The United Nations' International Peace Keeping (1988-2004): An African Perspective

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ABSTRACT: *This paper critically analyses the United Nations' International Peacekeeping in Africa between 1988 and 2004. It submits that most of the crises that attracted the UN Interventionist forces in Africa are internally based, and are mediated by misrule, bad governance and the structure of the international economy, which predisposes the continent to poverty, and constant conflicts. It agues further that most of these UN missions are often characterised by lack of clearly defined mandates, financial constraints, delayed intervention and frequent attacks of the peacekeepers by the rebel forces. It concludes that for enduring peace to be achieved in Africa, and for the UN peacekeeping operations to be successful (or better still, to be reduced to a minimum), the notion of sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of states should be reviewed, the negative impact of neoliberalism should be ameliorated, the Africa's thieving and predatory leadership should be brought to justice and democracy should be fully consolidated.*

Keywords: *Peace keeping, United Nations, Preventive Deployment, Humanitarian Operations, Peace Settlement*

I.   INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Organisation (hereafter referred to as the UN) is one unique and complex international body which emerged as a result of the complicated and yet divergent interactive processes amongst men that have occupied the globe. These opposing and often divergent human interactions have for centuries been producing conflicts that on several instances assumed crisis proportions. When pacific settlement fails, violence which could take staggering and wide-ranging dimensions ensues. Violence across the world has taken diverse forms: skirmishes, irredentism, guerrilla warfare, terrorism and in extreme cases, full scale war. The most devastating of all wars is the one which cuts across continental frontiers and in the process making the human race conforming to one or more of the clashing belligerent forces.

Twice in his history, mankind was confronted by calamities of unprecedented proportions which engulfed virtually all continents of the world. Even continents and peoples that were not directly affected were drawn into these hostilities as a result of the then colonial structure of the international system. With growing communication science and information technology, the world is becoming more integrated and making each conflict assume a much wider potential.

The UN came into existence after Western imperialism could not restrain itself and thus plunged the world into two World Wars. Alarmed by the devastating effects of the wars and even encumbered with greater concern for international peaceful relations and possible annihilation of human race through thermo nuclear destruction, the Western Powers inaugurated the UN at San Francisco, the United States in September, 1945. Hence, one of the objectives of the body is the maintenance of international peace and security. The realisation process of this objective takes the form of installing such structures as the General Assembly and the Security Council as both preventive and conflict-resolving mechanisms. Yet, the most far-reaching and successful peace instrument (arguably) at the disposal of the UN and which was unintended by its Charter is the international peace keeping which became accidental in 1948. Essentially, this endeavour by the UN was accidental, or better still, an instrument of ultimate crystallisation as a result of the nuances and processes of international relations.

International peace-keeping has taken so many forms: peace-enforcement, military observer missions, interposition forces, law and mandate missions, etc. Since its inception in 1948, the world witnessed fifty six UN peace-keeping operations up till 2004. Of this number, forty-three took place between 1998 and 2004 (76.8 percent). Of the forty-three peace-keeping missions between 1998 and 2004 cross the world, twenty took place in Africa (46.5 percent) (UN, 2004). Given these international realities, certain questions beg for answers. What is conflict? What are those historical forces that made the UN international peace-keeping inevitable?

Why is Africa so conflict-prone? What has been the impact of international peace-keeping operations on the continent? What measures could be taken to improve upon the UN peace keeping operations in Africa? These are the questions the rest of this paper will attempt to proffer answers to.

II. CONCEPTUALISING AFRICAN CONFLICTS AND THE UN PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

Whenever conflicts break out and finally degenerate into violent crises, the usual immediate response, either at domestic or international level, is to embark on a process that will culminate in immediate cessation of hostilities and ultimate restoration of peace. This assertion however, should not be viewed to be coterminous with a denial of preventive diplomacy which has been a traditional instrumentality of nipping conflict in the bud. The international system is indeed desirous of a global effective preventive diplomacy that would usher in a blissful international community where violent conflicts would be outlawed and consequently consigned into the limbo of history. This desire, however, is as unrealistic as it is utopian, not only because politics itself is a process of conflict resolution, but more importantly because of incompatibility of goals and the finite and inadequate nature of world's resources (Alan, 1990).[1]

