to contribute troops again for such an operation. Even when they are favorably disposed, there would still be the important issue of the acceptability of such troops to the host country. To avoid embarrassing situations such as the public refusal of Togo's troops by Weddeye, there should be prior consultations between the host, the OAU and donor states before the composition of the force is made public.

Side by side with the above problems is the issue of logistics. There is a conspicuous poverty of logistical facilities in African armies, especially those South of the Sahara. Such equipment as transport planes, personnel carriers and telecommunications equipment are either in short supply or, in the majority of cases, non-existent.[46] It is significant to note that the troops of Zaire and Senegal were transported to N'Djamena in French transport planes. Even Nigeria, the so-called "giant of Africa," made use of western facilities.[47] Inadequate logistics contributed in no small measure to the eventual failure of the force. As Lt. Col. Kupolati of Nigeria, a member of the force, lamented: "the inability or failure of the OAU to provide logistic support to the peace-keeping force affected command and control of the operation and its efficiency and effectiveness."[48] Not only did the force arrive late in Chad, its deployment was also held-up by logistical problems. The Zairean contingent, for instance, spent about five weeks in N'Djamena waiting to be transported to its designated zone.[49]

It is doubtful that the OAU and its members could domestically solve the logistics problem in any future peace-keeping role. This is because in periods of recession and economic uncertainty states tend to cut down on expenditure in many areas and military spending is not an exception.[50] What is certain, then, is that contributing states would in future continue to rely on their external friends for logistical support. Such a move should, however, be discouraged for reasons which have already been advanced. If there is to be any recourse to the use of external facilities, then the OAU should arrange for them as a corporate organization to avoid undue interference with the work of the force.

It is obvious from the experience in Chad that the OAU also lacked adequate telecommunications facilities to monitor the force from the Secretariat in Addis Ababa, although N'Djamena is relatively close. As Kupolati again lamented, "for long periods the secretariat had no clue about what was happening in Chad, and the sort of direction and guidance one expected from Addis Ababa, never came."[51] The inability of the OAU to link-up with Chad is not surprising. Telecommunications linkages within and between African capitals are notoriously poor, due in part to the many years of neglect during colonial rule, and to the policies of the successor regimes. The colonial powers created vertical communications lines that ran from the colonial capitals to the metropole. Unfortunately, these links have remained basically the same since independence.

It is easier to speak to a friend in London from Lagos, than it is to talk to a relative in Cotonou, Benin Republic, which is just a few kilometres away. The OAU must improve on this lapse in future if its peace-keeping efforts are to be credible and effective.

Much would also depend on the host state. If it already has advanced communications facilities, then all that would be required is for the OAU to complement such facilities to enable it to link-up directly with the force. In a situation like the one in Chad where the existing facilities were either very bad or non-existent, there was not much that the OAU could have done. In short, while there is certainly a need for better communications channels in future between the Secretariat and the force, there is no easy way of providing such facilities.

Technical Problems

The technical problems could be divided into four broad categories: the mandate; the ceasefire; the deployment of the force; and, the command structure. The mandate of the force, as has already been noted, was ambiguous and therefore open to misinterpretation by each of the warring factions in Chad. In particular, because the OAU had given the impression that Weddeye was the only recognized, de facto President of Chad, he believed that the force was in the country to fight to protect the integrity of both his regime and the state. As it turned out, such a notion was misplaced.

Even before the force was sent to Chad, the Secretary-General's representative, Gebre Dawitt, made it clear that it would not be a fighting force. The OAU, he said, would not repeat the experience of the UN force in the Congo (Zaire), which "had collaborated with a government to crush a rebellion."[52] The statement thus gave indirect assurance to Habre, whose forces were poised along the Chad/Sudan border, that he would not be stopped should he make a bid for power in N'Djamena. This led a disappointed Weddeye to describe the force as "ineffective," adding that "it remained idle while the civil war was escalated."[53] It is clear, then, that the issue of the mandate for any future peace-keeping force would have to be carefully examined to avoid a repeat of the Chad fiasco.

The other problem that has direct relevance to the future was the inability of the OAU to arrange a ceasefire in the territory before sending in the troops. This was a costly mistake because it not only delayed the deployment of the troops, it also allowed Habre to exploit the situation by mobilizing his forces. Thus, as late as 11 November 1981, there was still bitter fighting between his forces and those of the GUNT.

