

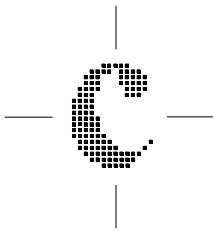
Conflict Policy Research Project (CPRP)

## The Netherlands and Liberia

Dutch Policies and Interventions  
with respect to the Liberian  
Civil War

Klaas van Walraven

Conflict Research Unit  
Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'  
November 1999



Desk top publishing by Kitty l'Ami

Netherlands Institute of  
International Relations  
'Clingendael'  
Clingendael 7  
2597 VH The Hague  
Phonenumber 31 - 70 - 3245384  
Telefax 31 - 70 - 3282002  
P.O. Box 93080  
2509 AB The Hague  
E-mail: [info@clingendael.nl](mailto:info@clingendael.nl)  
Website: <http://www.clingendael.nl>

© Netherlands Institute of International Relations *Clingendael*. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright holders. *Clingendael* Institute, P.O. Box 93080, 2509 AB The Hague, The Netherlands.

# Contents

---

Abbreviations	5
Executive summary	7
1 Introduction	11
1.1 Research Objective	11
1.2 Conceptual Aspects	12
1.3 Some Remarks on Sources and Methodology	14
2 An Outline of the Liberian Civil War	19
2.1 Background and Causes	19
2.2 The Parties and Objectives	23
The Warring Factions	23
The Civilians	28
ECOMOG and its West African Opponents	29
2.3 The Nature and Dynamics of the Conflict	32
3 Interventions in the Conflict:	
Some International and West African Aspects	37
3.1 Interventions in the Civil War by Other External Actors	37
The United States	37
The OAU and the UN	41
3.2 Getting Out: ECOMOG and its Exit Strategy 1995-1997	43
4 Interventions in the Conflict: The Role of the Netherlands	49
4.1 Introduction	49
4.2 Project Interventions	53
Introduction	53
Contents and Rationales	55
Relationship to the Conflict	59

	Intervention Moments	60
	Outcomes	61
4.3	Political and Diplomatic Initiatives	66
	Introduction	66
	Departmental Missions	67
	Initiatives by the Minister for Development Cooperation	68
4.4	Tentative Assessment of Policies and Interventions	74
5	Conclusions and the Relevance for Policy and Research	83
	Bibliography	87
	Annexes	91

## Abbreviations

---

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
BeMo	Beoordelingsmemorandum (Assessment Memorandum)
CEAN	Centre d'Etudes d'Afrique Noire (Bordeaux)
CP	Conflictbeheersing en preventie (Crisis management and prevention)
CPRP	Conflict Policy Research Project
CPWA	Conflict Prevention in West Africa (Research Project)
DAF	Directie Sub-Sahara Afrika (Sub-Saharan Africa Department)
DAM	Directie Noord Afrika en Midden Oosten (North Africa and Middle East Department)
DCH	Directie Crisisbeheersing en Humanitaire Hulp (Conflict Management and Humanitarian Aid Department)
DMP	Directie Multilaterale Programma's (Multilateral Programmes Department)
DSI	Directie Sociale en Institutionele Ontwikkeling (Social and Institutional Development Department)
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FOL	Friends of Liberia
FOS	Financieel Ontwikkelings Samenwerking Systeem (Financial Development Cooperation System)
HH	Humanitaire Hulp (Humanitarian Aid)
IA	International Alert
ICGL	International Contact Group on Liberia
IECOM	Independent Elections Commission
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
IFMC	Inter-Faith Mediation Committee
IGNU	Interim Government of National Unity
IMF	International Monetary Fund

INN	International Negotiation Network
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
KAP	Kleine Ambassade Projecten (Small Embassy Projects)
LDF	Lofa Defence Force
LNC	Liberian National Conference
LPC	Liberian Peace Council
LR	MIDAS Code for Liberia
MIDAS	Management Inhoudelijk Documentair Activiteiten Systeem (Management Contents Documentary Activities System)
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPP	National Patriotic Party
OAU	Organization African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
OS	Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Development Cooperation)
RF	MIDAS Code for West Africa
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SB	Sociaal Beleid (Social Policy)
SOH	Stichting Oecumenische Hulp (Foundation for Ecumenical Aid).
TWP	True Whig Party
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement for Democracy
ULIMO-J	United Liberation Movement for Democracy (Johnson's faction)
ULIMO-K	United Liberation Movement for Democracy (Kromah's faction)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
US(A)	United States (of America)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WW	MIDAS Code for world-wide

## Executive summary

.....

This case-study analyses Dutch foreign policy towards Liberia during its civil war between 1990 and 1997. It studies both aid policies aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Liberian people and the more politically oriented interventions by the Dutch government in its efforts to contribute towards an end to the hostilities as such. Chapters 2 and 3 describe the causes and eruption of the civil war, as well as the nature and dynamics of the violence involved and the interventions by third actors. With regard to the intervention by ECOMOG, it concludes that it was deployed not so much to bring an end to the war irrespective which party would be victorious as to come to the aid of the embattled Samuel Doe and, when it became apparent he was beyond salvage, to stop one particular belligerent, Charles Taylor and his NPFL, in its tracks. In its rationale as well as its actions ECOMOG constituted a party to the conflict rather than a neutral third party intervener. When it appeared that it was unable to rid Liberia of Taylor, however, Nigeria devised an exit strategy that enabled the countries in ECOMOG to end their presence in Liberia by rushing through elections that intended and resulted in the elevation to President of the country's principal warlord.

The analysis of Dutch policy is based on research of internal documents of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs that pertain to Liberia. Chapter 4 gives, firstly, a quantitative overview of the sums involved in the provision of Western emergence aid to the stricken population. It concludes that in terms of net total ODA the Netherlands was the third largest donor to Liberia, with an upsurge in project funding in the years following 1995, *i.e.* when the conflict began to scale down.

By and large Dutch funding of projects (executed by multilateral agencies or NGOs in Liberia) followed the dynamics of the conflict. Emergency aid predominated until 1996 and projects supporting peace initiatives, rehabilitation and reconstruction became more prominent after the mid 1990s. While one could question the rationale of projects aimed at rehabilitation and reconstruction before April 1996 as being based on an incorrect assessment of the politico-military situation, on the whole the choice of projects undertaken to attenuate the effects of

the conflict was not inappropriate. The popular objection that humanitarian assistance helps to fuel civil wars is to some extent vindicated. Yet it is concluded that in the context of Liberia's significant war economy, such aid constituted only an additional if welcome resource for factional armies that had already secured ample resources with which to continue the hostilities. In itself the plundering of resources of aid agencies in Liberia cannot be presented as an argument against Dutch aid projects in that country during the years of fighting.

Although the case-study raises questions about the utility of funding of mediation initiatives by NGOs, it is concluded that with the exception of the issue of sanctions (see below) the instruments used in the execution of Dutch Liberia policy were by and large employed in a coherent way. Two fundamental weaknesses are, however, noted in overall policy (including both politico-diplomatic initiatives and accompanying aid projects). Firstly, during 1997 and 1998 the Dutch government continued to provide aid to Liberia although it did not have much confidence in the new Taylor government. Sources of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explain this contradiction by referring to the lack of an alternative strategy or, less convincingly, present it as representing a mixture of warnings and incentives aimed at influencing the Liberian government.

Secondly, like other Western countries, Dutch political initiative vis-à-vis Liberia only began in earnest after 1995 – *i.e.* once the outlines of settlement had already become apparent. In merely reinforcing the objectives and priorities set by others, Dutch Liberia policy was only secondary and not initiatory in character. Worse, based on a flawed analysis of ECOMOG as a would-be neutral third party mediator, it facilitated the latter's exit strategy and Taylor's rise to the Presidency. For example, like other Western countries, the Netherlands failed to push for an extension of the 1997 election schedule.

More fundamentally, the Dutch government failed to understand the implications and manifestations of Africa's post-Cold War marginalization. It was therefore willing to allow ECOMOG a free hand and accepted ECOWAS parameters as the premise of Dutch policy. This in turn was based on general Western and Dutch post-Cold War policy towards conflicts in Africa. Such policy aims to strengthen the role of Africa's regional organizations in the handling of the continent's security issues and is essentially based on the mere likeness with the externalities of Western international institutions and attendant instruments of intervention. Western countries therefore declined to argue for a greater role by the UN in the years that this could have helped (1995-1997) – a window of opportunity that passed by.

Contrary to present policy, this case-study concludes that neither African nor Western cadres of settlement should be taken as the general point of departure for policy on conflict management. Their utility in a particular conflict is context dependent and determined by the specific configuration of interests at stake, the quality of inter-state ties and the degrees of interdependence. However, ECOMOG's record in Liberia makes clear that if Western policy towards African



conflicts is to improve, it is imperative to problematize and analyse the role and practice of African international institutions in the context of the continent's conflicts.

The study also concludes that successful African conflict management requires, in general, greater Western involvement. Among others, this should lead foreign policy circles to resume control of foreign affairs vis-à-vis Africa, the conduct of which is too much affected by private actors such as NGOs, multinational companies and private security agencies. Western involvement should also lead to greater willingness to introduce sanctions as an answer to developing war economies and massive human rights violations by warring groups. Following the poor example set by ECOWAS, UN sanctions against Liberia's warlords were introduced at a relatively late stage in the conflict. They were, moreover, restricted in scope. The reticence of African and Western governments on punitive measures not only helped to reinforce the dynamics of the conflict but also underlined Liberia's marginal position in world affairs.

# 1 Introduction

---

## 1.1 Research Objective

This case-study is part of the ‘Conflict Policy Research Project’, which the Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’ has executed at the request of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Conflict Policy Research Project aims at identifying and elaborating options for policies and instruments with which the Ministry could improve on the signalling of and intervention in (potential or actual) violent conflicts in Third World countries. Similarly, it should identify ways and means with which the Ministry could enhance its activities to ameliorate post-conflict situations. In order to generate suggestions for such an improvement in policies and instruments this project contains several case-studies of countries where the Netherlands ‘intervened’ in a variety of ways and with – or without – the objective to prevent, contain and solve violent conflicts or contribute towards the consolidation of peaceful conditions after the conclusion of hostilities.

These case-studies, among which the present report, therefore aim at the formulation of the most adequate ‘mix’ of policies and instruments with which the Dutch government could attempt to contribute towards the prevention or containment of conflicts. In order to provide the necessary building blocks for such a policy mix, this case-study will analyse past Dutch foreign policy towards a country in conflict, namely Liberia in the period 1989 to 1998. The analysis will attempt to identify and assess the objectives or rationales of Dutch policy on the Liberian conflict, the instruments with which the Foreign Ministry tried to realize these goals, and the options available in this context. Internal coherence of policy instruments will be discussed, as well as the expediency and moments of policy interventions in relation to the state and dynamics of the conflict, the question of coordination of policy with that of other external actors and, tentatively, the effectiveness of the policies and instruments employed to respond to the Liberian conflict.

The remainder of this chapter will outline some conceptual aspects with regard to conflict interventions and provide an overview of the source material on which this study is based. Chapters 2 and 3 will present a description of the causes and eruption of the civil war, the actors involved and the nature of the interventions undertaken by external actors other than the Netherlands, as well as by Liberian civilian and political groupings. Chapter 4, which constitutes the core of this study, will analyse Dutch policies and instruments as used vis-à-vis the Liberian conflict. Conclusions and tentative recommendations for policy will be presented in chapter 5.

## 1.2 Conceptual Aspects

The two concepts which are central to this research project are ‘conflict’ and ‘intervention’. While the cycles of conflict also include a so-called ‘dispute’ or ‘pre-hostilities’ phase, in this study we will concentrate on the period in which large-scale violence occurred in Liberia, *i.e.* the years 1990 to 1998. Before the outbreak of war, the Netherlands did not have a permanent relationship of development cooperation with Liberia, nor an embassy in the capital, Monrovia.<sup>1</sup> Since there was thus no question of any conflict preventive activity in the framework of development cooperation, it is justified to focus on the genuine conflict phase – the period of large-scale violence –, besides the post-conflict context.

The concept of ‘intervention’ warrants a more detailed discussion. One definition refers to intervention as a ‘portmanteau term which covers a wide variety of situations where one actor intervenes in the affairs of another’.<sup>2</sup> While this naturally begs the question what actually constitutes the intervening act, this definition has the advantage that it may be interpreted as to encompass various forms of activity by one actor vis-à-vis another. International law relates intervention to other concepts as ‘internal affairs’ and ‘domestic jurisdiction’ and in view of the domestic jurisdiction clause of the United Nations Charter (art. 2.7) it has been pointed out that one can only speak of intervention if the activity involved goes further than mere ‘talk’, *i.e.* oral and/or written communication between one actor and another – the target of its intervention.<sup>3</sup> In this study, however, any legal connotations and linkages to terms as domestic jurisdiction and internal affairs are discarded. In recognition of the fact that the instruments of intervention are now much more refined and sophisticated than in the past – transforming intervention

- 
- 1) Diplomatic relations were handled from the embassy in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.
  - 2) G. Evans and J. Newnham, *The Dictionary of World Politics: A Reference Guide to Concepts, Ideas and Institutions* (New York, 1990), p. 198.
  - 3) See I. Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law* (3rd ed.: Oxford, 1979), p. 294.

into a more pervasive phenomenon than ever before<sup>4</sup> –, this study considers a range of activities as to fall under the concept: thus, not only military actions are interpreted as intervention, but also activities in other areas, such as economics, development cooperation and, indeed, even ‘mere’ communication between one actor and the object of its intervention. This approach has the benefit that it underlines the importance of gradualism and incrementalism as features of the intervention concept. In this sense the intervention concept does not necessarily have to involve a rupture from conventional or ‘normal’ behaviour of one actor towards another.<sup>5</sup> Even the contention that the target of intervention should be the structure of government,<sup>6</sup> is not followed here, as this would not be useful in the Liberian context – marked as it was by the total collapse of official state and government structures.

Yet our definition of intervention, while allowing for any kind of activity (military, economic, political, diplomatic, cultural or other), is linked to *conflict* and the intention of the intervening actor to affect that conflict. Thus, intervention is taken to mean or involve any activity in the above-mentioned areas which is intended to influence the course, intensity or scope of hostilities and/or activity geared at attenuating the effects of conflict. In this sense, intervention amounts to *conflict-related intervention*.

Such conflict-related intervention may thus involve, firstly, interventions which are aimed at influencing the hostilities (*i.e.* course, scope and intensity of the violence) – defined here as *direct* conflict-related intervention. Direct forms of conflict-related intervention are, for example, political and diplomatic efforts to mediate a settlement; any form of military interventions to affect an end to or mitigation of the conflict; the provision of financial or logistical support to military operations; or the imposition of economic or military sanctions. Direct conflict-related intervention may, however, also involve activity geared at affecting the ‘dispute’, *i.e.* pre-hostilities, phase (a theoretical possibility not relevant in this study) or the post-conflict, *i.e.* post-violence, situation.

Secondly, conflict-related intervention may involve interventions which are aimed at attenuating the effects of a conflict, defined here as *indirect* conflict related-intervention. Such intervention involves the provision of aid to war-stricken areas and populations to help them survive the hostilities. In the Conflict Policy Research Project three forms of such aid are distinguished: 1. ‘emergency’ aid, which is assistance provided to non-combatants during the hostilities; 2. so-called ‘humanitarian’ aid, which is assistance given immediately upon the permanent or temporary conclusion of hostilities; and 3. ‘rehabilitation’ or ‘reconstruction’ aid, *i.e.* assistance given after the conflict has ended and aimed at helping to reconstruct the country.

---

4) Evans and Newnham, *Dictionary of World Politics*, p. 200.

5) *Ibid.*

6) *Ibid.*

Both the direct and indirect forms of conflict-related intervention involve an *intention* to affect the conflict and its effects. Direct and indirect conflict-related intervention should thus be distinguished from, what might be termed, *conflict-synchronous* intervention, *i.e.* intervention by an actor in the affairs of a country in conflict with another object than to affect that conflict. It should in this respect be realized that countries may continue to conduct ‘normal’ ties or relations with countries engaged in violent domestic conflict. Such relations cannot be easily distinguished from the patterns of interaction as they were before large-scale violence erupted and are marked by other rationales and objectives, such as the pursuit of one’s own economic, political or other interests, rather than the wish to end or mitigate the conflict. Even if this is a theoretical distinction in the case of the Netherlands and Liberia, one needs to uphold it in order to correctly assess policies towards countries in conflict.