There is a near consensus amongst scholars that conflict is an inevitable process of social interaction (Galtung, 1969; Otite, 1996). [2] This consensus is anchored on the general recognition of competing or incompatible material interests and basic values. In essence, conflict arises from the interaction of individuals who have partly incompatible goals in which the ability of one actor to gain his ends depends to an important degree on the choice or decisions another actor will take (Coser, 1968). [3] Then, it is crucial we stress that violence is not an inherent aspect of conflict but rather a potential form that conflict may take. With early employment of pacific means, conflict might not assume violent proportions (Momah, 1994).[4]

There exists an intellectual coincidence between a conceptual analysis of conflict and conflict resolution or management apparently because the ultimate essence of any discourse of conflict is its resolution. This attempt has been accorded different terminologies such as "conflict resolution," "conflict transformation," "conflict management" etc. (Otite, 1999:6-7). [5] Each of these terms is primarily aimed at intervention (through facilitation, mediation, counselling, and therapy, organisational development, conciliation, quasi-political and criminal and civil justice systems, or a combination of these) with a view to changing the course (that is, the scope, intensity and effects) of conflicts. [6] Article 33(1) of the Charter of the UN specifically prescribes the mode of conflict resolution to include "negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means." One of the "other peaceful means" at the disposal of the UN is international peace-keeping operation. Before examining the concept of international peace-keeping, it is important to stress that peace-making or conflict resolution are informed by four important principles, namely:

i. conflicts cannot be resolved or peace made unless the root causes of the conflicts are identified and dealt with (implying that the peacemakers must go beyond superficial issues to address substantive issues, which define the real needs and interests of the parties concerned);

ii. it is not possible to resolve conflicts and attain peace unless attention is given to the justice and fairness of the process as well as the outcome of the settlement (implying that although the pursuit of peace and the pursuit of justice are not coterminous, peace' without justice is obviously meaningless);

iii. people's deeper needs are not totally incompatible (implying that shared values and interests among parties to a conflict could define mutually acceptable solutions. to problems); and

iv. Conflict resolution and therefore peacemaking, involves. a restructuring of relationships implying a transition from a relationship characterised by coercion or hierarchy to one marked by 'equality, participation, respect, mutual enrichment and growth' (Assefa, 1999:44-5; Burton, 1986:333-344). [7]

The above points are necessary for the successful implementation of any peace-keeping operations. Then what is peace-keeping operation? Under what conditions does it emerge and operate successfully?

We need, however, to stress that international peace-keeping did not commence with the UN and neither is it confined to it. Other regional and sub-regional bodies like the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had at one time or the other been involved in keeping the peace amongst member-nations (Hutchful, 1999). [8] Nevertheless, it is an important diplomatic measure that the UN has so successfully employed in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In its essence, international peace-keeping involves the promotion and maintenance of global tranquillity, harmony and security with the ultimate purpose of reducing tension, localising conflicts, diminishing the risk of direct involvement by a large number of countries, saving vast material resources and numerous human lives (Aleksander, 1990:2006-7). [9] Furthermore, it involves the despatch of military or civilian officers to areas of conflict with the intent of disengaging warring factions, broker and monitor the degree of compliance with a cease-fire agreement. Expectedly, a peace-keeping force draws its powers from the consent

of the warring parties, their perception of its impartiality and the moral authority of its sponsors (Rikhye, 1984).[10] Additionally, there is the need on the part of the force to dispel dangerous rumours and misinformation and secure the active support of the great powers - all these constitute the essential ingredients for the success of any peace-keeping operation (Fwa, 1998).[11]

The UN peace-keeping operations and their deployment are authorised by the Security council, albeit, with the consent of the other parties involved. These operations could include military and police personnel together with civilian staff; and they may involve military observer missions, peace-keeping forces or a combinations of both. Usually, military observer missions are composed of unarmed offers, typically to monitor an agreement or a cease-fire. The military personnel of peace-keeping forces are armed but in most situations use the weapons in self-defence; and these soldiers are voluntarily provided and financed by the member-states who are assessed under the UN peace-keeping budget (UN, 2004:72).[12]

The UN peace operations take many forms and they include the following:

- *Maintenance of ceasefires and separation of forces.* By providing "breathing space," an operation based on a limited agreement between parties can foster an atmosphere conducive to negotiations.
- *Preventive deployment.* Deployed before conflict breaks out, an operation can provide a reassuring presence and a degree of transparency which favours political progress.
- *Protection of humanitarian operations.* In many conflicts, civilian populations have been deliberately targeted as a means to gain political ends. In such situations, peacekeepers have been asked to provide protection and support for humanitarian operations. However, such tasks can place peacekeepers in difficult political positions, and can lead to threats to their security.
- *Implementation of a comprehensive peace settlement.* Complex, multi-dimensional operations, deployed on the basis of comprehensive peace agreements, can assist in such diverse tasks as providing humanitarian assistance, monitoring human rights, observing elections and coordinating support for economic reconstruction.