To be fair to the OAU, it did make some effort to arrange a ceasefire; but it lacked the necessary authority to make them credible and enforceable. For instance, on 11 February 1982, almost three months after the troops had been sent to N'Djamena, the OAU Standing Committee on Chad met in Nairobi and issued a communique that called on both sides to observe a ceasefire which was to come into force on the 28th of that month. The disputants were also given up

to 15 March to enter into peace negotiations aimed at ending the war, to be coordinated and supervised by the Committee. Finally, they were given up to April 1982, to draft a national constitution and hold elections to elect a new government.[54]

In trying to enforce a ceasefire in the territory, the Committee created problems which were to undermine its own authority. It seemed to have unwittingly placed both Weddeye, the interim President, and Habre, the rebel Defence Minister, on the same political pedestal. Most surprisingly, the Chadian government was not even represented at the meeting. Accordingly, Weddeye described its decisions as "null and void," adding that the meeting was itself "illegal."[55] Much more important for the peace process was the criticism levied against the Committee for "denying the existence of the N'Djamena administration as a legitimate government and bringing the whole Chadian problem back to one of factions."[56] By 15 March 1982, two weeks after the Nairobi meeting, fierce fighting had broken out between Habre's FAN and Weddeye's GUNT forces resulting in the fall of Oum Hadjer to the forces of Habre. (see map)

Another technical problem is related to the long delay in sending the force to N'Djamena. Although the OAU had at its 18th summit in June 1981 approved the creation of the peace force in Chad, up to November that year it had not been sent to N'Djamena. The first contingent of troops, Zaireans, arrived on 14 November, but until the end of that month the rest of the peace-keepers had not yet arrived. The delay was not only costly in terms of the effectiveness of the force, it also provided an added strategic advantage to Habre. The Algerian daily, the *Moudjadid* put it piercingly:

> the delay profits FAN in direct proportion to the damage it does to GUNT, a formation set up by the OAU and which logic demands the OAU should support. The delay is not only not in the interest of Chad but hardly reinforces the authority of the OAU as a Pan-African Organisation.[57]

Finally, the command structure was also problematic. In theory, this had been taken care of by the appointment of the Nigerian Major-General Geoffrey Ejiga, as force commander. However, it did not solve the problem. The main reason seemed to have been the inability of the OAU to centrally finance the force. Since each state received support from different external sources, they were not only susceptible to suggestion and interference from their sponsors, they were also reluctant to hand over the control of their troops to the OAU commander. For example, Nigeria with the largest contingent in Chad started pulling out its forces a month before the OAU deadline.[58]

Several important points have come out clearly in the above discussion. The first is that to be able to organize an effective ceasefire in a conflict situation in future, the Organization must be seen by its members, particularly the parties directly involved in the conflict, to be credible and impartial. Its credibility would be enhanced if it equips itself with highly skilled civilian and military personnel who will be needed to supervise and/or monitor the ceasefire.[59] An

effective role in this regard would also require substantial financial input from the Organization. The amount required would depend not only on the size of the territory and number of troops involved, but also the duration of the ceasefire. However, given the present economic realities, this writer does not envisage a situation in which either a state, a group of states or the entire membership of the Organization, could raise huge sums of money for peace-keeping operations.[60]

Second, a peace-keeping force should in future be acceptable to all the parties in a conflict before it is sent on its mission. Such an arrangement would not only make the work of the force easier, it would also make it morally difficult for members to undermine its work by giving active encouragement to one of the factions in the conflict.

Third, the mandate of the force is central to its success. It must in all cases be clear, precise and unambiguous. The Chad force's mandate, as noted earlier, raised a number of issues which could not be resolved by either the OAU or the parties to the conflict, especially the host government. One of the unresolved issues related to the phrase "contain and temper hostilities . . .." How was this to be done? Was the force to fight any challenge to the "legal" authority in Chad? Or was it simply to sit and wait? As far as Weddeye was concerned, to "contain and temper hostilities" meant that the force would fight on his side against the forces of Habre. This was implicit in the phrase, to "safeguard the security of the Chad state" and government which were under threat from FAN. Surely, if the OAU had made it categorically clear from the onset that the force would not impose a government on the Chadian people — that it would only fight in self-defence — much of the bitterness and misunderstanding would have been avoided.