### 1.3 Some Remarks on Sources and Methodology

Chapters 2 and 3 are based on previous research on the Liberian civil war. This research, which was undertaken for another project executed at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>7</sup> involved an analysis of the intervention by the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group – ECOMOG – and was based on primary documents, interviews and some secondary literature.<sup>8</sup> This study will serve as an input for the next two chapters. For chapter 4 of the present study additional research was done to collect empirical data on Dutch policy interventions in Liberia. These data were collected by an undergraduate student<sup>9</sup> working on behalf of the Conflict Policy Research Project. The data in question consist of foreign ministry files pertaining to diplomatic initiatives through which the Netherlands tried to contribute towards a settlement, as well as to the funding of projects with which the Dutch tried to increase the chances of a peaceful end to the war, attenuate the negative effects of the conflict to the non-combatant population and help begin the reconstruction of Liberian society. For the purpose of this study the first group of files will be called ‘political dossiers’ and the second group will be referred to as ‘OS dossiers’ – OS standing for ‘ontwikkelingssamenwerking’, *i.e.* development cooperation.

- 
- 7) The project ‘Conflict Prevention in West Africa’ (CPWA).
  - 8) K. van Walraven, ‘Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States: Lessons from the Intervention in Liberia, 1990-1997’ (*Project Conflict Prevention in West Africa*: The Hague, 1999).
  - 9) Heleen Weening. Here I would like to thank her for the collection and presentation of these data in ‘Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia: Een dossieronderzoek naar de rol van het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken in het conflict in Liberia (1989-1999) in het kader van het Conflict Beleidsonderzoek van Instituut Clingendael’ (The Hague, May 1999).

The selection of the relevant political and OS files<sup>10</sup> occurred as follows. At first, a print-out was made of a list of over 1,300 dossiers, which were selected with the help of the term 'Liberia' fed into the databank of the Ministerial archives. These pertained to the period 1989 until 1999. From those 1,300 files an initial selection of some 250 dossiers was made that seemed most relevant for the analysis of conflict-related interventions.<sup>11</sup> The political dossiers emanate from various directorates or departments in the Ministry,<sup>12</sup> while the OS files come predominantly from the 'Conflict Management and Humanitarian Aid Department' (DCH<sup>13</sup>), either its section for humanitarian aid<sup>14</sup> or the section working on crisis management and prevention.<sup>15</sup> A few OS files came from the Social and Institutional Development Department.<sup>16</sup>

The political dossiers, which are listed in annexe 1, were categorized under various headings. Especially the categories 'meetings'<sup>17</sup> and 'missions'<sup>18</sup> provide insight into Dutch diplomatic initiatives on Liberia. Both categories give information on the articulation of Dutch policy during missions abroad and on the Dutch input during international conferences convened to discuss the Liberian crisis. The heading 'diplomacy' did not yield useful data, as the files in this category focus on administrative and personnel-related aspects of diplomatic and consular relations. The dossiers of other categories were either too generally focused on the situation in Liberia or too specifically aimed at aspects of Dutch policy to yield useful data on diplomatic initiatives.<sup>19</sup> All dossiers of the categories 'missions' and 'meetings' were analysed.

Roughly half of the dossiers on missions yielded data which were useful for an analysis of Dutch policy – the others focusing on visits of Liberians to the Netherlands or consisting of shadow files of other departments. The missions to Liberia consisted of three visits by Minister Jan Pronk, one as leader of an EU mission and the other two in his capacity as Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation. Ministerial departments undertook five important missions, of

---

10) The terms dossier and file will be used interchangeably in this study.

11) This excludes 36 classified dossiers.

12) DMP; DAM; DAF; DCH.

13) 'Directie Crisisbeheersing en Humanitaire Hulp'.

14) HH: 'humanitaire hulp'.

15) CP: conflictbeheersing en preventie.

16) DSI: 'Directie Sociale en Institutionele Ontwikkeling', section SB – 'sociaal beleid' (social policy).

17) Bijeenkomsten.

18) Dienstreizen.

19) The other headings, as used by the undergraduate student, were: situation Liberia; domestic politics; foreign affairs; African actors; international actors; OS-activities Netherlands; Dutch government in relation to Liberia; policy West Africa varia; policy Liberia varia; other.

which three by the 'Multilateral Programmes Department' (DMP) and two fact-finding missions by its successor department DCH.<sup>20</sup>

The Dutch input at international conferences represents an important form of diplomatic initiatives on the Liberian crisis. These conferences can be found under the heading of meetings and pertain to three conferences of the 'International Contact Group on Liberia' (ICGL); six so-called 'Special Conferences to Support the Peace Process in Liberia'; and two donor conferences. They are all listed in annexe 2. Although the dossiers distinguish between conferences of the ICGL and the Special Conferences, both series of meetings were of a political nature, involving the exchange of views as regards developments in Liberia, the discussion of priorities, coordination and decision-making on political and humanitarian issues and some limited pledging of financial or material assistance. It was, however, two conferences held in 1998 which constituted fully-fledged donor meetings where political aspects took second place to donor issues and pledging.

The OS files were scanned with the help of the so-called 'MIDAS'<sup>21</sup> inventory, a documentation system which lists all OS activities under an 'activity number'. Although this system came into operation only in 1992, most activities on Liberia before 1992 can also be traced via MIDAS, as many past activities have also been given an activity number and then included in this documentation system. The so-called 'FOS'<sup>22</sup> system, an inventory that came into operation in 1985 and was predominantly financial and budgetary in nature, was not researched in detail although an inventory was made of the dossiers in this system. A small number of OS activities with regard to Liberia before 1992 can be found in an old filing system.<sup>23</sup> However, as only a very small number of activities on Liberia between 1989 and 1992 was not included in MIDAS,<sup>24</sup> this case-study is based on an inventory of OS activities as provided by this documentation system.

The MIDAS register provides various numbers to OS activities, of which the code 'LR', standing for Liberia, is most relevant to this study. Besides LR, there are activities marked with the codes 'WW' (activities with world-wide application) and 'RF' (activities initiated for the West African region as a whole). These can be of relevance here in so far as they have led to budgetary allocations and the execution of projects in Liberia. One could think here, for example, of projects aimed at assisting refugees in various countries in West Africa; projects which attempted to enlarge knowledge about food security in the region; or projects

---

20) A sixth mission by DCH took place in July 1997 with respect to the elections which took place that month, but there is little information on it in the political dossier.

21) This acronym stands for 'Management Inhoudelijk Documentair Activiteiten Systeem'.

22) Standing for 'Financieel Ontwikkelings Samenwerking Systeem'.

23) Registered under number 610.33. An inventory was made of the files in this system, although they were not studied.

24) Not more than five. Oral communication by Heleen Weening.

which tried to enhance the competitiveness of African rubber producers.<sup>25</sup> However, as these activities were not formulated and implemented with the specific object to affect the conflict in Liberia but to influence developments in West Africa as a whole or other regions, our analysis will be based predominantly on LR marked activities.<sup>26</sup> So-called ‘KAP’ projects,<sup>27</sup> while included in MIDAS, are not relevant here as any such projects for Liberia were postponed in view of the conflict.

The OS files analysed for this study involve so-called ‘BeMos’<sup>28</sup>, which are reports which assess requests for financial aid for a particular project activity, followed by a proposal sent to the Minister for Development Cooperation. The descriptions of the background to a proposed project activity and the assessment by the Ministerial department provide useful data regarding Dutch policy on countries in conflict. Besides BeMos, this study is based on ‘activities dossiers’, in which the organizations which execute a project – often some development NGO – report on aspects of its implementation, such as objectives which were reached or not; concrete activities; difficulties encountered in the field; the use of the Dutch contribution to the project; and the effects, if any, on the situation in Liberia.

---

25) See, for example, RF 041301, RF 90060B and WW 034702.

26) All OS activities with the codes WW and RF are listed in annexe 3, while LR activities are listed in annexe 4. The MIDAS usually includes OS activities from the so-called S, B, C, U and E phases – with the latter two standing for the phase of implementation and finalization. Annexe 4 only contains projects in the U and E phase.

27) KAP stands for ‘kleine ambassade projecten’ – small embassy projects. If there would have been such projects for Liberia they should have been implemented by the embassy in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

28) Standing for ‘beoordelingsmemorandum’ – assessment memorandum.



## 2 An Outline of the Liberian Civil War

---

### 2.1 Background and Causes

While there is no space to provide an extensive analysis of the civil war, some cursory notes are necessary in order to set Dutch policy interventions in the proper context. The history of Liberia as a political entity began during the first half of the nineteenth century with the settlement of a couple of thousand of freed black slaves from North America.<sup>1</sup> In this they were aided, or forced, by the ‘American Colonization Society’, an institution run by white Americans who saw ‘repatriation’ as a way to solve what was perceived as the problem of freed blacks living as a minority in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Many of these ‘returnees’, who were called ‘Americo-Liberians’, had actually never lived in Africa and did not even originate from this specific area on the West African coast. However, just as Freetown in Sierra Leone and Libreville in Gabon, the Liberian colony was considered a convenient instrument with which to tackle the growing problems engendered by the changing political economy underlying nineteenth century slavery and slave trading.<sup>3</sup>

The result was that small groups of black immigrants were settled in various locations on the West African coast, areas which were more often than not taken by force from the indigenous population.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in the areas later to be called

- 
- 1) J.T. Sabin, *The Making of the Americo-Liberian Community: A Study of Politics and Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia* (Ph.D. thesis Columbia Un.: New York, 1974).
  - 2) See A.B. Jones, ‘The Republic of Liberia’, in J.F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds), *History of West Africa*, vol. 2 (London, 1978), ch. 8 and Sabin, *The Making of the Americo-Liberian Community*.
  - 3) See, for example, P.E. Loveloy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 246 ff.
  - 4) Y. Gershoni, *Black Colonialism: The Americo-Liberian Scramble for the Hinterland* (Boulder and London, 1985).

'Liberia' wars between the black immigrants and the local population were not uncommon.<sup>5</sup> As the name of the body that organized the settlement of these immigrants indicated, the enterprise amounted to a form of colonization not dissimilar to practices of Western colonial expansion seen elsewhere. The immigrants were, in fact, creoles who were culturally distinct from and kept their distance to the indigenous ethnic groups and their cultural complexes. Like many Afro-Americans, the Americo-Liberians had been subjected to varying degrees of Western cultural influences and were consequently imbued with Western cultural values current at the times – values which openly discriminated against African cultures and civilization. Thus, while on the one hand striving for equality with white culture and the Western world by demanding equal political rights and pleading Africa's economic and cultural uplift, on the other hand these creole communities developed an ambivalent, if not racist, attitude towards the indigenous cultures amongst which they lived.<sup>6</sup>

Reinforcing their ranks with Africans liberated from slave ships on their way to the Americas – called 'Congos' –, the Americo-Liberians managed to establish their dominance in the colony, for which they began to demand more autonomy and self-government. In 1847 this culminated in the Declaration of Independence and the establishment of the Republic of Liberia, which was recognized by most European states within the next decade and, a little later, by the United States itself.<sup>7</sup> The institutions of the Republic, often modelled on the American example, ensured the domination of the country's political, economic and social affairs by the Americo-Liberian elite, which made up only a few per cent of the total population.<sup>8</sup> Among these institutions the 'True Whig Party' (TWP) was the principal source of power and wealth, ruling Liberia from 1878 until 1980 without interruption.<sup>9</sup> The indigenous population was systematically oppressed and excluded from the process of decision-making, with property rights qualifying the right to vote, thus disenfranchizing the mass of the people. Social and political exclusion were solidified by the closely knit cultural network and patronage underlying the

---

5) Jones, 'Republic of Liberia', p. 313.

6) The relevant literature is extensive. See for an introduction I. Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe and Africa* (London, 1974); J.A. Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900-1945: A Study in Ideology and Social Classes* (London, 1978); and P. Boele van Hensbroek, *African Political Philosophy, 1860-1995: An Inquiry into three families of discourse* (Ph.D. thesis Un. of Groningen: Groningen, 1998), esp. ch. 3.

7) Sabin, *The Making of the Americo-Liberian Community*, pp. 77-90.

8) In 1974 they were estimated at some 43,000 on a total population of 1,5 million. *Africa South of the Sahara*, 1998, p. 596.

9) Jones, 'Republic of Liberia', p. 316.

Americo-Liberian community, kept together by intermarriage and institutions of social life, church and business.<sup>10</sup>

After World War II this situation was ameliorated somewhat, as voting restrictions were lifted, participation in government was widened and Liberia's 'Open Door' policy, while reinforcing its external dependence, led to some improvements in socio-economic conditions in the interior.<sup>11</sup> Although these measures did not end the domination by the Americo-Liberians, their hold on power became increasingly precarious, as it was based on a highly personalized form of governance by the President, rather than on autonomous public institutions. The instability of this patrimonial rule was enhanced, during the 1970s, by serious economic problems that were caused by rising oil prices. The combination of limited extension of patronage to people from indigenous communities and economic decline led to dissatisfaction in many quarters, both among conservative Americo-Liberians and indigenous groups still confronted with relative exclusion. Consequently, the army was opened up to unemployed youths from the cities, thus upsetting its ethnic balance and taking in some of the most alienated sections in Liberian society.<sup>12</sup>

Retrospectively, this foreboded the downfall of True Whig rule. In 1980, Samuel Doe, a largely uneducated sergeant from a tiny ethnic group – the Krahn – took power with the help of the lower ranks of the army. The coup was accompanied by bloody executions, among others of the President and his son, A.B. Tolbert. Doe's regime was infused with a strong resentment over past social deprivation and generated almost wholly by a drive for personal enrichment. While initially taking in opponents of the old regime, in only a few years Doe managed to lose most indigenous support, forcing him to rely on cronies from his own ethnic group and, ironically, some members of the Americo-Liberian elite.<sup>13</sup> Almost inevitably, this process was accompanied by economic mismanagement and increasingly authoritarian rule. The economy plunged into steady decline and in 1986 the IMF declared the country ineligible for new loans, thus reinforcing

---

10) See for example, K.O. Uche, *Ebony Kinship: Americo-Liberians, Sierra Leone Creoles and the Indigenous African Populations, 1820-1900: A Comparative Analysis* (Ph.D. thesis Howard Un.: Washington, 1974), ch. VII and J.G. Liebenow, *Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1969).

11) See for this period G.S. Hlophe, *Class, Ethnicity and Politics in Liberia: A Class Analysis of Power Struggles in the Tubman and Tolbert Administrations from 1944-1975* (Washington, 1979); M. Lowenkopf, *Politics in Liberia* (Stanford, 1976); and C. Clapham, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: An Essay in Comparative Politics* (Cambridge, 1976).

12) S. Ellis, 'Liberia 1989-1994: A Study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence', in *African Affairs*, 1995, pp. 175-176.

13) C. Clapham, 'Liberia', in T.M. Shaw and J.E. Okolo (eds), *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in ECOWAS* (Basingstoke and London, 1994), pp. 72-73 and Ellis, 'Liberia 1989-1994', p. 176.

Liberia's dependence on its former colonial power. The United States, however, became less and less interested in the affairs of the country, embarrassed as it was by its failure to control what was supposed to be one of its Third World clients. Declining US political interest was reinforced by steady economic disinvestment, leading to cutbacks in American aid after the mid 1980s.<sup>14</sup>

Already soon after Doe had come to power fellow putschists were executed or fell out with their former comrade, who blatantly rigged the elections of 1985 that were supposed to civilianize his regime.<sup>15</sup> Following the elections fellow putschist Thomas Quiwonkpa from Nimba county vainly tried to overthrow Doe's government. Since Doe cultivated the Krahn for support and Quiwonkpa had done the same among the Mano and Gio – ethnic groups living in Nimba county –, the failed coup led to large-scale reprisals by Doe's army against the latter two groups, many of whom became the victim of gruesome atrocities or fled to neighbouring Ivory Coast. The hatred against Doe that this engendered was to become an important source of fuel for the civil war that was to erupt in late 1989.<sup>16</sup>

More generally, there were two long-term trends which contributed substantially to the outbreak of war and the collapse of the Liberian state. Firstly, the fact that Doe, his cronies and his opponents systematically tried to cultivate political following through purely ethnic patronage seriously undermined the solidity of the state.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, the insurgency that was to lead to all-out civil war was spear-headed by, or rather based on, young men who for years had seen non-violent ways to power and wealth blocked by incumbent regimes that reduced their social mobility to practically nill. This represented a demographic and social trend that not only affected young Liberians but youngsters from across the region. Their relative and absolute deprivation was fuelled by left-wing radical leanings and led many youngsters to flee their country in search of better pastures. Like other West African youngsters, many Liberians flocked to Libya, where they got involved in military training or obtained an education denied to them at home.<sup>18</sup> To a greater or lesser extent they were affected by Libyan political teachings or the left-wing populism of (the late) Thomas Sankara, or Jerry Rawlings in his earlier days. With

---

14) Clapham, 'Liberia', pp. 74-75.