Finally, we need to stress that peace-keeping operations are interrelated with such concepts as peace-building, peace-enforcement and conflict-prevention. Peace making is the diplomatic means to persuade parties in conflict to cease hostilities and to negotiate the peaceful settlement of a dispute. It is basically the peace efforts by diplomats and politicians either to forestall the escalating of a conflict situation, or where this has been done, diffuse it, thereby providing the belligerents an opportunity to make peace (Momah, 1994:41).[13]

With regards to the UN, peace-keeping refers to "effort to assist countries and regions in their transition from war to peace, including activities and programmes to support and strengthen transition" (UN, 2004:78).[14] It usually begins with the signing of a peace-agreement by former warring parties and a UN role in facilitating its implementation. It may include a continued diplomatic role of the UN to ensure that difficulties are overcome through negotiation rather than resort to arms; the repatriation and reintegration of refugees; the holding of elections; and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of soldiers.

Peace-enforcement is essentially the application of military force under Article 42 of the UN Charter to deal with any proven case of aggression. Peace-keeping could transform into peace-enforcement when one or more parties to dispute or conflict puts the peace-keeping mission in total jeopardy, to such an extent that if not neutralised, carnage or genocide might result, culminating in complete refugee problem.

Conflict prevention encompasses preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment and preventive disarmament. Preventive diplomacy refers to actions to prevent disputes from arising, to resolve them before they escalate into conflict or to limit the spread of conflicts when they occur. Preventive deployment is fielding of peace-keepers to forestall probable conflict. Preventive disarmament seeks to reduce the number of small arms in conflict-prone regions (ibid.).

III.   IMPERIALISM, AFRICAN CONFLICTS AND THE UN

The contemporary situation in Africa has been extensively and graphically painted by Adebayo Adedeji thus: Africa's track record on civil war, violent conflict, strife and political instability has with a large measure of justification, earned it the application of a continent at war against itself, with war-torn polities and pauperised and divided societies. More than 2 million people have been killed in civil wars, strifes and political uprisings in the course of the past decade while about 10 million have been victims of forced migration and starvation. More resources have been expended on the importation of arms than on the importation of food to alleviate hunger and famine and on education and health to counter illiteracy and ignorance and the low expectation of life at birth (Adedeji, 1999:xvi).[15]

In his report to the US Africa Subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee on 8 October, 2004, James Swigert, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Organisation Affairs noted that:

The African continent... now hosts seven of the UN's 16 peace-keeping operations, including the two largest ones, MONUC and UNMIL in Liberia. The Security Council currently authorise over 37,000 UN peacekeepers in Africa, and that is out of 54,000 worldwide (Swigert, 2004:1).[16]

While peace has now been restored to Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo has recently held elections, it behoves us to ask why is Africa so conflict prone. Ake (1981:vii) [17] provides an important clue in understanding the African situation by stating that "we do not really understand a society until we can account for how it came to be what it is, until we can articulate its law of motion." Surely, the contemporary conflict situation in Africa could hardly be understood without situating the continent in its historical context.

The contemporary Africa is a product of the trans-Atlantic slavery, Western colonisation and neo-colonialism. Virtually all the current African countries were a product of Western imperialism and most of their boundaries were delineated at the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. Expectedly, the central point at Berlin was the economic interests of the imperial powers and consequently, the wishes and aspirations of the colonies counted for nothing. This is an important *modus operandi* of imperialism and capital: conquest and profit. The African peoples were subject to colonial rule through conquest whose sole aim was profit-making for the imperial powers. With its predatory and confiscatory tendencies, imperialism annexed African lands, reoriented its economy towards servicing the European economy (Rodney, 1972) [18] and at the point of departure installed a petit-bourgeoisie that would continue to promote its exploitative interests. Hence, the legacies of Western imperialism is conflict and political instability which usually results in the UN intervention in the form of peace-keeping operations.