Fourth, there must be broad agreement among OAU members on the need to send such a force to a strife torn territory. The records of the debate preceding the establishment of the force are not available, but it is doubtful, for instance, if Sudan supported its creation. Whatever the case may be, the hope was that Sudan would suspend its support for Habre once the force had been assembled and on the ground in N'Djamena. Such a posture would have denied Habre any rear bases and sanctuaries. It would have also been difficult, if not impossible, for him to regroup his men to launch a successful counter-attack on the GUNT's troops without Sudan's connivance.

Finally, all OAU peace-keeping operations in the future should be under one command structure, like their UN counterparts. This would not only enhance discipline but also its effectiveness. It would surely minimize the tendency for external interference in its activities. It would also eliminate the temptation for troop contributing states to dictate to the local commanders orders which may be at variance with those of the central command. These are some of the technical issues which must be adequately addressed if a future OAU peace-keeping force is to avoid the mistakes made in Chad.

LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

The OAU force in Chad did not achieve the objective of separating the warring factions in the territory which would have prepared the way for national reconciliation. Instead, it acted inadvertently or otherwise as an "accomplice" in the restoration to power of Hissene Habre. Are there any lessons which could be learned from that experience? There are two broad lessons: the first stems from the psychological problems created by the failure; and the second is the need for a revision of the OAU Charter.

The Psychological Impact

The failure of the force had a psychological impact on both the OAU and its members. It was seen as a humiliation for the Pan-African body not only by the members but also by observers. The OAU therefore suffered a crushing blow to its prestige and credibility. The operation cast serious doubts on the OAU as an organization which could play an effective conflict management and resolution role in the continent to ensure peace and stability. In short, if the Chad operation provided a test case in terms of the OAU's ability to successfully defuse a conflict situation, it was disarmed, and its confidence severely dented. The consequences for individual members are many.

It is now doubtful whether any member state would ever call upon the Organization again to mount a peace-keeping operation on its territory. It is equally doubtful that members would collectively muster the political will to support a peace-keeping operation in the near future. What is much more likely, then, is that members would rely on bilateral security arrangements, the type which Weddeye initially worked out with the Libyans.

The major advantage of such bilateral arrangements even if they are with non-African countries, is that the host government will know from the start that the force from the "friendly" state would be a fighting force. It would not adopt a "wait and see" attitude, but would go straight to the task of protecting the host regime and/or government, e.g., the Cubans in Angola. Such a force would also send unambiguous signals to the opponents of the regime; that any attempt to seize power by force of arms would be met with equal, if not greater force. Thus the opponent would risk defeat if he opts for a military solution to the conflict. Directly and indirectly, then, the presence of a fighting force could possibly pave the way for a political solution to the conflict. Such a scenario is most likely in a situation whereby other local and foreign powers are not interested in further interference in the conflict to counter the initial advantage which the first intervention would have given to the host government.

The conclusion from the above analysis, then, is that the failure of the OAU force in Chad is bound to make bilateral and multilateral security agreements among African states on the one hand, and between them and external powers on the other, much more attractive in the future, both as pre-emptive measures and to contain actual conflicts.[61] Conversely, the concept of "try Africa first" has been dealt a severe psychological blow, to a large extent.

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No African regime would in future want to take the sort of risk that Weddeye took in Chad. This will of course have serious implications for African security and stability in future. It is likely that the propensity of African states to invite in external "friends" in times of conflict/crisis would increase.[62] It is also doubtful whether foreign powers would give the OAU a chance — that is, "try Africa first" — in conflict situations involving their proteges. All this would seem to point towards increasing political instability and insecurity in the continent in future.