15) See, for example, T. Lyons, 'Peace and Elections in Liberia', in K. Kumar (ed), *Postconflict Elections, Democratization, and International Assistance* (Boulder and London, 1998), p. 178.

16) Ellis, 'Liberia 1989-1994', p. 176.

17) *Ibid.*, p. 178.

18) See for a study of black African students in Libya C. Duton, 'Black Africans in Libya and Libyan Images of Black Africa', in R. Lemarchand (ed), *The Green and the Black: Qadhafi's Policies in Africa* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988), ch. 9 and for the importance of education as a reason for social deprivation the analysis of the RUF's rank and file in Sierra Leone by P. Richards, 'Sur la nouvelle violence politique en Afrique: le sectarisme séculier au Sierra Léone', in *Politique Africaine*, 70, June 1998, pp. 85-104.

Libya presenting itself as the base of Third World revolutionary movements and assisting them with arms, money and training, it was in this country that recruitment for a guerrilla war against Samuel Doe began in earnest. Moreover, as these structural developments were not only limited to Liberia, recruitment for the Doe campaign also targeted other young West Africans, such as Burkinabès, Ghanaians, Sierra Leoneans, Gambians, Nigerians and Togolese.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.2 The Parties and Objectives

This section will provide an overview of the various actors that got involved in the civil war, as well as of the process of splintering that gave rise to additional players. While paying attention to the changing objectives of the various actors, the dynamics of the conflict as such – in terms of the nature, scope and intensity of the hostilities, as well as of the changing levels of influence of the various actors concerned – will be outlined in the subsequent section.

### *The Warring Factions*

The man who got the organization for a military campaign against Doe off the ground was Charles Taylor, whose father was a black American and mother a Liberian from an indigenous ethnic group. He had joined the Doe administration for a short while during the early 1980s when he headed the General Services Agency, a government procurement office through which he was able to enrich himself in a short space of time. In order to avoid embezzlement charges he escaped to the United States, where he was detained but managed to break jail. He returned to West Africa and began working on a network of Doe opponents and courting potential regional backers involving Libyan, Burkinabè and other contacts, which earned him short spells of prison time in several countries in the region.<sup>20</sup>

Taylor exhibited a kind of revolutionary adventurism that has to be set in the context of a ruthless quest for power. His political drive was marked by considerable ideological flexibility and an odd assortment of allies, which were all instrumental in furthering his supreme objective – getting hold of the Liberian Presidency. Besides various external backers, on whom more below, he managed to

- 
- 19) See S. Ellis, 'Liberia's Warlord Insurgency'; paper for the conference on African guerrilla movements, African Studies Centre: Leiden, 30 January 1997, pp. 8-9; E.K. Aning, 'Managing Regional Security in West Africa: Ecomog, Ecomog and Liberia' (Centre for Development Research Working Paper 94.2: Copenhagen, 1994), pp. 11-12; and *Africa Confidential*, April 1991, 19/4/91.
- 20) Some biographical details in M. Gaud, and L. Porgès, 'Biographies de quatorze chefs de guerre', in *Afrique Contemporaine*, 4th trimester 1996, pp. 195-197.

construct a small Americo-Liberian entourage, get the support of disaffected elements from the Mano and Gio victimized by Doe and, more generally, mobilize socially deprived youngsters from the rural areas.<sup>21</sup>

Taylor's guerrillas, grouped together as the 'National Patriotic Front of Liberia' (NPFL), invaded northeastern Liberia during Christmas 1989, slowly pushing back Doe's army – the Krahn dominated 'Armed Forces of Liberia' (AFL) – until a military stalemate was reached in the streets of the capital, Monrovia, in the summer of 1990. The impasse was reinforced when a small band of NPFL fighters broke ranks with Taylor's men, uniting under the leadership and banner of Prince Johnson's 'Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia' (INPFL). As the Armed Forces of Liberia had, in effect, become an instrument for the defence of Doe and of Krahn interests generally, Liberia was faced with three armed factions that were not marked by any clear political programme other than the hatred of Doe, the defence of the Krahn or the personal drive for power and wealth among their leaders and rank and file. The civilian population of Monrovia was held hostage by warlords and foot-soldiers living on murder, rape, plunder and extortion.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, in the course of the conflict the factions, especially Taylor's NPFL, began to exploit Liberia's varied natural resources in an effort to sustain themselves. Set against the background of military deadlock, the control and exploitation of the hinterland became a primary objective for several factions, as war reaped economic benefits which in turn were necessary for perpetuating the war. The exploitation of such resources as tropical timber, iron ore, diamonds, coffee, cocoa and rubber, as well as skimming the resources of humanitarian agencies, thereby became an end in itself – at least for some time –, rather than a means with which to gain political power. War having become the essence of the various factions, most of the armed actors therefore looked for ways to continue the fighting.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, in the case of the predominant warring group, the NPFL, one might discern a political design attached to its economic enterprises in the sense that Taylor, if not his rank and file, may have used the benefits to build up future (electoral) support by maintaining a professional though predatory economy and infrastructure in 'Taylorland', *i.e.* the larger part of the Liberian interior that he controlled.<sup>24</sup>

---

21) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', pp. 29-30.

22) *Ibid.*, *passim*.

23) F. Prkic, 'The Economy of the Liberian Conflict'; paper presented at the Conference on Defence Economics and Security in Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Countries', CEAs/IDN, Lisbon, 5-6 June 1998, ch. 3. See also generally F. Jean and J.C. Rufin (eds), *Economie des guerres civiles* (Paris, 1996).

24) F. Prkic, 'Privatisation du pouvoir et guerre civile: l'émergence de l'Etat-phénix au Liberia dans les années 1990 (paper CEAN, Institut d'études politiques de Bordeaux, n.d.), p. 18.

The appearance of the INPFL was only the beginning of a process of splintering that gave rise to many more warring factions. This proliferation had much to do with the ethno-political factionalism and underlying patronage systems that had already been a feature of Liberian politics well before the outbreak of war. In addition, in the course of the fighting it became clear that most factions were badly prepared, poorly trained and lacking in discipline. Loose in structure, most warlords found it impossible to control their rank and file or stop the splintering of their quickly swollen armies. Feuding among themselves and ruthlessly pursuing their personal gain the leaders set an example which spread downwards until reaching the soldiery.<sup>25</sup>

The process of splintering was enhanced by the fact that, from a military perspective, the war became deadlocked. Not only the AFL and INPFL but also Monrovia's civilian political class was squarely opposed to Taylor's NPFL, which by the summer of 1990 controlled some 95 per cent of the territory, admittedly considerably drained from human resources by flows of refugees who fled to Monrovia and neighbouring countries. By colluding with a Nigerian-led group of regional actors, the AFL, INPFL and Monrovia's political class managed to prevent Taylor from converting his military position into the ultimate political prize – the Liberian Presidency and international recognition. As will be shown further below, to this purpose these regional actors got together in a somewhat multilateralized intervention force, *i.e.* the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group, ECOMOG, which was fielded, ostensibly at least, under the auspices of the 'Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS).<sup>26</sup>

Yet while these forces could stop the NPFL in its tracks, they failed to defeat it on the battlefield. In 1991-92 this led Sierra Leone and ECOMOG to help in the formation and arming of another rival faction – the 'United Liberation Movement for Democracy' (ULIMO) composed of Krahns and Mandingos – as a way to reduce Taylor's military gains and retaliate for the latter's attempt to spread the war into Sierra Leone by assisting a group of armed dissidents from that country, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). In addition, a cease-fire accord worked out in 1993 – the so-called Cotonou agreement – may have stimulated the proliferation of factions by encouraging the latter to fight each other through proxies. While Taylor did, indeed, suffer considerable losses as a result of the coalition of forces pitted against him, he nevertheless managed to hold on to large parts of the Liberian interior. The AFL together with contingents from ECOMOG then began aiding another faction to engage the NPFL in the south-east of the country – the Krahn-led 'Liberian Peace Council' (LPC), which in turn led Taylor to sponsor the 'Lofa Defence Force' (LDF) to confront ULIMO in the western sectors. Yet the impasse remained and in time some of the newly created forces produced new

---

25) See also Ellis, 'Liberia 1989-1994'.

26) See extensively van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', ch. 4.

problems – which again reinforced the dynamics of factionalism. Thus in the spring of 1994 internecine fighting in ULIMO led to a split in its ‘K’ and ‘J’ factions (so called after their rival Mandingo and Krahn leaders, Alhaji Kromah and Roosevelt Johnson), a process helped along by ECOMOG when it tried to cut Kromah, whose K section worked increasingly against the intervention force, down to size.<sup>27</sup>

While territory was gained and lost, by and large the military stalemate never really broke. In the absence of effective third party intervention this was translated at the political level in demands and objectives that could not be reconciled. At first the NPFL, AFL and INPFL were united in their opposition to hand over power to a civilian-led interim administration – the ‘Interim Government of National Unity’ (IGNU) – which was put in place in 1991 with the blessing of ECOMOG. This merely confirmed the partition of the country, with the predominant faction, the NPFL, forming its own government in the interior and refusing to hand over its weapons to ECOMOG. Until 1996 many of the warring groups hoped that they could defeat their enemies on the battlefield and were unwilling to give up the sources of their leverage to a civilian administration whose ‘power’ depended wholly on the presence of ECOMOG. In recognition of this dilemma the Cotonou accord replaced IGNU in 1993 with a transitional arrangement in which a new ‘Council of State’ included representatives of the factions, besides some civilians.<sup>28</sup>

This agreement failed to end the fighting, not only because the warring factions were not yet convinced that they could not reach their objectives with military means but also because the Council representatives themselves would be unable to participate in future elections.<sup>29</sup> The faction leaders therefore declined to sit on the Council and sent some of their lieutenants, some of whom later broke with the faction that had dispatched them. This further diminished the significance of the Council of State and fuelled quarrels over the allocation and control of cabinet posts, ministries, as well as posts in public corporations and autonomous agencies – disputes that the Cotonou accord had aimed to settle. The factions therefore refused to stop the fighting and disarm. Moreover, as the process of splintering continued, new factions appeared which similarly desired representation on the Council. In order to create a more attractive, non-violent channel through which the armed factions could pursue their objectives a Ghanaian brokered deal – the Akosombo agreement of 1994<sup>30</sup> – tried to transform the Council into an institution in which the factions would exercise genuine influence. The prohibition on those serving on the Council to contest future elections was lifted. In the allocation of vacant government posts existing factions would be

---

27) *Ibid.*, pp. 36-41.

28) *Ibid.*, ch. 5.

29) Text in *Liberian Studies Journal*, 1993, no. 2, pp. 329-341.

30) Text in *ibid.*, 1995, no. 1, pp. 148-155.



taken into account and implementation of the agreement, including the provisions on disarmament, would be partly the responsibility of the factions themselves. However, some factions had still been left outside the negotiations and thus opposed the agreement. As the role of the Council of State had grown, the stakes were also raised substantially. The result was that the factions were unable to cooperate, the more so as the process of splintering continued unabated and command structures weakened, fuelling new splits and realignments. A new accord – the Accra agreement of December 1994<sup>31</sup> – was drafted to include those factions left out so far, but by then could do nothing to break the impasse.<sup>32</sup>

A new, Nigerian brokered agreement in 1995 – the Abuja accord<sup>33</sup> – thus expanded the Council from five to six members and decided that it was the warlords themselves who should sit, rather than their representatives. In essence the Abuja accord tried to placate the faction that was still the most powerful, the NPFL of Taylor, who had managed to survive the onslaught on his position during the preceding years. The power in the new Council came to lie predominantly in the hands of Taylor and to a lesser extent of Alhaji Kromah of ULIMO-K and George Boley of the LPC, two warlords with whom Taylor had by then allied himself. Furthermore, the faction leaders were allowed to enter the capital with their militias intact, thus beginning the militarization of Monrovia. New cease-fire violations occurred, however, mainly because the leader of ULIMO-J, Roosevelt Johnson, had not been allocated a Council seat. In exchange, he had been given the post of minister for rural development, but this was widely perceived as inadequate compensation.<sup>34</sup>

In April 1996 Taylor and Kromah tried to use these violations, in which Johnson was implicated, by trying to arrest the leader of ULIMO-J. Johnson, together with the LPC of George Boley who broke with Kromah and Taylor, decided to fight back. This new round of fighting ended inconclusively, underlining to Taylor and his rivals that it would be impossible to gain the upper hand by violence. Pressured by both the regional actors in ECOMOG and the international community they decided to try and achieve victory through the ballot box. Most factions began jockeying for position for the prospective elections by trying to gain control of more people and territory. Again, the factions reached for their guns, which in late 1996 – early 1997 resulted for some of them in gains and losses on the ground. With incomplete disarmament and demobilization, the factions

---

31) Text in *ibid.*, pp. 156-161.

32) See van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', pp. 58-62.

33) Text in *Liberian Studies Journal*, 1995, no. 2, pp. 273-276.

34) More detail in van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', pp. 63-65.

transformed themselves into ‘political parties’ and by July 1997 were prepared to fight each other at the polls.<sup>35</sup>

### *The Civilians*

Civilians, and especially the inhabitants of Monrovia, watched with increasing dismay and despair how their country and capital were getting destroyed in the ferocious struggle between the factions. Moreover, as the war progressed it was the civilians that were forced to pay the price. The armed factions looted or destroyed private property on a massive scale; forced citizens to provide labour necessary to sustain the war economy; and, worse, targeted them for reprisals or random acts of brutality, including murder, torture, rape and mutilation. Thus, most civilians were opposed to the prospect of the factions coming to power, especially the one that had begun the war – the NPFL. The extent to which the military objectives of the factions were dictated by a ruthless desire for personal power and enrichment did not bode well for the time that they might control the country’s administration. Thus civilian groups pleaded that the factions disarm and demobilize, an objective that remained one of their key demands throughout the war.<sup>36</sup>

Special interest groups, such as women’s organizations and human rights committees, focused on their own, more specific goals.<sup>37</sup> One organization, however, the Christian-Muslim ‘Inter-Faith Mediation Committee’ (IFMC), adopted a broader mandate by trying to broker a deal between Samuel Doe and Taylor in June 1990. When this failed the IFMC convened a national conference in the Gambia with the blessing of the ECOMOG countries and resolved to establish the above-mentioned interim administration, the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU). While it was to be led by a civilian politician, dr Amos Sawyer, its actual establishment in Liberia depended on the implementation by ECOMOG of the so-called ‘ECOWAS Peace Plan’.<sup>38</sup> This plan, of which the essentials were formulated by the IFMC, called for an immediate cease-fire, the disarming of the factions to the ECOMOG intervention force and the administration of the country by IGNU until the holding of general elections.

Since the warring factions were to be barred from leading the transitional government, the plan constituted an effort by the civilian politicians to assume full control and side-track the militias. Moreover, as the latter dominated the situation

---

35) *Ibid.*, pp. 65-71.

36) *Ibid.*, *passim*.

37) See T.K. Biaya, ‘Acteurs et médiations dans la résolution et la prévention des conflits en Afrique de l’Ouest’ (*Project Conflict Prevention in West Africa*: Dakar, 1998), pp. 10-13.