Abubakar [19] (2004:4) succinctly captures why Africa will be perpetually conflict-prone,...Africa is a community of multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious groups with divergent colonial history. The root causes of conflict could be traced to any or all of these factors. The fact that the British, the French and the Portuguese had their footprints in different states in... Africa gave rise to a group of people who are of the same race but different orientation. That created inter-state problems of rivalry, national psyche, and competitive colonial linkage.

The diversities and complexities in Nigeria, for example, explain why most African countries will continue to be plagued by internal crisis. Nigeria comprises abut three hundred different ethnic groups with considerable diversities in history, religion, culture, language and custom. Hardly has the world produced this type of polity that is so pluralistic and divergent in virtually all aspects of its national life. Perhaps, if the country had evolved due to certain historical forces and processes, its usual and contemporary fissiparous and centrifugal tendencies would have been drastically reduced, but the pseudo-federalist system imperialism introduced has in-built tendencies to produce conflict. Alabi buttressed this position thus:

British imperialism... introduced a federalist constitutional framework, not mainly for forging compromises and unity in diversity into the country's heterogeneous composition but mainly for ease of administration and an unobstructed predatory pillaging and looting of the country's resources (2006:47).[20]
Imperialism does not create a vacuum. When it vacates a place or a country it leaves its surrogate for uninterrupted inflow of profit. This is exactly what Western imperialism did in Africa. When the Western imperialists were forced to exit from Africa, they left behind a petit bourgeois to perpetuate their interests. Ake [21] (1981:96) states the dilemma of the local bourgeoisie: "The national bourgeoisie which came to office in the wake of independence movement soon found that they were in office but not in power because they had little control of the economy." Rather, the economy was being manipulated and controlled from the West.

The deteriorating economic conditions in Africa will consistently predispose it to conflict. As earlier emphasised, the outbreak of conflict in the continent escalated from the 1980s and this coincidence should not be viewed to be accidental. Rather, it was the introduction of neo-liberal monetarist policies otherwise known as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which many African countries adopted that resulted in massive job losses. Through trade liberalisation and privatisation and commercialisation of public enterprises, cost of living soared. Also as a result of withdrawal of subsidies on essential products and devaluation of national currencies, life became unbearable for most Africans. Consequently, the continent began to witness what has come to be known as 'SAP riots', as the unemployed started taking to the streets, economic problems began taking on the garb ethnic crises, the armed robbery incidences started growing in leaps and bounds, national and minority questions began to tear hitherto intact countries apart, war lords and armed banditry began to dot Africa's political landscape. It was this state of confusion and crisis that set the stage for the UN intervention in various forms in African conflicts, most especially in the form of peace-keeping operations.

IV. THE UN PEACE KEEPING OPERATIONS IN THE AFRICAN CONFLICTS

Before delving into specific UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, two important remarks will be in order. The first is that the creation of UN was primarily as a result of the failure of imperialism to preserve international peace. The economic contest and territorial ambitions of the imperial powers, inter alia, were responsible for the two world wars. Second, imperialism has divided the world into two, the North and the

South; and given the exploitative structure of the international system, an inbuilt mechanism has been incorporated into the South's situation that would always generate conflict - a precondition for the UN international peace keeping operations.

Africa between 1988 and 2004 witnessed twenty peacekeeping operations. Two of these came under the aegis of ECOWAS and codenamed ECOMOG in the West African sub-region. In other sub-regions of the continent like Southern, Central and the Horn of Africa, the UN had embarked on several peacekeeping operations.

In Southern Africa, rapid political and social development began at the end of the 1980s. One of such was the decline of the apartheid regime in South Africa whose influence had earlier extended to the frontline states that had supported opposition forces in Angola and Mozambique. In 1988 South Africa agreed to cooperate with the UN to ensure the independence of Namibia. Again, by 1992, the government of Mozambique and the Mozambican National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) signed a peace agreement to put an end to long-drawn hostilities. To ensure a successful transition to peace, the United Nations operation in Mozambique was deployed in 1993 to monitor the cease-fire, the demobilisation of forces and the country's first multiparty elections held in 1994.