Need For a Revision of the OAU Charter

The OAU was not designed to play either a collective security or peace-keeping role. It was simply conceived as a collegial organization which could meet from time to time to deliberate on issues of common interest to the members. If the OAU is to truly play a peace-keeping role in the future, then there is need for such a role to be reflected in an amended charter. There could be an additional clause added to Article 2, under purposes, which could read like this: "to maintain inter- and intra-African peace and security" or simply, "to maintain peace and security in Africa." Such a commitment would have obvious legal and strategic military significance. It would for example, give legal backing and status to peace-keeping activities in future.[63]

It would also be necessary to give more powers to the Secretary-General in the revised charter. Such powers should be akin to those of the UN Secretary-General as contained in Article 99 of the UN Charter. Under this amendment, the Secretary-General could bring to the notice of a "serving OAU Chairman or any appropriate authority actions which in his view, may threaten the peace and security of any African state and/or the continent."[64] This is however a very sensitive issue in Pan-African diplomacy. It was clear from the founding conference that African leaders did not want a competing centre of power and influence within the OAU. This was why they deliberately included the epithet "administrative," which leaves no one in doubt that the Secretary-General has no "executive" powers. For example, Nzo Ekangaki was forced out of office in 1974 over the Lonrho affair.[65] Besides, there is also the possibility of misuse of the powers of the Secretary-General. The controversy and political bitterness that were provoked in the continent by the admission of the Saraoui Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) by Edem Kodjo in 1982, brought this danger into clear focus.[66] African leaders would want to continue with the status quo within the OAU system. Nonetheless, if the Secretary-General is to have any significant input in future peace-keeping activities, then he must be given some room for independent action and initiative, which is not provided for in the Charter at the moment.

In making these suggestions, however, we must not lose sight of the fact that the African continent is a complex one ideologically, politically and culturally. African leaders are, like many of their counterparts elsewhere, conservative. Thus, it is not likely that these suggestions and recommendations would be implemented in the near future. Indeed, the chances of their

implementation would depend on several other factors; such as the commitment of African leaders to ensuring the peace and security of the continent; their commitment to the whole idea of Pan-African unity; and the extent of the psychological damage caused by the Chad peace-keeping experience. This would determine whether or not they would opt for another peace-keeping operation in future. Another factor is the state of the economies of individual states and the continent in general. Predictions and forecasts are bleak in that regard. African economies will remain impaired for some time to come. The debt burden has shown no sign of decreasing and so far, the structural adjustment programmes are not yielding results in terms of putting an end to the economic recession.[67] As long as such an economic situation continues, it is doubtful that the African states would be able to finance a future peace-keeping operation.

One way out of this predicament is to suggest that the OAU hold annual pledging conferences where non-members as well as members could make financial pledges towards specific objectives/activities, i.e., to raise a peace-keeping force. However, experience with such conferences has not been entirely satisfactory.[68] After all, one could take the extreme position and say that the world does not really owe Africa a living. That after over thirty years of independence, Africa ought to have come of age. What all this means in effect, is that the future of an African peace-keeping force along the lines of that sent to Chad in 1981 is very bleak, at least in the short and medium term. What seems more likely in future, especially in light of the emergent world order, is a joint OAU/UN operation in situations that pose serious threats not only to Africa's peace and stability, but also to world peace. Under such circumstances, the OAU would most likely provide the troops while the UN would provide funds and logistical support.

Endnotes

1. See Z. Cervenka, *The Unfinished Quest for Unity* (New York: Africana, 1977), and Amadu Sesay et al., *The OAU After Twenty Years* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984).

2. According to C.O.C. Amate, in the middle of May 1982, "it was learnt that the Zaire contingent of the force had made contact with anti-government troops in the Lake area . . . Before anything could be done about this, the anti-government troops . . . had moved large numbers of their men to occupy towns that were originally under the control of the OAU force." See C.O.C. Amate, *Inside the OAU: Pan-Africanism in Practice* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 187.

3. See Alan James, *The Politics of Peace-Keeping* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), p. 12.

4. Gwendolyn Spencer Prater, "Post-colonial Chad: International Aid and Social Development," paper presented at the International Conference on Foreign Aid and Development in Africa, University of Ife, Nigeria, 29-31 May 1985, p. 1.

5. Guy Martin, "Security and Conflict Management in Chad," paper presented at the 30th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (London), 28 March - 1 April 1989, p. 2.

6. Ibid., p. 4.

7. Ibid., p. 6.

8. Ibid., p. 6.

9. Ibid., p. 7.

10. See Orobola Fasehun and Amadu Sesay, "The OAU and Conflict Control," mimeograph, Department of International Relations, Ife, 1980, p. 12.