38) Text in *Official Journal of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)*, November 1992.

on the ground, where the civilians were in fact powerless, the execution of the plan depended wholly on the military intervention by ECOMOG. Thus, while some civilian groups can be seen as actors that did not really take part in the conflict but concentrated mainly on mitigating the humanitarian problems and inserting a moral voice in what was a merciless struggle for wealth and power,<sup>39</sup> the civilian political class was to some extent one of the players in the conflict. Of course, it cannot simply be equated with the armed factions, as most politicians did not belong to any faction, did not engage in fighting and did not commit any acts of brutality. On the other hand, the political class *did* have an armed 'group' at its disposal in the guise of ECOMOG, which was willing to engage the factions on its behalf.<sup>40</sup>

IGNU, one of the key players among the civilian political groups, participated fully in the diplomatic manoeuvres and negotiations that led to the earlier peace accords. When, in turn, it was IGNU which threatened to be side-tracked by the shifting patterns of power, it was prepared to fight, by political pressure and intrigue, to retain a voice in the political set-up being worked out by the regional players and warring factions. While other civilian groups condemned the Cotonou and post-Cotonou accords for their accommodation of factional interests, IGNU and the civilian 'Liberian National Conference' (LNC) that succeeded it, joined in the bickering among the factions over the allocation of administrative posts and positions in the cabinet. Thus, in the new Council of State following on Cotonou the civilian politicians managed to claim one seat for themselves and were able, by joint intrigue with ULIMO, to capture a second one as well. They also retained several seats in the so-called 'Transitional Legislative Assembly'. Predictably, besides their claim to some of the posts in the interim administration they argued incessantly for disarmament of the various factions before a definitive peace settlement could be put in place by way of general elections.<sup>41</sup>

### *ECOMOG and its West African Opponents*

As can be inferred from the above, ECOMOG did not represent a normal example of a multilateral, third party intervention instrument as understood in the classical literature on peace-keeping. Humanitarian considerations, including concern over the fate of one's own citizens trapped in Monrovia, and concerns over refugees pouring into neighbouring countries, may indeed have played a role in the determi

---

39) A good example is the work done by a human rights watchdog, the Justice and Peace Commission of the National Catholic Secretariat in Monrovia.

40) Some of these points were made clear to me by Stephen Ellis, in letter to author, 5 February 1999.

41) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', ch. 5, *passim*.

nation of West African governments to deploy ECOMOG in Liberia. However, the decision to go in, spurred on especially by Nigeria and Guinea-Conakry, was mainly related to the nature and spatial dimensions of Taylor's insurgency. As the composition of his rebel force was tied to a process of social deprivation among younger generations that affected every country in the region, some West African leaders feared that their own regime could become the target of similar types of insurrection. The irregular militias which formed the backbone of forces like the NPFL and RUF thus constituted a threat, as well as an affront, to regimes that were often dominated by the regular armed forces.<sup>42</sup>

Yet in the case of Nigeria, which provided the biggest contingent to ECOMOG, there were other, possibly more important, reasons to intervene. In order to mobilize support Taylor's NPFL had allied itself not only with the Libyans but also with the government of Burkina Faso, French commercial interests and Ivory Coast. Both the Libyans, the Ivorians and, in the background, France happened to challenge Nigeria's aspirations to the leadership of the region. The allies of the NPFL thus constituted the principal rivals of Lagos on the more strategic question of regional hegemony, something that could easily trigger a Nigerian counter-move. Added to this were important economic and personal motives of the Nigerian leadership to try and resist the rise of the NPFL: the Nigerians had invested substantial capital in the Liberian economy, while the Nigerian leader, President Babangida, was a personal as well as business friend of Samuel Doe – the target of Taylor's wrath.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to these personal ties and interests, which often heavily influence the conduct of African foreign affairs,<sup>44</sup> this was sufficient reason for the Nigerians to intervene in Liberia. Moreover, it was reason for them to go in, not so much to strive for a peaceful settlement no matter who would come on top, as to come to

---

42) *Ibid.*, pp. 27-34.

43) See for some of these strategic, economic and personal issues R. Lemarchand, 'On Comparing Regional Hegemons: Libya and South Africa', in Lemarchand, *The Green and the Black*, pp. 167-181; R.B. St John, *Qaddafi's World Design: Libyan Foreign Policy, 1969-1987* (London and Atlantic Highlands, 1987); W. Reno, 'Foreign Firms and the Financing of Charles Taylor's NPFL', in *Liberian Studies Journal*, 1993, no. 2, pp. 175-188; C.K. Daddieh, 'Ivory Coast', in T.M. Shaw and O. Aluko (eds), *The Political Economy of African Foreign Policy* (Aldershot, 1984), pp. 122-144; A. Adeleke, 'The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The Ecomog Operation in Liberia', in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1995, pp. 569-593; Aning, 'Managing Regional Security in West Africa', p. 15; and Y. Gershoni, 'From ECOWAS to ECOMOG: The Liberian Crisis and the Struggle for Political Hegemony in West Africa', in *Liberian Studies Journal*, 1993, no. 1, pp. 21-43.

44) A feature often overlooked but in line with the patrimonial nature of politics at the sub-state level. See my 'When Conflict Masquerades as Conflict Resolution: The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia, 1990-1997'; paper for the Brown Bag Seminar, National Defence University, Washington DC, 10 May 1999.

the aid of Doe and, when it became clear that he was beyond salvage, to stop one specific Liberian actor in its tracks – Taylor and his NPFL. Similar considerations infused the Guineans with a firm anti-Taylor stance, whilst the security implications of a NPFL victory caused Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia to toe the anti-Taylor line as well.<sup>45</sup>

Equally partisan motives determined the Liberia postures of Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast. They were the principal supporters of the NPFL and were opposed to the deployment of ECOMOG for a number of personal, economic and strategic reasons. As mentioned above, when Samuel Doe came to power he had the President and his son, A.B. Tolbert, put to death. The latter happened to be married to a niece of Houphouët-Boigny, the President of Ivory Coast, and upon being widowed this niece married Blaise Compaoré, who became President of Burkina in 1987 and for some time hired Charles Taylor as his personal security officer. In addition to an interest of Ivory Coast and French companies in some of Liberia's resources, these personal ties gave ample reason to the Ivorian and Burkinabè regimes to target Doe. However, by providing the NPFL with every conceivable form of support they obviously gambled on a quick, clean sweep of the Doe regime, rather than the collapse of the Liberian state and its attendant flows of refugees.<sup>46</sup>

Apart from having clear domestic roots, the civil war in Liberia therefore began very much as an invasion supported from outside, rather than as an insurgency from within: it represented a revolt with West African wide dimensions which easily triggered a reaction from across the region – to the extent that a West African crisis was fought out in the Liberian theatre.<sup>47</sup>

Deployment of ECOMOG was thus hotly disputed and marred by legal irregularities.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, the countries that provided contingents to ECOMOG – Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Sierra Leone and Gambia – confronted their opponents with a military *fait-accompli*. With Nigeria dominating the intervention force in every respect<sup>49</sup> ECOMOG thus began to intervene while

---

45) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', pp. 27-33.

46) *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

47) *Ibid.*, p. 77. See also A. Sawyer, 'Elements of an Institutional Approach to Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa: Keynote Address'; Conference on Nature of Conflicts and Policy of Containment of Conflicts in West Africa (CODESRIA-Clingendael conference on the causes of conflict and practices of conflict prevention in West Africa), Saly, Senegal, October 14-18, 1998.

48) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', ch. 3. Also K. Otent Kufuor, 'The Legality of the Intervention in the Liberian Civil War by the Economic Community of West African States', in *African Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 1993, pp. 523-560.

49) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', pp. 41-44.

lacking in neutrality. Its partisan, anti-Taylor objective became clear in a number of ways, such as the help the ill-prepared intervention force accepted from the rival INPFL and AFL when landing in Monrovia; its engagements with the NPFL on the battlefield on various occasions between 1990 and 1995; and the armed support it provided to the NPFL's enemies. ECOMOG thus constituted another party in the conflict, rather than an impartial third party intervener.<sup>50</sup>

Conversely, the diplomatic interventions by the most anti-ECOMOG governments of the region were infused with the objective to sustain Taylor as an actor on the scene. For example, in the so-called 'Yamoussoukro process' (1991-1992) the Ivorians tried to capitalize on Nigeria's inability to force a military breakthrough by wresting the intervention initiative from the ECOMOG countries and pursuing a diplomatic line that was clearly meant to be to the advantage of the NPFL.

### 2.3 The Nature and Dynamics of the Conflict

The splintering and proliferation of armed factions were a principal feature of the Liberian conflict. As mentioned in the previous section, this was partly due to the loose structure and limited training and discipline among them, something that was reinforced by the fact that many of the rank and file were children or adolescents. Factions had taken care to recruit socially deprived youths, many of whom were orphaned when they saw their loved ones murdered in previous rounds of fighting or by the Doe regime. These youths were willing to join up in order to exact vengeance or make their way in a world which had destroyed their families and blocked their social mobility. Many who were not willing to join were press-ganged. They were also frequently forced or encouraged to commit acts of unimaginable cruelty, with promotion being dependent on committing atrocities. Because this violence was closely bound up with ritualized acts of violence in Liberia's traditional religious cults – *Poro*, now manipulated for the purpose of modern militia warfare –, it both spread terror among civilians and mentally strengthened the fighters. In this way the factions had at their disposal soldiers who were more or less held in check and transformed into fearless warriors by the abuse of cultic practices, the provision of alcohol and drugs and the subjection to physical abuse and torture.<sup>51</sup>

---

50) The widely reported participation, at contingent level, in the war economy was probably not the prime reason to deploy ECOMOG or to stay put in Liberia. Motivations of plunder began to play a (short-term) role at the level of contingents once intervention had reached stalemate. *Ibid.*, p. 44-46 and K. van Walraven, 'The Privatization of Violence in Africa: The Role of ECOMOG in Liberia' (seminar paper African Studies Centre: Leiden, April 1998).

51) Ellis, 'Liberia 1989-1994' and J. Fleischman and L. Whitman, *Easy Prey: Child Soldiers in Liberia* (New York, 1994).

Civilians were thus a legitimate target during the hostilities. They were used as human shields, abducted, subjected to all manner of abuse or killed in large-scale massacres. The worst of these took place in July 1990 and June 1993, each case with some 600 victims, many of them women and children. In total, the civil war cost the lives of an estimated 150,000 people, with some 800,000 displaced in and outside the country – on a pre-war population of roughly 2,5 million.<sup>52</sup> Besides the human cost, the war exacted a high financial price, with serious damage inflicted to the economy and infrastructure.<sup>53</sup> During the war looting was, as mentioned above, an important pastime for young warriors, giving free play to personal greed and desires. The country was thus regularly subjected to pillaging by factional thugs, the worst plunder taking place in Monrovia in the autumn of 1992 and again in the spring of 1996.<sup>54</sup>

It would be difficult to describe the course of the war in terms of phases. The conflict was marked by occasional flare-ups during which hostilities reached new levels of scope and intensity, while periods during which official cease-fires were in place were characterized by sporadic violence at lower levels of intensity. Thus, this case-study eschews an analysis in terms of phases of ‘peace-making’, ‘peace-keeping’ and ‘peace-building’. Such terminology carries normative, teleological connotations which may not accurately reflect empirical observations of the conflict. One could, for example, argue that the phase of peace-keeping began after the second Abuja accord (August 1996) and that of peace-building after the elections of July 1997;<sup>55</sup> yet, there were numerous cease-violations in the period August 1996 until the spring of 1997, while the so-called phase of peace-building was marred by serious hostilities, in September 1998, between the forces of the Taylor-controlled government and those of his rival Roosevelt Johnson.

Rather than describe the conflict in these terms, this study will therefore analyse the conflict interventions of the Dutch government against the background of high and low water-marks in the hostilities. Thus, the civil war was marked by high intensity violence from the spring of 1990 until, roughly, the end of the year; during the autumn of 1992; and in April 1996. The engagements that took place in these periods could involve hundreds of deaths (even more than one thousand in April 1996) and many thousands of people displaced. At other times, hostilities occurred at lower levels of intensity, although they could involve bitter fighting, such as between the NPFL and ULIMO in August-September 1992; between the two ULIMO factions in May 1994; and between ULIMO-J and ECOMOG in

---

52) M.A. Sesay, ‘Bringing Peace to Liberia’, in *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives*, issue 1, 1996, p. 13.

53) *Africa South of the Sahara*, 1998, p. 623.

54) Van Walraven, ‘Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States’, *passim*.

55) As in Weening’s report of the research of Foreign Ministry files, ‘Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia’.

December 1995. In between smaller engagements took place, involving all manner of cease-fire violations, such as the proliferation of armed factions, cross-border raids, kidnappings and skirmishes between rival militias. Perhaps one can broadly discern the years 1990 until 1994 as the period with the most serious fighting and the period of 1995 until 1997 as the time during which the conflict began to scale down – with the exception of a couple of serious flare-ups –, until the warring parties reached a rough balance of forces.

From 1989 until 1991 Taylor's NPFL represented the most powerful fighting force in the Liberian theatre. From October 1992 until 1994 his faction was seriously weakened as a result of enforcement campaigns by ECOMOG and the combined actions of rival and proliferating militia groups. However, the NPFL managed to keep its command structures relatively intact and was less subjected to the weakening effects of splintering than other factions. Benefiting from its control and effective exploitation of Liberia's natural resources, Taylor's force managed to survive and re-emerge, by 1995-1996, as the dominant politico-military group in the country. This was translated in a convincing political victory at the polls in July 1997. In contrast, the INPFL of Prince Johnson was eliminated as an independent force in the course of 'Operation Octopus', the all-out assault of Taylor's men on Monrovia in October 1992. The AFL quickly transformed itself from the country's armed forces into another fighting faction, especially after the head of state, Samuel Doe, was murdered by men of the INPFL. In due course the Krahn-dominated AFL struck an alliance with another Krahn group, ULIMO-J, in order to better withstand Taylor's NPFL. The latter allied himself with Alhaji Kromah of ULIMO-K. With the Krahn-led LPC switching sides from ULIMO-K/NPFL to ULIMO-J in April 1996, Taylor continued jockeying for position, winning back territory in late 1996 – early 1997 at the expense of the LPC. ULIMO-J did the same to the detriment of ULIMO-K. However, at the elections of July 1997 both ULIMO groups were, like all other factions-parties, defeated by Taylor's NPFL-NPP.<sup>56</sup>

In the course of the war the civilian political groups got progressively marginalized. The high water-mark of their 'influence' was the period from August 1990 until 1993, when IGNU formed the official, yet phantom, transitional government of Liberia. However, this influence depended on the presence of ECOMOG while, paradoxically, ECOMOG's intervention also helped to diminish it. Internal divisions among civilian-political groups further weakened their impact. IGNU, in particular, was ridiculed as a puppet of ECOWAS. Some argue that it lacked a basis of local support, while it was ignored and boycotted by the

---

56) The latter standing for National Patriotic Party.



armed factions. It did not, at any rate, represent a decisive actor in the conflict and failed to abate the fighting.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps even more important was the failure of the civilian political groups to stop the progressive militarization of the cabinet, the administration and the capital. Thus the Akosombo agreement of 1994 amounted to an open accommodation of factional interests. One of the less serious results of this was that IGNU lost one of its two members on the Council of State as well as the Presidency. The final Abuja accord allowed the factions to enter Monrovia with their militias intact. In the settlement of the conflict the civilians therefore got by and large side-tracked.

At first ECOMOG was too weak to take on the NPFL on its own. As mentioned in the previous section, it needed and accepted help from rival factions to gain a foothold in Monrovia. It was only after the death of Doe that it adopted a forceful posture by pushing the NPFL to the eastern outskirts of the capital (September 1990). After that, its military influence remained limited to keeping the peace in Monrovia. In 1991-1992 ECOMOG's military significance increased somewhat when it began to aid ULIMO in its struggle against Taylor's men. After October 1992, in response to Taylor's attempt to recapture the capital, it embarked on a violent campaign of enforcement action, bombing the NPFL out of Monrovia and the port of Buchanan. ECOMOG increased its parameter to a 45 mile radius around the capital and took control of several towns, the international airport and an important rubber plantation.

However, as a fighting force it never really expanded its hold beyond this area. This did not change with the expansion of ECOMOG, whose force totals fluctuated between 4,000 and 15,000 men. In fact ECOMOG was at times humiliated by Liberian factions which attacked, robbed or killed members of its contingents. For example, in the autumn of 1990 INPFL militias captured a Nigerian platoon and released it in exchange for two 105 mm howitzers; in 1992 Senegalese troops were killed in a clash with the NPFL, while later on some 500 Nigerians were held hostage by Taylor's forces for several days;<sup>58</sup> and in December 1995 the Nigerian contingent tried to disarm fighters of ULIMO-J which responded by staging an onslaught on the intervention force, kidnapping and wounding ECOMOG personnel, seizing military hardware and killing dozens of men – some say one hundred.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, while ECOMOG managed to keep some degree of peace and normality in the capital, it twice failed dismally to protect the civilian population against the marauding gangs of factional militias, namely in October 1992 and

---

57) C.E. Adibe, 'The Liberian conflict and the ECOWAS-UN partnership', in *Third World Quarterly*, 1997, p. 477 and van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', pp. 36 and 73-74.

58) Several of these men were stripped from their uniforms, arms and personal belongings. Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', p. 39.