The Angolan crisis, quite unlike the Mozambique's proved highly intractable for the UN in terms of peace keeping and political missions. The first mission in 1989 monitored the withdrawal of the pro-government Cuban troops; and the second starting in 1991 was saddled with the responsibility of monitoring a ceasefire, verify demobilisation of combatants and observed the 1992 elections. Again in 1997, the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) was established to restore peace and assist in ensuring a peaceful transition to democracy. We must stress that all these missions and efforts in restoring peace were futile and peace could not be restored to Angola until after the death of Jonas Savimbi on 22 February, 2002. Thus, the United Nations Mission to Angola that was subsequently set up was to monitor elections, promotion of human rights, enhancing the rule of law, supporting reintegration of demobilised soldiers and promoting economic recovery.

In Central Africa, the Rwandan crisis of 1994 and the attendant genocide really questioned the utility of the UN's preventive diplomacy and any of its peace missions. In the early 1994, the death of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi in a plane crash due to a rocket attack culminated in several weeks systematic massacre of the Tutsi and moderate Hutu. Earlier the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) had been set up in 1990 but when its personnel started coming under intense fire power, the 2,548 strong force had to be reduced to just 270 in April 1994. Even after reinforcement of UNAMIR in May to 5,500 troops, it proved highly incapable of brokering peace until the Rwandese Patriotic Front (PRF) forces took control of the country and thus putting an end to the war which led to the death of about 800,000 people.

The Rwandan crisis spilled into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with the contest between Uganda and Rwanda. However, in July 1999 after intense diplomatic efforts by the UN, the OAU and the region, a Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was signed for the DRC. Subsequently, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) which successfully monitored a successful withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the DRC and the dismantling of the Internahamwe forces and voluntary repatriation of some 900 Rwandese combatants and their dependents by the end of 2003 (UN, 2004).[22]

The Burundi experience was similar to Rwanda's. A longstanding internal conflict resulted in 1993 in a coup attempt in which the first democratically elected president, a Hutu and six ministers were killed. This culminated in fighting that resulted in at least 150,000 people losing their lives in the following three years. Again in 1996 a Hutu led government was deposed by a Tutsist-led military coup resulting in 500,000 being forcibly transferred into "regroupment camps" and 300,000 fled to Tanzania. Through the mediation the late Julius Nyerere and subsequently Nelson Mandela, a peace and reconciliation agreement was signed in August in Arusha, Tanzania in 2000. Finally, in April 2003, the African Union authorised the deployment of the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) comprising up to 3,500 troops and including 120 military observers. On 30 April, 2003 a Hutu president and a Tutsi vice-president were sworn in, thus ending the Tutsi minority rule. Then, by June another round of crisis broke out which again led to the deployment in June 2004 of the United Nations operation in Burundi (ONUB) to use all necessary means to ensure respect for ceasefire agreements, carry out disarmament and demobilisation activities and to monitor the illegal flow of arms across the national borders. It was also to facilitate the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons and to contribute to the successful completion of the electoral process through the creation of an environment for free, transparent and peaceful elections.

Another country in Central Africa that was embroiled in civil strife is the Central African Republic (CAR). In the mid-1990s a series of mutinies was staged by soldiers in the country. After French intervention in 1998 and followed by an African multinational force (MISAB), the UN established the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MIMURCA) with a mandate to help improve security in the capital, Bangui. Following the withdrawal of MINURCA, the United Nations peace-building office in the Central

African Republic (BONUCA) was created in 2000. Despite all the efforts of the UN, in March 2003, a group led by General Francais Bozize forcefully took power through a coup d'etat that ousted elected President Ange Felix Patasse.

In the West African sub-region, the civil crises that warranted external military intervention took place in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire. With regards to Liberia and Sierra Leone, the peace keeping operations in those countries were initiated by ECOWAS with minimal support from the UN (and considerable works have been done in that respect). However, on September 19, 2003 the Security Council established the United Nations Missions in Liberia (UNMIL) with about 15,000 military personnel and over 1,000 civilian police officers to take over from the ECOWAS force on October 1, 2003 to preserve the peace following the exit of Charles Taylor.

Following a period of internal conflicts in Guinea-Bissau in March 1999 the UN established the United Nations Peace Building Support in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) to help create an enabling environment for restoring peace, democracy and the rule of law and to facilitate the organisation of free and transparent elections. Despite this, the government of President Yala was toppled on September 14, 2003 in a bloodless coup.