11. The civil wars in Sudan and Ethiopia have been going on for over two decades. Yet, the OAU has not made any pronouncements on them.

12. Fasehun and Sesay, "The OAU and Conflict Control."

13. Ibid., p. 13.

14. Ibid., p. 13.

15. For more on this and other related concepts, see Amadu Sesay, "The roles of the Front Line States in Southern Africa," in Olajide Aluko and Tim Shaw, eds., *Southern Africa in the 1980s* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), Chapter 2. See also Inis Claude, *The Changing United Nations* (New York: Random House, 1967).

16. *West Africa* (London), 7 July 1980, p. 1217.

17. The members were Nigeria, Niger, Sudan, Central African Republic, Cameroun, Togo, Guinea, Benin, Congo, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Liberia.

18. *Africa Research Bulletin* (henceforth *ARB*), 1-31 December 1980, p. 5909.

19. See United Nations, *The Blue Helmets: A Review of UN Peace-Keeping* (New York: UN Department of Public Information, 1985).

20. Alan James, *Politics of Peace-Keeping*, p. 2.

21. For more details on modes of conflict management, see Amadu Sesay et al., *The OAU After Twenty Years*, Chapter 3.

22. *ARB*, 1-31 January 1981, p. 5930.

23. For more on this, see David S. Yost, "French Policy in Chad and the Libyan Challenge," *Orbis* 26, no. 4 (Winter 1983), pp. 965-997; and Pierre Lellouche and Dominique Moisi, "French Policy in Africa: A lonely battle against destabilization," *International Security*, 3, no. 4 (Spring 1979), pp. 108-133.

24. The arms included 20 M60 tanks, 12 155 mm howitzers and 2 F5 fighters; the package was estimated at $100M. See *ARB* 1-31 October 1981, p. 6210.

25. *ARB*, 1-31 October 1981, p. 6211.

26. Ibid., 1-30 June 1981, p. 6068.

27. Ibid., 1-31 December 1981, p. 6274.

28. Quoted in *Punch*, (Lagos), 6 December 1981. See also, Olusola Ojo and Amadu Sesay, "The OAU Peace-Keeping Force in Chad: An Analysis of Policy Implementation and Failure," in C.A.B. Olowu and Victor Ayeni, eds., *A Nigerian Reader in the Policy Process* (Ife: University of Ife Press, forthcoming), pp. 1-18.

29. Ojo and Sesay, "The OAU Peace-Keeping Force in Chad," p. 9.

30. Alan James, *The Politics of Peace-Keeping*, p. 12.

31. For more on this, see Sesay et al., *The OAU After Twenty Years*.

32. *ARB*, 1-28 February 1982, p. 6355.

33. OAU's Secretary-General, Ide Oumarou, quoted in *West Africa*, 16 March 1987, p. 541.

34. While the budget was $23.2M in that year, arrears were $35M. See *Guardian* (Lagos), 26 January 1988.

35. According to Amate, by 31 August 1982, only $5.4M had been contributed for the Force. See Amate, *Inside the OAU*, p. 457.

36. See *West Africa*, 9-15 January 1989, p. 14.

37. However, no figure is available on how much the fund was able to realize, or what was to be done precisely with the money collected.

38. It was believed that apart from the financial limitations, Guinea's President Toure was also of the view that his country could not participate because the OAU was being teleguided by France. In the case of Togo, Weddeye objected to the country's contingent because he thought Eyadema was politically biased.

39. It was claimed in Lagos that by May 1982, the Nigerian government had spent $43M on its troops in Chad.

40. The UN conservatively spent $416M in Namibia to maintain the troops during the transition. *Guardian* (Lagos), 24 January 1988.

41. For the experience, see "Oil Debts and Democracy: Nigeria," *Review of African Political Economy*, 37 (December 1986). The entire number is devoted to Nigeria. There were riots in Nigeria in April 1988, over the removal of a petroleum subsidy. Some lives were lost. Before then, there were food riots in Zambia, Morocco, and Algeria.

42. Arrears to the annual budget stood at $35M in 1988, more than that year's budget. See *Guardian* (Lagos), 26 February 1988.