59) *Ibid.*, p. 40.

April 1996. During the latter incident it did not simply stay out of the conflict but connived by allowing thousands of NPFL men into the capital and providing factions with heavy weapons. It did nothing to protect civilians or stop large-scale looting.<sup>60</sup> By 1996 ECOMOG itself had lost over 700 men, 600 of whom were Nigerian.

---

60) See 'Liberia: Out of Control', in *Africa Confidential*, 10/5/96.

### 3 Interventions in the Conflict: Some International and West African Aspects

---

#### 3.1 Interventions in the Civil War by Other External Actors

##### *The United States*

In essence the Liberian civil war was about marginalization – not only of Liberians themselves but also in terms of third parties willing to mediate a proper settlement. Thus the former colonial power, the United States, declined to intervene in 1990 beyond the evacuation of US nationals.<sup>1</sup> With the end of the Cold War Liberia had lost its former strategic significance in the eyes of the Americans. Moreover, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait took place more or less at the same time as the first high watermark in the Liberian conflict (August 1990), thus focusing Western attention firmly on the Middle East. This lack of external interest gave ample opportunity to the West African opponents of Taylor to intervene, with their own specific objectives, in the Liberian conflict. The Nigerians received, in fact, the encouragement of the United States to deploy ECOMOG. Beyond this, American concern with Liberia was limited, first to mediatory activities of former President Carter and then to financial-material support to ECOMOG and, in a later phase of the conflict, diplomatic activities to facilitate Nigeria's efforts to reach a settlement based on a rapprochement with the NPFL. Apart from this, the US channelled large quantities of emergency aid to Liberia through NGOs and the UN.

Thus in 1991 the 'International Negotiation Network' (INN) of Jimmy Carter got involved in the negotiations taking place in the framework of the Yamoussoukro process, in which the Ivorians tried to hammer out a deal more acceptable to Charles Taylor. The INN founded a 'Carter Center' in Monrovia to give logistical support for the elections that were originally foreseen to take place at a much earlier date, while it also helped Liberian civilian groups to organize conflict resolution seminars to be attended by members of the armed factions. The Carter Center also disbursed money for small peace projects, involving some forty

---

1) It also evacuated Western citizens in 1992 and 1996.

grants between 1993 and 1996. The former US president was himself active in facilitating negotiations between the NPFL and IGNU. Carter openly criticized the lack of neutrality on the part of ECOMOG,<sup>2</sup> a sentiment which was shared by the US Assistant Secretary of State, Herman Cohen. After the Yamoussoukro process had collapsed, in part because of duplicity on the part of ECOMOG, Ivory Coast as well as Taylor, Carter collaborated with the Ghanaian government to realize the Akosombo agreement.<sup>3</sup>

Most if not all of the INN's activities could be considered as direct conflict-related interventions as outlined in section 1.2, namely interventions aimed at affecting course, scope and intensity of the hostilities. Probably none of them, however, had much if any effect on the violence in Liberia. The Yamoussoukro process facilitated in part by Carter collapsed with Operation Octopus in October 1992, while the Ghanaians failed to stop the fighting with their Akosombo framework as worked out between September and December 1994. As mentioned previously, the violence began to scale down roughly as of 1995 – some major flare-ups excepted –, as a result of the Abuja accords brokered by the Nigerians. It is thus also difficult to estimate the effect of the INN's small peace projects launched from 1993, although the Carter Center did field forty USAID-funded election observers for the July 1997 polls that concluded the hostilities.<sup>4</sup>

The American government itself did not have any illusions about ECOMOG. This was partly caused by ECOMOG's partisan role in Liberia and partly by the strained relations with the brutal Abacha regime that came to power in Nigeria in 1993. US support to ECOMOG was thus low key. The Americans gave non-lethal assistance to the intervention force, such as communications equipment, lorries, helicopters and transport maintenance, to the value of some forty million dollars,<sup>5</sup> besides some 75 million dollars in military assistance to individual countries.<sup>6</sup> They covered, for example, a large part of the cost of the Senegalese contingent that was in Liberia in 1992-1993 to make ECOMOG more acceptable in the eyes of Taylor. The Tanzanian and Ugandan contingents that were in Liberia in 1994-1995 for the same purpose were also financed by the Americans.<sup>7</sup> However, there were at times

- 
- 2) According to François Prkic the former US president took positions very favourable to the NPFL. F. Prkic, 'Privatisation du pouvoir et guerre civile', pp. 12-13. Also on this H. Howe, 'Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping', in *International Security*, Winter 1996/97, p. 158 n. 28.
  - 3) See *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives*, issue 1, 1996, p. 94.
  - 4) Lyons, 'Peace and Elections in Liberia', pp. 185-188. USAID stands for United States Agency for International Development.
  - 5) *Ibid.*, citing a USAID report of August 1997.
  - 6) Figures before the election year 1997. Howe, 'Lessons of Liberia', p. 150 n. 11.
  - 7) Senegal's 42 million dollar debt to the USA was cancelled while it received some 15 million dollars in military equipment, in addition to one million dollars 'to support the Yamoussoukro peace process'. Ivory Coast also got one million for this, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry and Sierra Leone half a million each and Gambia \$ 250,000. R.A. Mortimer, 'Senegal's Rôle in ECOMOG: the Francophone Dimension in the

delays in deliveries of logistical equipment – probably because of American scepticism over ECOMOG's professional record –, while the US sometimes also withheld intelligence.<sup>8</sup>

The effect of US assistance on the course of hostilities seems to have been marginal, at least in the case of the support provided to the Senegalese and East African contingents which left Liberia before the crucial turning-point created by the Abuja accords. The same can be said of US (financial and political) support to some of the early conferences at which new peace accords were worked out – cease-fire agreements that came to naught. More important, therefore, was US encouragement of informal talks, in the first half of 1995, between Taylor and the Nigerian leadership. These exchanges were sponsored by Ghana and some international NGOs and culminated in a visit by Taylor to Nigeria in the summer of 1995.<sup>9</sup> As outlined in the next section, this visit marked the beginning of a crucial rapprochement between the NPFL and Nigeria, that was to lead to an end to ECOMOG intervention and a definitive settlement. While thus representing an important direct conflict-related intervention on the part of the Americans, it has to be realized that the turning-point that set this process in motion depended mainly on the action of some West African leaders, rather than on external initiative.

A similar conclusion can be drawn with regard to the US initiative to set up the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL), which was supposed to mobilize support for the Abuja peace accord. The first ICGL meeting took place in the spring of 1996, thus well after the rapprochement with Taylor had begun. However, at subsequent meetings the Americans threatened with sanctions against Liberian factions following the serious incidents that took place in Monrovia in April 1996. This could be interpreted as vital support for attempts to prevent a derailment of the settlement process. Yet, at these ICGL meetings the US also expressed support for the strengthening of ECOMOG – without taking the intervention force to task for its dubious role in the April incidents and despite the fact that, privately, the Americans were so dismayed by these events that they began arming the fighters of ULIMO-J to withstand their rivals in ULIMO-K and the NPFL.<sup>10</sup>

---

Liberian Crisis', in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1996, pp. 294 and 297 and Howe, 'Lessons of Liberia', p. 150 n. 11 and p. 159.

8) Howe, 'Lessons of Liberia', p. 150 n. 11 and p. 164 n. 43. See for US policy on Liberia also A. Alao, *The Burden of Collective Goodwill: The international involvement in the Liberian Civil War* (Aldershot, 1998), ch. 7.

9) *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives*, issue 1, 1996, p. 100; S. Riley and M. Sesay, 'Liberia: After Abuja', in *Review of African Political Economy*, 1996, pp. 431-432; and M.A. Sesay, 'Politics and Society in Post-War Liberia', in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1996, p. 400.

10) Based on information from Stephen Ellis, in letter to author, 5 February 1999.

Nevertheless, when settlement of the conflict appeared imminent, the US began to provide elections assistance, partly through NGOs. USAID gave financial assistance to the 'International Foundation for Election Systems' (IFES) in order to provide technical support and observers and help establish an independent radio station – 'Star Radio'. The 'National Democratic Institute' (NDI) obtained USAID funds for civic education and the financing of hundreds of Liberian election observers.<sup>11</sup> Until that time American aid for demobilizing combatants was rather limited. USAID, as well as the 'United Nations Development Programme' (UNDP), initiated some projects in this area.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, the Americans gave emergency aid on a massive scale, through NGOs and the UN, amounting to at least 500 million dollars.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, in conclusion one can say that the United States initiated both direct and indirect forms of conflict-related interventions. The indirect ones, in the form of emergency assistance to the civilian population, represented a very substantial effort to sustain Liberians in these difficult times. As the US contribution in total aid to Liberia was by far the largest of all external donors,<sup>14</sup> it may have constituted, in fact, the most crucial Western intervention in the Liberian civil war. Without it, Liberian civilians, displaced people and refugees would probably have suffered even more. However, emergency aid and the resources of aid agencies generally were also a regular target of the warring factions, which tapped them to add to their 'income'. Emergency aid actually became a factor that was inextricably bound up with the conflict and, thus, this form of external intervention fuelled, rather than mitigated, the hostilities. This aspect will be pursued more fully in chapter 4, where the way in which emergency aid contributed to the conflict will be discussed not just against the background of Dutch aid but of external assistance generally. One final aspect of US indirect conflict-related intervention that deserves praise is the support given to Star Radio, which managed to become a valuable independent media voice – thus counter-balancing the media resources of the armed factions, especially those of the NPFL.<sup>15</sup>

While the indirect forms of intervention were by definition reactive in nature, the same has to be said of the direct interventions. The initiative was left by and large to West African actors. If the Americans intervened to try and affect the hostilities, it was on the whole in response to some (would-be) turning-point or as

---

11) The EU also contributed to civic education and elections monitoring. Lyons, 'Peace and Elections in Liberia', p. 185.

12) *Ibid.*, p. 181.

13) Figure before the election year 1997. Howe, 'Lessons of Liberia', p. 150 n. 11.

14) In terms of total ODA (Official Development Assistance), the US gave some 139 million dollars between 1990 and 1997, while the second largest donor, Germany, came to 88 million. See for these (OECD-DAC) figures annexe 5.

15) Star Radio's daily news bulletins have also been made available on the internet (via 'Africa News Online'), thus providing a valuable source of news and facts to researchers.

an additional input in efforts by others trying to effect such turning-point. Many of these additional inputs were, moreover, given to ECOMOG – contrary to US awareness of the dubious, for partisan, role played by this actor in the conflict. It does not appear that ECOMOG was sufficiently problematized in the formulation and execution of American policy; in this context US assistance could also help sustain the hostilities, as was seen, for example, in American arms deliveries to ULIMO-J in April 1996. We will come back to this more fully in the next chapter. Moreover, American assistance to ECOMOG was clearly half-hearted, and thus not crucial to the course of the conflict. Set against the background of what the United States could, theoretically, provide in terms of resources and capabilities the aid was, indeed, piecemeal and marginal. Liberia was, in the end, not a US priority.

### *The OAU and the UN*

The same conclusion can be drawn for the Organization of African Unity. In 1990 the OAU was only just beginning with the slow process of revising its official posture on intra-state conflicts.<sup>16</sup> The chairman of the OAU's Assembly of Heads of State and Government, President Museveni of Uganda, and the new Secretary-General Salim nevertheless cooperated with others in encouraging Nigeria to intervene in Liberia in the framework of ECOWAS. Salim was even a witness to the ECOWAS Peace Plan on the basis of which ECOMOG was to be deployed. Later he appointed the reverend Canaan Banana as his representative to observe the evolution of the settlement process.<sup>17</sup> The decision to dispatch East African contingents to enhance ECOMOG's acceptability in the eyes of Taylor was taken in the cadre of the OAU's Assembly meeting in Cairo in 1993.<sup>18</sup> Finally, the OAU sent representatives to act as observers at the elections of July 1997.<sup>19</sup> In other words, the organization played only a very secondary role, most of the time cooperating with, and going along with the policies of, other intervening actors.

Such a secondary, passive stand was also taken by the United Nations. In 1990 the Security Council refused to get seized with the Liberian problem, in part because of opposition from Ivory Coast and the two African Council members, Zaire and Ethiopia. In the course of the conflict it responded from time to time sceptically to the actions taken by ECOMOG but it never took an explicit line on

---

16) K. van Walraven, *Dreams of Power: The Role of the Organization of African Unity in the Politics of Africa 1963-1993* (Aldershot, 1999), ch. 8.

17) Adibe, 'The Liberian conflict and the ECOWAS-UN partnership', p. 473 and Biaya, 'Acteurs et médiations dans la résolution et la prévention des conflits en Afrique de l'Ouest', p. 33.

18) Van Walraven, *Dreams of Power*, section 8.2.

19) Biaya, 'Acteurs et médiations dans la résolution et la prévention des conflits en Afrique de l'Ouest', p. 14.

the latter's (mis)appropriation of enforcement powers.<sup>20</sup> A more active period came, however, in 1993 in the wake of the Cotonou agreement. In view of ECOMOG's inability to coerce Taylor into submission and end the conflict in Benin, as holder of the presidency of the ECOWAS Authority,<sup>21</sup> began to work for more involvement of the United Nations. The UN thus appointed Trevor Gordon-Somers as Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Liberia. As Nigeria was temporarily distracted by a domestic political crisis, the UN managed to get the Liberian parties around the negotiating table in Geneva for an agreement – 'Cotonou' – that effectively ended ECOMOG's preferential treatment of Monrovia's civilian politicians.

It also marked the establishment of the so-called 'United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia' (UNOMIL), which was to act as a watchdog for ECOMOG in order to placate Taylor. However, while more to the advantage of the NPFL and the other factional militias the agreement came, as mentioned in chapter 2, to naught for a variety of reasons. What is important to note here is that UNOMIL never developed into more than a token force of a couple of hundred men. These were unable to put an effective check on ECOMOG, on which UNOMIL was, in effect, wholly dependent. Cotonou did not conclude the hostilities and the Abuja turning-point was largely the work of West African actors. Since UNOMIL did not formulate any initiatives independent of ECOMOG,<sup>22</sup> the UN's direct form of conflict-related intervention remained reactive and secondary in nature.

A similar conclusion could be drawn for the UN's participation in the organization and observance of the 1997 elections, although its contribution here was obviously of some importance.<sup>23</sup> It was UNOMIL's job, among others, to certify together with ECOWAS whether or not the elections had been free and fair. To this purpose it had, besides its military observers, 34 civilian observers for medium-term observation located in sixteen field stations, in addition to 200 civilian observers to be deployed on polling day itself.<sup>24</sup> Before the elections took

---

20) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States' and D. Wippman, 'Enforcing the Peace: ECOWAS and the Liberian Civil War', in L. Fislér Damrosch (ed.) *Enforcing Restraint: Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts* (New York, 1993), pp. 183-187.

21) The organization's highest organ, made up of heads of state and government.

22) Adibe, 'The Liberian conflict and the ECOWAS-UN partnership', pp. 483-484.

23) See Lyons, 'Peace and Elections in Liberia', pp. 185-188. Besides this direct form of conflict intervention the UN system naturally played an important part in the distribution of emergency aid, involving different agencies such as UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and the 'World Food Programme' (WFP). See for further discussion the next chapter.

24) With 40 observers of the Carter Center, 34 of an American NGO, 'Friends of Liberia' (FOL), 54 of the EU, 15 of the OAU, 20 of an African NGO, 'Femmes Afrique Solidarité', and 500 other international observers, the observers numbered some 900. Lyons, 'Peace and Elections in Liberia', pp. 187-188.



place, UNOMIL observers were active in collecting demographic data and information on proper locations for registration of voters and polling sites. While they were supposed to help the 'Independent Elections Commission' (IECOM)<sup>25</sup>, they diverted resources to assist Liberian counties with registration and voting procedures. UNOMIL observers actively visited registration sites to check on the correct registration of voters. Their communication and transport facilities also became important resources for information and logistics, to the extent that some worried that this intensive involvement in the preparation of the elections might interfere with the requirements of impartial observation. As noted above, UNOMIL could not develop into a force independent of ECOMOG. ECOWAS insisted on leading the elections itself as Nigeria feared that the West might try and take the credit<sup>26</sup> or, possibly, that strong external participation might become an obstacle for ECOMOG's final withdrawal. This and the already strained relations between the West and the Abacha regime complicated international donor cooperation in Liberia, making the provision of assistance and technical advice rather difficult.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.2 Getting Out: ECOMOG and its Exit Strategy 1995-1997

As mentioned above, Cotonou did not stop the fighting in Liberia. If anything, it made the military situation even murkier, as it encouraged the established factions to fight each through proxies, thus reinforcing the proliferation of militias. While weakening Taylor, his NPFL nevertheless managed to survive the onslaughts on its position, thus continuing the military stalemate. Nigeria's inability to defeat the NPFL and stop the fighting allowed other West African actors to try their hand and effect a settlement – whether or not to the advantage of one or other Liberian actor. Thus, the Ivorians could intervene in the framework of Yamoussoukro and Benin could come in through Cotonou. While the latter agreement did not end the war it pointed the way to dealing with those Liberians who really mattered – the armed factions rather than the civilian political class. However, one of the reasons why Cotonou failed to settle the conflict was because it still excluded the warlords on the Council of State to participate in the prospective elections.