After the restoration of President Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone in 1988, the Security Council established the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMISIL) which monitored the security situation and efforts to disarm combatants and restructure the security forces. We must stress that UNOMISIL was under the protection of the ECOMOG forces. After another round of crisis which led to almost overrunning the capital, negotiations between the government and the rebels led to the Lome Peace Agreement to replace UNOMISIL with a larger mission - the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to assist the parties in putting the agreement into effect and to assist in disarming, demobilising and reinstating the estimated 45,000 combatants. In February, 2000 after the withdrawal of the ECOMOG troops, the Security Council increased the strength of UNAMSIL to 11,000 troops. However, in April 2000 the UN forces cane under heavy attack from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leading to the killing of four peace keepers and close to 500 UN personnel were taken hostage by the RUF forces. It was, however, not until the British troops serving under a bilateral arrangements with the government of Sierra Leone, that the capital and its airport were secure and the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh arrested. By January 2002, UNAMSIL completed the disarmament process of former combatants; and in September 2002 the Security Council approved a draw down of UNAMSIL in four phases to be completed in 2004.

Despite the setting up of the United Nations Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (MINUCI) in May 2003 and the establishment of the United Nations Operations in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) by the Security Council, the restoration of peace between the government and the northern rebel forces still remains precarious.

One of the last phase of the UN forces in Africa could be located in the Ethiopia-Eriteria crisis which led the Security Council ion July 2000 to establish the United nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) to monitor the cessation of hostilities agreement between the two countries which had earlier been reached in June in Algiers. UNMEE was to deploy liaison officers to each capital and military observers along the border. By September, 2000 the Security Council authorised the deployment of 4,200 military personnel to monitor the cessation of hostilities and assist in ensuring observance of the security commitment agreed to by the two parties. The UN forces was able to keep the peace between the two countries while a Boundary Commission appointed by the UN continued to demarcate the boundary lines between the two countries.

Finally, one of the most disastrous UN outings was its intervention in the Somali crisis in 1993. Due to lack of clear understanding of the social and political realities in the country, the UN forces came under severe attack from the factional leaders resulting in heavy casualties and eventual withdrawal of the UN peace-keepers from the conflict (Ayittey, 1992).[23]

V.   TRENDS IN THE UN PEACE KEEPING OPERATIONS IN AFRICA

Between 1988 and 2004, certain discernible trends could be observed in the UN peace – keeping operations in Africa. One of such is that before the actual deployment of troops to any country, certain diplomatic steps would have been taken seeking the consent of all the belligerent forces. Without this important initial step, peace making or peace – keeping operations become highly perilous. This, however, is not to deny the fact that certain forceful entry into a country could not be embarked upon (as it was with the ECOMOG in Liberia) if necessary, especially if one of the affected parties is rather unreasonable in its demand and unable to see reason with the sub-regional or international community. (Vogt, 1992)[24]

On arrival, any peace-keeping or peace making force would want to establish contacts with all the rebel and factional leaders and put in place requisite logistics. The logistic support should be such that will aid its effectiveness and the command structures should be such that will aid an ease of achievement of targets and goals. (Aleksander, 1990) Depending on the situation in which it finds itself, any peace – keeping operation

could establish its command structure as it pleases, the most important point being the efficient operation of the mission.

Within the period under review, most of the conflicts that warranted the intervention of the UN were essentially domestic conflicts emanating from bad governance, thieving and insensitive leadership. Apart from the Ethiopia-Eriteria crisis and to some extent the Congo crisis which attracted Rwanda and Uganda, one could assert that the rest of the serious conflicts within the continent were internal in nature .As far as the Nigeria / Cameron disagreements over the Bakassi were concerned, no UN peace-keeping force was involved. Hence, if the UN interventionist forces are to be minimized to the barest minimum in the continent, the problems bad leaders who devastate their countries should be urgently reviewed.

In very many of the peace-keeping operations in Africa, the pace-keepers have been targets of attack by one or more of the rebel forces. In Liberia, the peace-keepers were attacked by the Charles Taylor forces. In Sierra Leone, the RUF forces attacked and killed four of the peace-keepers and in fact so many of them were captured and taken hostage. In Somalia, the same problem was encountered. This goes a long way to suggest that peace-keepers should be sufficiently armed enough for self – defence. (Oni, 2002)[25]

Again, the UN interventionist forces in the continent often come rather too late thereby leading to huge loss of lives and property. Perhaps if the UN forces had monitored the situation in Rwanda in 1994 and had intervened early, the situation could have been saved and about the 800,000 lives that were lost would have been saved. The same applies Burundi, Somalia, Sudan and even almost all the conflicts in the continent. The notion of non-intervention in internal affairs of state is gradually becoming atavistic, especially in Africa, where largely undemocratic and irresponsible governments have been looting and pillaging their countries.