43. In late 1988, following the internal strife in Rwanda, the government decided to give more cabinet posts to the majority Hutus to pacify them. See also the MPLA-UNITA Accord of 22 June 1989.

44. See advert in *West Africa*, 15 June 1988. The emoluments are slowly being improved.

45. Chapter XV, Article 101(3) of the UN Charter. See also Amadu Sesay, "The global economic squeeze and the administration of international organisation: the African experience," (Ife: Faculty of Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, 1986), Chapter 1.

46. See *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 1988) for details.

47. Britain, France and the US offered assistance with 21 Landrovers, boots, badges, aspirin, etc. See Amate, *Inside the OAU*, p. 458, and *ARB*, 1-31 December 1981, p. 6275.

48. Lt. Col. R.M. Kupolati of Nigeria who was a member of the Force, in R.M. Kupolati, "OAU Force in Chad: Nigerian Experience and Lessons Learned," (Lagos) no date, page 4, quoted in Ojo and Sesay, "The OAU Peace-Keeping Forces in Chad." Commissioned Chapter, yet unpublished; 18 pages.

49. Ojo and Sesay, "The OAU Peace-Keeping Force in Chad," p. 9.

50. Amadu Sesay, "The global economic squeeze and the administration of international organisation."

51. Lt. Col. Kupolati, "OAU Force in Chad," in Ojo and Sesay, "The OAU Peace-Keeping Force in Chad," p. 4.

52. *ARB*, 1-30 November 1981, p. 6251.

53. *West Africa*, 3 May 1982, p. 1436. See also David S. Yost, "French Policy in Chad." He quoted Weddeye as saying, "the Chadian government thinks it is vain to continue to support and keep such a force on its national territory, since it does nothing to safeguard the security and integrity of Chad—it has been passive and therefore useless," p. 981.

54. *ARB*, 1-28 February 1982, p. 6335.

55. *Daily Nation* (Nairobi), 24 May 1982.

56. *ARB*, 1-28 February 1982, p. 6335.

57. 24 November 1982.

58. Lack of a central command made it possible for the Zairean troops to establish links with Habre's force. See note 2 above.

59. Apart from a force of 4,600 the UN also had several hundred civilian administrators in Namibia for the transitional programme. See *Guardian* (Lagos), 24 January 1988.

60. See Amate, *Inside the OAU*, p. 458.

61. See for example, the ECOMOG forces sent to Liberia by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in August 1990.

62. Note the refusal by France and Belgium to allow their troops to intervene in the civil war in Rwanda in October 1990.

63. A detailed discussion on all the suggested reforms is beyond the scope of this paper. However, see *Comments on the Committee of Experts' Proposal for the Review of OAU Charter: Report of Rapporteur*. Ref. CAB/LEG/97.1 (Lagos).

64. See *Comments on the Committee*. See also E.F. Udoyeop, "The Organisation of African Unity: A Case for the Review of the Charter," Msc. Project, 1985, Dept. of International Relations, University of Ife, especially chapter III.

65. Lonrho was chosen by the Secretary-General as the consultant to African states on oil matters, in spite of the company's many business interests in South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

66. For his own defence, see *Memorandum on the Admission of the Saharaoui Arab Democratic Republic into the OAU* (Addis Ababa: OAU Secretariat, 1982).

67. For the social impact of these programmes, see *West Africa* (London), 17-23 October 1988, pp. 1942, 1943 and 1932. See also Jeff Haynes, Trevor W. Parfitt and Steve Riley, "Debt in Sub-Saharan Africa: the local politics of stabilization," *African Affairs* 86, no. 344 (1987), pp. 343-66; and, Trevor W. Parfitt and Steve Riley, "African Debt and Debate on stabilisation: The Case of Nigeria," in *Geo Forum* 19, no. 1 (1988).

68. The OAU occasionally holds pledging conferences in aid of African refugees. The SADCC countries have also held pledging conferences to raise money for specific projects in the Sub-region. These conferences have not however, yielded much in the past. See also Amadu Sesay, "The OAU and Continental Order," in Tim Shaw and Olusola Ojo, eds., *Africa and the International Political System* (Washington, DC: UPA, 1982), Chapter 7.