The failure of Cotonou allowed the Ghanaians to come in. Although Rawlings, the President of Ghana, was at least initially opposed to Taylor's violent rise to power, he did not share Nigeria's and Guinea's obsession with the leader of the NPFL. Working on the Cotonou approach he therefore hammered out a new

---

25) IECOM was made up of representatives of the factions and Liberian civilian groups besides one delegate each, but without voting power, for ECOWAS, the OAU and the UN. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

26) *Ibid.*, p. 186.

27) *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

agreement – Akosombo – which as noted in the preceding chapter amounted to a complete accommodation of factional interests. By that time, however, the Nigerians were not yet prepared to admit that they had failed in defeating Taylor. As they resented what they saw as Akosombo's political elevation of Taylor they tried to wreck the agreement, not by open confrontation with Ghana but by way of the factions under their influence. Coupled to other factors mentioned above, this managed to destroy the Ghanaian initiative.<sup>28</sup>

In 1995, however, the new Nigerian leader, Saani Abacha, was ready for a U-turn in an effort to consolidate his own precarious political position. Nigeria's leader was internationally isolated and stood condemned for his brutality and the wrecking of the country's democratic experiment. As five years of determined opposition to Taylor had not led to the latter's undoing it seemed to Abacha that the risk of getting permanently stuck in the Liberian quagmire was less acceptable than being confronted by the possible accession to power of the NPFL. Moreover, while Abacha was ostracized by the international community over the hanging of Ken Saro Wiwa, the French government held on to the closer commercial and political ties it had been developing with the Nigerians in previous years. This French-Nigerian rapport led, in turn, to a closer convergence of views between Nigeria and its two most implacable West African opponents over the Liberian issue, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso.<sup>29</sup>

Although the resultant Abuja accord of August 1995, following on a visit of Taylor to Nigeria, did not end the hostilities immediately, de-escalation of the violence began to set in, a few serious flare-ups excepted. Like Akosombo, Abuja unashamedly favoured the warlords, who were allowed to march into the capital with their militias intact. With large numbers of militia men taking up positions in Monrovia as 'armed protection' for their superiors, the capital was progressively militarized. Taylor could proceed unhindered with recruitment for his NPFL-controlled 'national police', while little progress was made on the issue of disarmament and demobilization. As noted above, Abuja marginalized ULIMO-J and put power in the Council of State mainly in the hands of Taylor, Kromah and Boley, with the first progressively strengthening his position, behaving as *de facto* government leader and usurping the powers of the Council Presidency.

In April 1996 the Nigerians even went so far as to encourage ULIMO-K and the NPFL to get at ULIMO-J – which had struck ECOMOG a painful blow in December 1995 –, allowing thousands of militia men into Monrovia, providing them with heavy weapons and staying by and large aloof when the operation degenerated into a massive looting spree. Nigeria's belated realization that an end

---

28) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', pp. 59-62.

29) *Ibid.*, p. 63.

to its intervention depended on Taylor had, in fact, led to an accommodating if not sympathetic attitude to the NPFL.<sup>30</sup>

Although the April incidents led to a toughening of the West African attitude to the warring factions, ECOMOG was unable if not unwilling<sup>31</sup> to effect the process of disarmament and demobilization across Liberia. Thus from November 1996 disarmament began rather slowly, picking up momentum in January 1997 as the deadline was extended until February. ECOMOG collected large quantities of arms, although it regularly announced, during the spring of 1997, that it had found new arms caches. Perhaps more significantly, demobilization was very limited, halting at forty per cent and failing to break command chains and the control that faction leaders exercised over their rank and file. With limited resources and planning demobilization was restricted to a twelve hour process in which fighters simply registered and turned over their gun.<sup>32</sup>

The registration of voters was marked, according to experts, by only minor problems. Despite allegations about fraud there was no evidence of large-scale irregularities with regard to this process, with most prospective voters who were rejected being turned away for being under age. It was stated that an overwhelming majority of people, totalling some 750,000, had the opportunity to register during the ten day period in which ECOMOG provided security at every registration site. However, the demographic data necessary for this process basically amounted to guesswork and refugees wishing to register were required to return to Liberia as many feared that they might otherwise become voters under factional control. In effect, this amounted to mass disfranchisement, involving thousands of people.<sup>33</sup>

The Independent Elections Commission was seriously hindered in its work by the lack of resources and the tight schedule. The Taylor dominated Council of State refused to cover IECOM salaries and the Commission, realizing that it could not meet the deadline of 30 May (polling day), began to plead for postponement. Eleven Liberian parties wanted the elections to be held in October. The UN and the United States also wished to delay the contest, although the latter did not want to press the issue.<sup>34</sup> However, the dominant NPP, Taylor's NPFL-turned-political party, opposed this and threatened to withdraw from the settlement process. ECOWAS also resisted the calls for such a postponement, indicating that it did not want a protracted transition period. In the end it agreed to defer the elections until

---

30) More cynically, however, it began delivering heavy weapons to ULIMO-J when the threat against this faction became too serious, while its contingents took part in the ensuing plunder. See also section 4.3 of this study.

31) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', p. 66 n. 142.

32) *Ibid.*, p. 67 and Lyons, 'Peace and Elections in Liberia', p. 181.

33) Lyons, 'Peace and Elections in Liberia', pp. 182 and 186.

34) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', p. 67 + n. 149.

19 July, which left little time for voters education and the training of elections officials. Campaigning was restricted to thirty days, starting on 16 June. Most observers believed that the abbreviated timetable favoured the NPP, the party with the best organization and the most resources.<sup>35</sup>

Taylor used the richness he had amassed over the years to launch a professional and modern election campaign. Leasing a helicopter in order to reach the areas cut off by the rainy season and employing land rovers, buses, motor cycles, loudspeaker trucks and the government short-wave radio station that he still controlled, the NPP leader campaigned extensively throughout the country. Voters were lured with hand-outs of food and rallies marked by music, dance, games and fashion shows. Legally stipulated limits on campaign spending were left unenforced, so much so that Taylor freely donated to hospitals and humanitarian agencies and even had the Liberian football team flown to the African Nations Cup tournament at his own expense.<sup>36</sup>

Taylor and the NPP scored resounding victories on polling day, which passed by without serious incidents. Most polling sites had multi-party observers and ECOMOG security personnel, the latter in some cases directly involved in administering voting stations and assisting illiterate voters. While this raised concerns about undue influence it was generally seen as speeding up the process rather than the outcome.<sup>37</sup> With a turn-out of 85% Taylor gained the Liberian Presidency with over 75% of the votes and his party won both houses of the legislature with comparable figures. The plebiscite was judged by IECOM and observers as having been free and fair.<sup>38</sup>

Fear was one of the main reasons why so many Liberians voted for the country's principal warlord. Taylor had made it clear that he was the only one who could end the civil war and that he would resume hostilities if he would not get his way at the polling stations. The low rate of demobilization only helped to fuel civilian concern about such a scenario. Other presidential candidates did not present credible alternatives, as they lacked Taylor's resources, were divided, or were seen to represent, in the case of his principal rival, the educated elite. Moreover, other factions had been even worse than the NPFL in their dealings with civilians, of whom many were also attracted by Taylor's populist style and social promises. Besides the massive resources that he openly mobilized for his presidential ambitions, there were also some reports of coercion. To this purpose the NPP leader had the benefit of command structures that still reached right into the community. Yet this was probably a minor aspect to Taylor's victory. Most people

---

35) Lyons, 'Peace and Elections in Liberia', pp. 183-184.

36) *Ibid.*, pp. 182 and 188-190.

37) *Ibid.*, p. 187.

38) Figures in *New African*, December 1997, pp. 10-11 (source: IECOM); *Le Bulletin de l'Ouest Africain* (publ. by Department of Information, ECOWAS Executive Secretariat, Lagos), no. 5, November 1997, p. 16; and *Jeune Afrique*, 30/7-5/8/97.

preferred a strong man to a weak coalition government and it was clear that further postponement of the elections carried the risk that the precarious transition arrangement might be blown up.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, ECOWAS did not provide Liberians with an alternative. It did nothing to block Taylor's race to the Presidency, declining to restrict his campaign spending, to effect a thorough demobilization of militias or to work on a reasonable election schedule. The presence of ECOMOG forces also did little to reassure Liberians. People had not forgotten the way in which they had helped the NPFL during the hostilities of April 1996 and how they had failed to protect civilians. With some ten thousand troops at its disposal ECOMOG's presence across the country was shallow. In fact, ECOMOG did not *want* to prevent a Taylor victory. By the spring of 1997 there were clear signs that Nigeria and Ghana would not feel uncomfortable with such an outcome.<sup>40</sup> Thus, wishing to end their Liberian involvement the elections were rushed through. The result was a thoroughly factionalized regime that stood at the helm of a militarized state and society feeding on a more or less formalized predatory economy. The ECOWAS-sponsored settlement thus amounted to a veritable exit strategy that gave rise to an unstable peace.

---

39) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', p. 68 and Lyons, 'Peace and Elections in Liberia', pp. 188-191.

40) See *Africa Confidential*, 28/3/97.

## 4 Interventions in the Conflict: The Role of the Netherlands

---

### 4.1 Introduction

The Dutch government showed an interest in the developments that unfolded in Liberia throughout the entire civil war. It also became actively involved in the various efforts of the international community to try and contribute towards a settlement and attenuate the negative effects of the conflict for the population. This constituted, superficially and *prima facie*, an implementation of Dutch foreign policy objectives as formulated in the post-Cold War era and laid down in various policy statements and speeches. Principal among these are two policy papers from 1990 and 1993<sup>1</sup> and a speech by the Minister for Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk, at the UN General Assembly in 1996.<sup>2</sup>

Central to these policy documents are the expressed objectives to contribute to freedom, democracy and human rights as a precondition for socio-economic development of Third World countries; to assist in effecting sustainable development; and to help in realizing peace and preventing or settling violent conflicts, which usually make such development impossible and destroy any previous advances made in this area.<sup>3</sup> However, the 1996 speech by the Minister for Development Cooperation added another dimension to this by emphasizing that the Netherlands should and would not wait with assisting developing countries which were engaged in violent, often intra-state, conflict. On the contrary, it was stated explicitly that war-torn countries should be provided with development aid. This assistance should, moreover, not just be limited to short-term emergency aid

- 
- 1) See *Een Wereld van Verschil* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Hague, 1990) and especially *Een Wereld in Geschied: De grenzen van de ontwikkelingssamenwerking verkend* (TK 23408: The Hague, 1993).
  - 2) See Statement by Mr. Jan Pronk, Minister for Development Co-operation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in the General Debate in the Second Committee, New York, 14 October 1996.
  - 3) *Een Wereld van Verschil* and *Een Wereld in Geschied*, *passim*.

but also help in sustaining preventive diplomacy and peace-building measures of a political nature. Such ‘peace aid’ would, among others, involve support for indigenous mechanisms to resolve conflict, for programmes reintegrating ex-combatants in society, for programmes sustaining the freedom of information, for reconciliation and for various other, related aspects. The result was that, on the level of objectives, development cooperation became firmly integrated with politics. This approach required, however, that one would be able to find the most adequate combination of conflict management, humanitarian assistance and socio-economic programmes in order to pave the way for sustainable development.<sup>4</sup>

Yet here we will not investigate Dutch foreign policy on Third World conflicts as laid down in official, general policy documents. Rather, this case-study and the Conflict Policy Research Project are based on the premise that ‘policy’ is what is actually being pursued and implemented on the ground. Based on this empirical perspective it will be possible to reconstruct what policy was executed with regard to a specific country in conflict; to identify its objectives and rationales; to assess the instruments employed; and, tentatively, to conclude on the effectiveness of instruments and policies in helping to settle the conflict.

In the case of the Liberian conflict the distinction in the Dutch Foreign Ministry between those departments active in development cooperation and those with more classical foreign policy mandates had little relevance. Firstly, it was, as shown in sections 4.2 and 4.3, the Minister for Development Cooperation, rather than the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was responsible for Dutch policy interventions on Liberia. This conformed to a tradition in Dutch politics in which it was the Minister for Development Cooperation who was responsible for foreign policy on Africa – a tradition that was ended, at least on the level of rhetoric, in 1996 when development cooperation was formally integrated with foreign affairs. Secondly, the Ministerial departments responsible for the implementation of the policy interventions on Liberia were departments with mandates in development cooperation or emergency, humanitarian and reconstruction aid, rather than the more politically oriented departments.

Nevertheless, Dutch Liberia policy involved two forms of activity, *i.e.* diplomatic or political initiatives aimed at contributing to a settlement and, secondly, the funding of projects which, it was hoped, would enhance the chances of an end to the war, attenuate the negative effects of the conflict to the population and help begin reconstruction. These two types of activity conformed by and large – though not entirely – to the two forms of conflict-related intervention identified in section 1.2: ‘direct’ conflict-related intervention, which aims at affecting course, scope and intensity of the hostilities, and ‘indirect’ conflict-related intervention, which is directed at softening the effects of a conflict. However, although the latter

---

4) Statement by Mr. Jan Pronk, Minister for Development Co-operation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

types of intervention constituted the largest claim on the Ministry's budget for development cooperation, the former type of interventions, while largely budget-free in their application, did involve some claims on the same budget in so far as they entailed, for example, financial or logistical support to the operations of ECOMOG, the organization of the July 1997 elections or the demobilization and social reintegration of factional militias.

Funding of projects in the context of indirect and direct conflict-related interventions occurred throughout the civil war. Based on the selection procedure as outlined in section 1.3 one can detect, however, an increase in LR-coded projects after the turning-point created by the first Abuja accord. Thus, while only some five relevant projects could be identified for the period preceding 1992, seven projects could be counted in that year alone. This decreased to five projects in 1993, but increased to nine each for 1994 and 1995, sixteen each for 1996 and 1997 and fourteen in 1998. Even if one realizes that the implementation and/or conclusion of several of these projects extended to, or took place in, subsequent years,<sup>5</sup> the overall picture shows an upsurge in project activity in the years following 1995.

This record would not be fundamentally altered if one would include projects involving WW- and/or RF-coded activities.<sup>6</sup> The same picture arises in terms of the total sums of money involved. Thus of the roughly 69.000.000 guilders given to LR-coded projects for Liberia between 1992 and 1998, some 4.5 million was allocated to projects for 1992, 5.7 million in 1993, over ten million in 1994 and 7.5 million in 1995. This increased to more than 10 million again in 1996, to over 16 million in 1997 and 14.5 million in 1998 – these last three years thus covering more than 41 million guilders, *i.e.* almost two-thirds of the total allocated since 1992.<sup>7</sup> The same pattern can be discerned in total net Official Development Assistance (ODA) given to Liberia between 1990 and 1997. Of the total sum involved, namely 38.4 million US dollars, over 20 million was allocated between 1995 and 1997.<sup>8</sup>

The evolution of funded projects is paralleled by the diplomatic or political initiatives undertaken to contribute towards a settlement. In fact, of the six missions undertaken by Ministerial departments to Liberia only two took place

---

5) This was the case for 2 of the 7 projects in 1992; 1 of the 5 in 1993; 5 of the 9 in 1994; 6 of 9 in 1995; 7 of 16 in 1996; 9 of 16 in 1997; and 10 of 14 in 1998. See annexe 4.

6) Taken together, 1 of such activities can be identified for 1991; 3 for 1992; 1 for 1993; none for 1994; 6 for 1995; 7 for 1996 and 1997 each; and 2 for 1998. See annexe 3.

7) The exact sums, which exclude WW- and RF-coded projects, were for 1992: 4.535.050,--; 1993: 5.741.770,--; 1994: 10.483.720,--; 1995: 7.540.535,90; 1996: 10.440.502,--; 1997: 16.353.436,--; and for 1998: 14.586.247,--. See for further details annexe 4.