The problem of funding of the peace-keeping operations is one of the critical factors that have been plaguing the UN and to a large extent account for the late intervention of the body in many of the African conflicts. For instance, in 1995 the UN peace-keeping operations cost $3 billion, reflecting the experience of operations in Somalia and former Yugoslavia. This went down $889 million in 1999 but by the end of 2001, the annual cost of the UN peace-keeping had again risen to over $3 billion reflecting major new missions in Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Eriteria and Ethiopia. By 1 July, 2003, the approved budget for the following 12 months was about $2.2 billion (UN, 2004:20). For instance while the United States and Japan contributed 22 percent and 19.468 percent respectively, African countries that are most prone to conflict like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Central Africa Republic, Somalia, Central Africa Republic and Burundi contributed 0.001 percent each (Nigeria contributed 0.042 percent) (UN, 2004:297 – 302).[26] With these low contributions by the African countries to the UN purse, little wonder then that it pays little attention to African crises.

Furthermore, many of the UN peace-keeping operations in Africa are devoid of clear-cut mandates and objectives. Under normal circumstance, the composition, equipment and logistic support of any operation should be commensurate with the assigned tasks. It is not just enough to send peace-keepers on a mission, but they must be given the necessary mandate and support to succeed. It should be stated clearly at what point they have to be defensive and at what point they have to be on the offensive. The size of troops and equipment should be such that will accelerate the success of such missions. The refusal of the UN security council in putting all these into consideration before embarking on some of the peace missions has been responsible for some of the negative consequences that have characterized its mission in the continent.

In the same vain, understanding the domestic situation, the ethnic composition, the various factions in a crisis and other social realities is indispensable to success. The UN on certain occasions has not taken the pain to take a critical look at the domestic situations in Africa before dabbling into them. (Abubakar, 2004). The failed UN intervention in Somalia in the 1990s is a typical example. Rather than perceiving the UN forces as peace-keeping forces, some of the factions viewed them as invaders and consequently started attacking, killing many of them. Many African countries are complex political and social entities and these complexities must be properly comprehended before any peace-keeping or peace-making operation is embarked upon.

VI.   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing it clear that most of the conflicts the warranted the UN peace-keeping operation were internally based. Bad leadership and misrule constitute serious impediments to peace in the continent. Equally, the introduction of the neo-liberal economic policies has widened the frontiers of poverty and conflicts in Africa.

Imperialism is also still at work, especially in the destabilization of Africa. Colonialism laid the foundation for the disarticulation of the African economy and neo-colonialism has continued to sustain and strengthen internal contradictions in Africa that make the UN peace-keeping operations inevitable. In a bid to make the UN missions in Africa more rewarding and successful the following critical areas should be examined.

▸   There is the urgent need for preventive diplomacy and prevent disarmament by the UN and other regional and sub-regional organizations in the continent in order to prevent escalation of conflicts.

More time and resources should be devoted to this aspect of the maintenance of international peace and security.

▸ The notion internal sovereignty and non-interference is the internal affairs that has enabled many African leaders to perpetrate many heinous crimes against their people should be urgently reviewed. There should be international mechanisms of calling tyrants and looters who masquerade as leaders in Africa to order.

▸ The mandate and specific objectives of the Africa missions should be clear. On several occasions the arrival of the UN forces in many countries is usually viewed as a means of protection for the defenceless masses but when those forces prove incapable of achieving the objective of making and preserving the peace, the people are often badly disappointed, calling to question the usefulness of such missions.

▸ Without proper funding, any peace-keeping is doomed to failure. The UN should calculate the financial cost of any mission before embarking on it rather than rushing to an area of conflict, running out funds and hurriedly leaving the entire situation worse than it met it.

▸ The surest recipe for peace in Africa in solving its escalating economic crisis. The UN and the international community have a tremendous role to play in this regard. Debt forgiveness, financial aid, flow of foreign investment and paying restitution for evils of slavery and colonialism should be topmost issues to be embarked upon in restoring lasting peace to Africa.

▸ Finally, he UN in concert with the AU and other stakeholders in the African continent should urgently constitute an interventionist force that could quickly move into a potentially violent and volatile zone. This force should be well trained and equipped, mobile and combat-ready at all times so as to nip many of the African crises in the bud.

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