8) See annexe 5.



before 1995, namely in November 1991 and October-November 1994. The others occurred in July 1995, February 1997, July 1997 and September-October 1997, thus more than half of them taking place after the signing of the first Abuja accord. The correlation with the Abuja turning-point is even more explicit in terms of the visits paid by Minister Pronk to Liberia, as all three of them took place between 1996 and 1998. Similarly, the international conferences on Liberia where a substantial part of Dutch political activity occurred all took place in the years 1996 to 1998.<sup>9</sup>

However, beyond this it becomes difficult to establish a correlation between the number of funded projects and political-diplomatic initiatives on the one hand and the levels of violence on the other. Although the conflict began to scale down after the summer of 1995, several serious flare-ups of violence occurred after that but this is not clearly matched by a decrease or increase in the number of funded projects or political initiatives. Neither can one see a link between projects and initiatives and high-water marks in the hostilities before 1995, such as in July-August 1990, the autumn of 1992 and in May 1994. The period of the most serious fighting in Liberia (1990-1994) drew, overall, very little activity in terms of projects and political initiatives.

However, it needs to be said that the genesis of projects, from the time of formulation to the period of implementation and conclusion, is usually a long drawn-out process which does not lend itself easily to swift application to respond to current developments. Moreover, the above correlations are only rough, quantitative linkages which may not say much about the attitude and responses of the Ministry to the violent events unfolding in Liberia, nor about the expediency and effectiveness of the projects and initiatives involved. For this, a qualitative assessment is needed which will be presented in the following sections.

Having said that, one final quantitative indicator could perhaps, *prima facie*, establish the importance of Dutch policy interventions in Liberia. In terms of net total ODA given to Liberia between 1990 and 1997 the Netherlands was, in fact, the third largest donor, only the United States and Germany surpassing the Dutch efforts. This position was assumed in 1993 and became particularly pronounced as of 1994.<sup>10</sup> The projects involved were funded and implemented through various channels. As the Dutch government itself did not entertain bilateral relations with Liberia in the field of development cooperation all projects represented financial contributions to, and were executed by, multilateral agencies, foreign or international NGOs, or Dutch non-governmental agencies active in development work or humanitarian or emergency assistance. Based on the list of LR-coded projects there is a clear preponderance by the Dutch NGOs in terms of the number of projects financed and executed, followed by multilateral agencies. However, in

---

9) See annexe 2.

10) During 1990 to 1992 it had to cede the third or even fourth position to Japan, Canada and Sweden. See annexe 5.

terms of total sums spent the multilateral agencies rank highest with roughly double the amount as compared to the sums spent by Dutch NGOs.<sup>11</sup> This is understandable in terms of the greater capacity of multilateral agencies to absorb funds and execute more and larger projects. It is also in line with global net ODA given to Liberia, in which multilateral sums are roughly double those spent on bilateral aid.<sup>12</sup>

The next section will discuss the various project-based interventions vis-à-vis Liberia, which is followed by a section on political and diplomatic initiatives. The reason for this sequence is that the Netherlands already undertook projects in the country – usually involving the disbursement of emergency aid – before the evolution of overall Dutch Liberia policy, the political outlines of which became more explicit only after the mid 1990s. An analysis in reverse sequence could thus to some extent be construed as anachronistic. Moreover, the sequence followed in this study is more in line with the inductive, empirical focus of the research project. This chapter is concluded with an overall assessment of both project and political interventions.

## 4.2 Project Interventions

### *Introduction*

In order to gain a first, rough idea of the nature and priorities of Dutch project interventions it may be useful to give a short overview of the LR-coded projects, which number some 75, in terms of the different categories of conflict-related activity as outlined in the guidelines of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. After that we will present, in outline, the contents and rationales of some of the most important or remarkable projects concerned. This is followed by an assessment of the degree to which these projects were conflict-related, in the direct as well as indirect sense as mentioned earlier. Finally, this section will discuss the appropriateness of the projects, in terms of the point in time of the conflict that they were undertaken, and their outcome.

The OECD guidelines mentioned above suggest different activities through which donors could contribute to peace and development in war-torn societies. The first kind of activity involves support to peace initiatives. The second category consists of the provision of humanitarian aid, which includes emergency aid, assistance to refugees, food aid and medical and health aid. The third category of assistance that could be given involves, what is called, 'peace-building' activities. This includes a broad range of activities, namely support for disarmament, demobilization, the reintegration of ex-combatants, the return and reintegration of

---

11) See annexe 4.

12) See annexe 5.

refugees and displaced people and, finally, the organization of elections. The last kind of activity amounts to assistance for the consolidation of peaceful conditions, *i.e.* support for rehabilitation and reconciliation, assistance to civil society and, finally, support for the rather generally phrased objective of human rights, good governance and democracy.<sup>13</sup>

The first category refers to political and diplomatic initiatives, which can be undertaken to try and contribute to the settlement of a conflict and to the funding of projects which may enhance these efforts. The second, third and fourth OECD categories more or less equal the triplet of aid categories as used in the Conflict Policy Research Project – emergency aid (given during hostilities), ‘humanitarian aid’ proper (given immediately after hostilities) and rehabilitation or reconstruction aid (given after the conflict has ended and aimed at helping to reconstruct society). Although this triplet is explicitly mentioned in the Ministry’s MIDAS inventory, in practice the concept of humanitarian aid is used rather broadly to cover all three categories.<sup>14</sup> The result is that, in MIDAS, the term humanitarian aid figures in almost all projects undertaken.

Nevertheless, based on the descriptions of project objectives in the MIDAS inventory, one can conclude that all three types of aid were used to try and attenuate the effects of the civil war for the Liberian population. From 1992 until 1998 more than 40 of the total projects undertaken, *i.e.* well over half, had objectives in the area of emergency aid and/or humanitarian aid proper. This involved aid in the areas of health care (somatic as well as psychological), sanitation, food aid, refugee aid in general, special educational programmes and assistance in agriculture. This type of aid reached its height in 1996 after which it began to decline, thus more or less congruent with developments on the ground. Second in line were projects aimed at supporting peace initiatives and peace-building activities, together numbering some twenty and rising in importance after 1995. These projects involved support for a mediation initiative undertaken by an international NGO, financial and logistical assistance to ECOMOG, support for disarmament and demobilization programmes, aid for the reintegration of combatants and refugees, and elections assistance. Projects aimed at rehabilitation and reconstruction numbered some fifteen and became prominent as of 1997. They involved support for different sectors of the Liberian economy and society, such as agriculture, education and health care. Reconciliation programmes, which tried to promote understanding and reconciliation between Liberian citizens, grew in importance in 1998. Some four projects could be identified in this area, in which the role of independent media received special attention.

---

13) *DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation* (DAC: Paris, 1997).

14) See also *Humanitaire hulp tussen conflict en ontwikkeling* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Hague, 1993).

*Contents and Rationales*

The arguments and considerations that led the Ministry to approve the above projects can to some extent be found in the BeMOs, reports that assess requests for financial support for a particular project and include reports on the background situation in Liberia and an assessment by officials of the Ministry. In short, they provide some insight in the rationales for Ministerial decisions to undertake these project interventions. Here we will discuss the contents and rationales of the principal programmes, with the exception of projects involving purely emergency or humanitarian aid as the rationale of these programmes was rather obvious in terms of efforts to attenuate the effects of conflict.

Project 001601 concerned a financial contribution to the UN Trust Fund for Liberia, which was established by the Security Council at the request of ECOWAS to finance the implementation of the Cotonou agreement. Part of the accord concerned the dispatch of Tanzanian and Ugandan troops to end ECOMOG's anti-Taylor posture and contribute towards a more impartial stand. The United Nations made a request to the Netherlands to contribute to the UN Fund, to which Minister Pronk responded positively. The contribution was to be used for the funding of UN observers, ECOMOG contingents and the demobilization of Liberian factions. The relevant Ministerial department – DCH – justified the project by stating that it concerned an African peace initiative that fitted well in Dutch support for UN policy, which aims at strengthening the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of peace and security. This argument ignored the fact that UNOMIL and the East African contingents were brought in precisely to compensate for some of the negative, for partisan, aspects of the regional – ECOMOG – intervention. However, DCH also considered that Minister Pronk's response to the UN had given rise to expectations about a Dutch contribution.

Another very important project in the area of Dutch support for ECOMOG concerned the provision of logistical aid to the intervention force. At the request of the United States the Dutch government decided, in 1996, to dispatch over one hundred lorries to Liberia, which should not only be used by ECOMOG but also by humanitarian agencies active in the country. This programme was to be implemented in cooperation with the US administration, the EU and an NGO. In order to justify this project the Ministerial department concerned, DCH, argued that ECOMOG could not adequately keep the peace without transport facilities. While the intervention force did, indeed, have a shortage of transport equipment, DCH also pointed out that the risks of this project were comparatively great in view of the nature of the programme and the precarious peace reigning in Liberia.<sup>15</sup>

The Dutch government was also willing to lend its support to the organization of elections as a means to end the civil war. One early project in this area

---

15) See LR 003201 to 003204.

concerned support for the Carter Center in Monrovia in its efforts to provide logistical support for the elections originally expected to take place much earlier.<sup>16</sup> However, because of the continuation of hostilities this project was launched only at a later date. Based on a later BeMo of 1994 it appears that the Carter Center requested support for its activities which were aimed at ending the war and facilitating the return or introduction of democratic structures. The Ministry's rationale involved the argument that political instability in Liberia should be ended so as to prevent a new humanitarian crisis and eliminate present obstacles to emergency aid. It also argued that this project should be supported because the conflict had negative repercussions for countries in the region to which the Netherlands provides development aid. Moreover, the Carter Center was deemed to have a good international reputation and to possess good contacts with the various belligerents. Oddly, it was stated that support to an African peace initiative was in line with some of the foreign policy documents discussed in section 4.1, even though the Carter Center represents an off-shoot of an American NGO – the INN of Jimmy Carter.<sup>17</sup>

Later in the conflict the Dutch government made a contribution of over 2 million guilders to the funding of the July 1997 elections. In this it cooperated with the EU, the 'Liberian Women Initiative' – a local NGO – and the Carter Center, and provided funds to IECOM despite fears about its financial accountability. However, it was argued that IECOM was seriously underfunded and that properly run elections were crucial to the peace process. Thus, the Netherlands provided money for the purchase of landrovers for IECOM, a voters education scheme, the establishment of IECOM offices in thirteen counties and the payment of temporary election personnel. The Dutch government also contributed 4 observers to the EU observer team, 3 to that of the UN and one to that of the Carter Center.<sup>18</sup>

With the end of hostilities in sight the Dutch government began supporting a range of activities aimed at reintegration of ex-combatants, reconciliation and the reinforcement of civil society. Thus in one project the Ministry supported the funding of small-scale development activities in rural areas by way of Liberian NGOs. The programme would enhance networking between them, strengthen Liberian NGO culture and contribute to the safety and accessibility of the hinterland. The orientation on women, who kept the economy going, proved an important consideration for DCH to approve funding.<sup>19</sup> The reinforcement of NGO culture may also be read in a project that aimed at improving and expanding the capacities of the non-governmental 'Justice and Peace Commission'. This commission wished to strengthen its community structures that were and are active in,

---

16) LR 92902.

17) This and the following are based on Weening's report, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia'.

18) LR 004601 and 004801.

19) LR 004701.

among others, the monitoring of human rights violations and the training of community leaders in human rights issues and conflict resolution skills. The excellent reputation of the Commission and its head, Kofi Woods, proved a consideration for DCH to approve the project. It also wished to support the drive for reconciliation as publicly professed by the then elected Taylor government by helping representatives of civil society keep an eye on the actual behaviour of the new administration.<sup>20</sup>

More or less in the same vein and as a follow-up to a meeting between Minister Pronk and an international NGO, the Ministry approved funding, in 1998, for training programmes in various issue areas such as education, the banking sector, conflict resolution, and democracy and governance. The target group, however, did not only consist of representatives of NGOs, but also included government officials and parliamentarians. As it had, until then, concentrated mainly on emergency and humanitarian aid, support for peace initiatives and peace-building activities, DCH considered this project as a logical step for the post-conflict phase.<sup>21</sup>

In another effort the Ministry contributed to two projects of UNDP, which encouraged cooperation between civilians and ex-combatants in reconstruction works and aimed at providing vocational training to some 4,000 former fighters over a 2 to 3 month period. DCH provided funding as it considered both UNDP projects as an important contribution to the consolidation of peace since they would help in the social reintegration of ex-combatants.<sup>22</sup>

Another project supported similar goals and was approved on the basis of the argument that the programme involved would promote the social reintegration of child soldiers.<sup>23</sup> Still another programme also promoted social reintegration of war affected children after Taylor had come to power and the hostilities had ended. This consisted of a more substantial contribution to a project of UNICEF. The Ministry considered the goals of this project as being of great importance to the

---

20) LR 005401. Unfortunately, Woods and his family were regularly threatened by members of the armed factions. In 1998 they had to leave Liberia and the Netherlands decided to invite Woods and enable him to study at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. DCH approved funding for this by arguing that, since Woods was the most prominent critic of human rights violations in Liberia, there were sufficient grounds to fear for his life. The time he would spend in The Hague would take him out of the spotlights and preserve his talents for the future. See LR 005402.

21) LR 05501.

22) LR 004401 and 004402. However, a UNDP project to open Monrovia airport did not receive funding as DCH considered that this did not directly help the objectives demobilization – disarmament – reintegration. See Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 41 n. 31.

23) LR 003001. See also LR 003002.

reconstruction of Liberia, while it was stated that the Ministry had had good experience with UNICEF.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, in the area of reintegration and reconciliation the role of media received special attention. An early example of this was a project that gave support for a media campaign promoting disarmament of factional militias and the provision of support to demobilized soldiers, mainly adolescents. As this project was approved in 1995, when the Abuja turning-point occurred, there was hope that the war would, indeed, come to an end. An important reason for the Ministry to provide funds for this project was the impression that the Liberian NGO that would execute the programme, Susukuu, had for years been working with war victims and had received a positive assessment of a Dutch NGO, SOH.<sup>25</sup>

However, supporting independent media became more explicit only later in the conflict. Such support had an obvious rationale. During the civil war factions made propaganda for their case on a large scale. There was, in particular, a need to counter Taylor's control of the government short-wave radio station by making reliable radio programmes and building a reliable news network that could transmit impartial and credible information on the security situation and peace initiatives. DCH argued that such media could help bring messages aimed at establishing peace to large numbers of people and narrow the differences among the warring factions. To this purpose it decided to contribute over a million guilders to the plan of a foreign NGO to set up a radio production studio. The fact that the NGO concerned, 'Search for Common Ground', had already gained experience in this area in previous programmes was an additional reason to approve the project.<sup>26</sup> In a later but related project DCH approved a contribution to a Swiss NGO, 'Fondation Hirondelle', to help the USAID- and IFES-funded radio station Star Radio. The Ministry argued that it was crucial to reinforce a system of social and political checks and balances in the post-conflict phase and that Star Radio was of importance to the radio production studio established under the earlier project. Star Radio was also considered to be very useful as a news source for the international community, while the Fondation Hirondelle was deemed a competent NGO that would try and diversify its income and contribute to the gradual Liberianization of the radio station.<sup>27</sup>

---

24) LR 006701.

25) LR 002601. SOH stands for Stichting Oecumenische Hulp (Foundation for Ecumenical Aid).

26) LR 004101, 004102 and 004104.

27) LR 005601.

### *Relationship to the Conflict*

In an indirect sense all projects amounted to conflict-related interventions. Firstly, one could argue that, since the Netherlands did not have a permanent relationship of development cooperation with Liberia before the outbreak of war, the ‘conflict-relatedness’ of these projects becomes rather obvious: they were all initiated *because* conflict had erupted in that country. Secondly and more in terms of their contents, most projects were aimed at affecting and attenuating the effects of the civil war for the Liberian population by alleviating and improving their living-conditions. The degree to which they were conflict-related becomes particularly explicit in those projects which focused on specific groups that originated through and in the course of the conflict, such as refugees, displaced people, people who were traumatized by the violence, ex-combatants or, more generally, groups deemed to be specially vulnerable like women and children. Most LR-coded projects mentioned one or other of these groups as the target of intervention.

For only a few projects would it be difficult to point to the conflict-related nature of the intervention. Projects involving, for example, the encouragement of small-scale development activities of NGO centres in rural areas or the introduction of new agricultural techniques would qualify more as normal development-related projects. However, even here the target groups involved were usually ex refugees or former victims and, therefore, these projects can be deemed to be conflict-related.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, not many of the projects undertaken could be considered to be conflict-related in the direct sense, *i.e.* aimed at affecting course, scope and intensity of the hostilities. Roughly ten of the over 75 LR-coded projects would qualify as such. These involved financial and logistical support to ECOMOG, elections assistance, support for a mediation initiative undertaken by an international NGO, aid for the disarmament and demobilization process and, more tentatively, support for media campaigns with the specific objective to reduce ideological differences.

Of course, projects undertaken to consolidate peace and prevent a *future* outbreak of violence, such as – but not exclusively – those aimed at reintegration of former combatants and reconciliation, could also be considered as being conflict-related in the direct sense. If these were included the number of direct conflict-related project interventions would rise to some twenty programmes. However, while it can be argued that these projects were direct conflict-related at least at the level of the Ministerial rationale, it becomes very difficult to prove that this was the case *as a matter of fact*. Not only is there the fundamental obstacle of assessing factual situations that still lie in the future, but it is also extremely hard to distinguish between the Dutch conflict-related interventions and other factors as the causes of peace. Moreover, this approach risks watering down the concept of

---

28) See, for example, LR 005901 and 004701.



direct, conflict-related intervention, the essence of which is the link to actual hostilities. We will come back to this more fully in the last part of this section and section 4.4.

### *Intervention Moments*

On the most general level one could argue that Dutch project interventions were expedient in terms of the point in time that they were undertaken, as they broadly followed the course of the conflict. Thus LR-coded projects grew in number and financial importance after the Abuja turning-point. The nature of the projects also changed around that time. After 1996 emergency and humanitarian aid began to decline to make way for other programmes. Direct conflict-related interventions also began to increase after the Abuja turning-point had been passed. Similarly, reconstruction projects became more prominent as of 1997 and programmes aimed at reintegration of former combatants and reconciliation became more significant as of 1998.

There is thus a strong logic in the development of Dutch project interventions. Nevertheless, some programmes were undertaken at the wrong moment. This could be argued for the support given to the Carter Center in Monrovia in its efforts to provide logistical support for the elections. It was decided on in 1992 but had to be postponed because of the hostilities. When the project was finally implemented in 1993-1994 it was accompanied by an awareness in the Ministry that all was not well in terms of the dynamics of the conflict.

As mentioned in the previous section flare-ups in violence were not followed by a rise or reduction in project interventions. One could thus perhaps argue that projects implemented at the time of increases in hostilities were executed at an inopportune phase in the conflict – certainly if they involved aid for reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation. Such a conclusion, however, can be rather facile, especially if one realizes the long gestation period of projects. Moreover, it is quite easy to be taken by surprise in the relatively fluid conditions of faction warfare, even if such warfare is beginning to scale down.

Yet one could argue that reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation projects undertaken before April 1996 were based on an incorrect political assessment. Thus, it was quite clear that the Abuja accords were flawed in one serious way, namely the marginalization of Roosevelt Johnson and his ULIMO-J. This made the cease-fire very fragile and formed the cause of the serious fighting in Monrovia in April 1996. Efforts at reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation before that time thus took place at an inopportune moment in the conflict. However, it would be difficult to tie this assessment to particular projects – not

only because few such projects were executed but also because fighting was mainly limited to the capital and need not have affected all projects.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, while one could question the rationale of Dutch support for ECOMOG before April 1996, such reservations are more part of the role of ECOMOG and the nature of the Abuja accord as such, rather than tied to the expediency of Dutch assistance in a temporal sense. This will be taken up more fully in section 4.4.

### *Outcomes*

For a number of reasons it is not easy to say something about the effects of Dutch project interventions on the Liberian conflict. Firstly, one would need an activities dossier as mentioned in section 1.3 for each project undertaken. The contract between the Ministry and the agency responsible for executing the project contains a clause stipulating that the latter must report, upon conclusion of the project, on its effects and outcome. However, when this case-study was being written the Ministry had received just over 40 of such dossiers on a total of nearly 75 LR-coded projects.<sup>30</sup> Secondly, while it is believed that this number may at least provide some general idea about Dutch project interventions one is still confronted with the difficult problem of causality. In trying to establish the effect of such interventions on the conflict one should distinguish between the influence, if any, of the particular intervention and other factors affecting the conflict. This is especially difficult in the case of direct conflict-related interventions, as it is easier to point to certain effects in the case of projects aimed at attenuating humanitarian conditions than with regard to multiple efforts to affect the hostilities. In both cases, however, one needs to interpret project outcomes in the context of the circumstances as they obtained in Liberia at the time.

One project in the area of ameliorating the circumstances created by the conflict aimed, as noted above, at promoting the social reintegration of child soldiers.<sup>31</sup> To this effect activities were undertaken, from January until April 1996, involving counselling of youngsters in the streets of Monrovia and special reception centres; the provision of sleeping accommodation; and the realization of commercial activities and training programmes for adolescents. Regular contact was established with some 500 youngsters; 120 were offered sleeping accommodation; 400 children were helped in day-care centres; 116 children lived in reception

---

29) For an example, however, see LR 003001 – 003002.

30) In case the executive agency does not meet its obligations the Ministerial department involved will invite the organization concerned still to do so. The project activity will be closed after a period of six months if, after repeated requests, such report is not filed. Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 48.

31) LR 003001.

centres on a permanent basis; some 60 took part in commercial activities; and more than 300 participated in programmes involving sport, vocational training and group discussions.

In April of that year all training activities were discontinued when some of the worst fighting of the entire civil war engulfed the capital. The project changed its focus and concentrated on the provision of food and security. Some 300 children were given such aid on an irregular basis while only 45 could stay in reception centres permanently. Project workers kept in touch with 100 street children. Some reception centres, the training centre and other training facilities were destroyed in the widespread looting that accompanied the fighting. The project was subsequently reorganized. Activities were decentralized and integrated in local communities so as to make them less vulnerable. Priority was given to the provision of sleeping accommodation. Reception and day-care centres were repaired and commercial and training activities resumed, although the training centre as such was not available anymore. A few hundred children thus continued to benefit of the project's objectives and facilities. The executive agency involved managed to keep in touch with several youngsters, which prevented some of them from taking up arms again.

The project's outcome could thus be considered a mild success,<sup>32</sup> notwithstanding the destruction of some of the work involved and the general remarks made in the previous part of this section on the temporal expediency of reconstruction and rehabilitation activities before April 1996. A continuation of this project into the following year showed similar results, although its outcome was marred by some criticism as to the durability of its effects. Thus, a survey undertaken at the behest of a Dutch NGO, 'Stichting Mensen in Nood',<sup>33</sup> showed that some of the children who returned to their families later ended up on the streets again. It was not clear, in general, what happened to the children after they had completed the programme as no follow-up had been planned. Finally, the executive agency was deemed guilty of financial mismanagement as project expenses exceeded the budget with one-third.<sup>34</sup>

For a considered assessment of Dutch emergency, humanitarian and reconstruction aid it would, of course, be necessary to evaluate all projects involved. However, this is impossible within the confines of this case-study, the objective of which is, moreover, not an evaluation of Dutch aid projects in Liberia as such but, rather, an analysis of Dutch foreign policy and development policy-based intervention vis-à-vis that country. Nevertheless, the above points to the fact that many such aid projects managed to help people, in particular vulnerable groups like children, to overcome some of the difficulties generated by years of fighting. It also shows, secondly, that such aid was itself vulnerable to attack, theft

---

32) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 50.

33) Standing for 'Foundation for People in Distress'.

34) See LR 003002 and Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 52.

or destruction by some of the belligerent forces in the country. Thus another project ordered, between April and August 1996, the provision of equipment to 'Médecins sans Frontières' to replace what was lost in previous rounds of fighting.<sup>35</sup>

This problem was, of course, not limited to Dutch aid alone. In the context of Liberia's war economy the resources at the disposal of aid agencies constituted a valuable addition to the income of the warring factions. It was extracted in a variety of ways, such as financial taxation, threats, theft and violence. For example, the state-like organization that Taylor's NPFL built up in the Liberian hinterland was sufficiently equipped to demand and enforce the payment of a fifteen per cent fee of the budget of each visit undertaken by aid agencies in NPFL-controlled territory, in addition to the use by the NPFL of all equipment used for that mission upon its completion. This faction also required Médecins sans Frontières to pay entry taxes for each ship landing in one of Liberia's ports, while aid convoys were subsequently forced to pay for 'security' guards but were nevertheless taxed at each of the numerous check-points the NPFL had established. The rival LPC even created an official agency to collect the taxes in its territory.<sup>36</sup>

Food aid was skimmed by stationing fighters among civilians or, more crudely, simple theft of the latter's rations. In order to help matters along factions would themselves alert aid agencies about an actual or impending crisis, in the process exaggerating numbers and circumstances involved or even deliberately starving the civilians under their control. If this was not enough to entice the agencies to give aid, agency personnel would be taken hostage or goods stolen from agency headquarters. Médecins sans Frontières, for example, was a victim of various of these practices. Even more significantly, massive robberies regularly took place just before major military operations. Vehicles and communication equipment were particularly favoured items. Thus in 1996 the NPFL even took the trouble to warn a French NGO in advance that its vehicles would be taken if military developments so required. Theft could reach such levels that, for example, during an offensive in September 1994 the aid community lost, in a matter of days, 5 million dollars worth of equipment, over seventy light vehicles, nearly thirty lorries, eighteen motorbikes, radios, computers and more than 4,000 tons of food. The International Red Cross suffered what was dubbed one of the biggest losses in its history.<sup>37</sup>

It is thus not difficult to see how emergency and humanitarian aid in general, including that of the Netherlands, helped to sustain the hostilities and therefore to some extent led to unintended and counterproductive outcomes. Yet beyond this

---

35) Over 700,000 guilders were involved in replacing equipment lost. LR 003401.

36) Prkic, 'Economy of the Liberian Conflict', pp. 17-18. See for a list of NGOs that suffered losses during the April 1996 incidents, Alao, *Burden of Collective Goodwill* (n. 8, ch. 3), p. 171.

37) Prkic, 'Economy of the Liberian Conflict', pp. 18-19.

it would be difficult to pass judgment on particular Dutch aid projects and its relationship to the course of the conflict.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, it should be realized that in the case of Liberia the phenomenon of the war economy was specially well developed, particularly in the NPFL's Taylorland. Set against the numerous resources that the warring factions managed to extract, whose value ran into the millions and millions of dollars, aid can only have been an additional, if sometimes very helpful, input in factional resources.

As shown above, projects involving direct conflict-related interventions only numbered some ten in total. For most of these activities dossiers were available. Project LR 92902 concerned the previously discussed support to the activities of the Carter Center in Monrovia. It was already concluded that this project was undertaken at the wrong moment as implementation, originally foreseen for 1992, had to be postponed until 1993-1994. The activities that were supported by this project involved, among others, the organization of a workshop on reconciliation and support for Liberian NGOs. It is difficult to see how this affected the hostilities raging in Liberia in any way. The warring factions held the key to the future of the country whilst the civilians or the civilian political class were by then becoming rapidly marginalized. Even if the Carter Center, benefiting in part of Dutch aid, contributed to a limited extent to the realization of the Cotonou agreement,<sup>39</sup> it has to be realized that this accord did not end the fighting.

Similarly, in 1994 the Dutch government gave financial support to the value of 154,000 guilders to the London-based NGO, 'International Alert' (IA), in order to assist this organization in a mediation initiative.<sup>40</sup> The relevant dossier contains a report by IA itself on the outcome of its work. It claims that the 'Special Envoy' of the organization was able to maintain the momentum in the negotiating process that was to lead to the Akosombo agreement. Thus the Envoy began a round of shuttle diplomacy in which he visited Liberia, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Uganda to find support and a venue for a summit conference where the prospective accord could be worked out. However, the summit subsequently took place in Ghana when President Rawlings assumed the Presidency of the ECOWAS Authority. Contrary to the impression created by the IA report the Akosombo agreement was very much the work of the Ghanaians. Even if IA contributed in a small way to facilitate this accord,<sup>41</sup> it has to be realized that in the context of Africa's international relations it is heads of state who dominate policy- and decision-making in almost every way. Moreover, at the time Nigeria, which

---

38) This would require analysis of each activities dossier as well as fieldwork. See for the complex role of NGOs in Liberia generally Alao, *Burden of Collective Goodwill*, ch. 6.

39) See Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 48.

40) LR 001501. The BeMo concerned was absent from the file.

41) In order to provide a correct assessment of this one would need to conduct interviews in, especially, Ghanaian policy circles.

was visited by the Envoy, was to prove an implacable opponent to the agreement and to what it saw as the political elevation of Charles Taylor. Akosombo, while openly accommodating factional interests to the point of infuriating Liberian citizens,<sup>42</sup> thus did nothing to put a definitive end to the fighting.

Perhaps more interesting was the previously mentioned project in which the Liberian NGO, Susukuu, tried to persuade fighters to hand over their arms.<sup>43</sup> In order to entice them it offered education, clothing, food and medical help, while the civilian population was encouraged to provide ex-fighters with educational material, medicine, seeds and equipment. Some 700 of them were enrolled in the 'school for guns' programme, of whom 200 were allowed to follow some vocational training and 100 received small loans to set up businesses. Subsequently Susukuu began to cooperate with ECOMOG in setting up three new disarmament centres while its fieldworkers were sent into the bush to encourage fighters to come out and disarm. In the execution of the disarmament programme the NGO decided to side with ECOMOG in the various centres. Although the project activity was originally aimed at assisting disarmed warriors, Susukuu changed its goals on its own initiative by getting involved in the disarmament process itself. The Dutch embassy in Ivory Coast criticized this but the relevant Ministerial department, DCH, was positive about this change, which it argued pointed to flexibility on the part of the NGO. It was concluded that Susukuu had delivered a substantial contribution to the disarmament process and, thus, to the return of peace and stability to Liberia.<sup>44</sup> Our own conclusion would be that this project did, indeed, contribute to an end to hostilities in the sense that it helped facilitate disarmament. This contribution was probably greatest in Susukuu's participation in the disarmament process itself, although its exact extent would have to be set against the contribution of other actors, such as ECOMOG and UNOMIL. Moreover, the importance of the overall disarmament process was reduced by the fact that the rate of demobilization did not go further than forty per cent. The aid and educational programmes offered by Susukuu only reached a few hundred fighters which, in view of the tens of thousands of militia men in the country, cannot be considered significant.

As mentioned above, the provision of logistical support to ECOMOG constituted an important part of Dutch policy. Despite some delayed delivery caused by the events of April 1996, more than one hundred lorries were sent to Liberia and neighbouring countries to be used by ECOMOG and aid agencies. More than half of them were used in the course of the July 1997 elections, while many lorries were put to use for the transport of displaced people and the return of

---

42) See van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', p. 61.

43) LR 002601.

44) See the activities dossier in *ibid.* as well as Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 50.

refugees. They were also put to use in the disarmament and demobilization assistance programmes of the European Union and for the provision of various forms of rehabilitation aid, such as the hand-out of agricultural seeds and equipment and logistical support to health care, medicine and sanitation programmes. Both Ministerial and embassy reports<sup>45</sup>, as well as documents of the European Union,<sup>46</sup> are very positive on the outcome of this project intervention.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, the media projects supporting the establishment of a radio production studio and the independent station Star Radio led to concrete results as partly foreseen in the rationales of the relevant Ministerial decisions. The production studio became operational in April 1997 and for this purpose reporters were stationed throughout the country.<sup>48</sup> Star Radio also began broadcasting and developed into a valuable source of information on Liberia. It remains difficult, however, to assess whether or not, or the extent to which, these projects contributed to the process of reconciliation.

### 4.3 Political and Diplomatic Initiatives

#### *Introduction*

Many of the above-mentioned project interventions which were conflict-related in the direct sense originated through, and represented the financial-institutional follow-up of, diplomatic and political initiatives taken in the course of missions to Liberia and participation in international conferences. These involved visits by delegations of Ministerial departments to Liberia; missions by the Minister for Development Cooperation to that country; and the latter's and his subordinates' participation in international conferences convened to discuss the civil war and its implications. These visits and meetings formed the input for the Dutch posture on the Liberian conflict and on the ways that a settlement could be effected, while at the same time constituting one of the instruments for the implementation of the resultant policy.

In this section we will outline the views on Liberia and the settlement process as represented by the attitudes of Ministerial departments and the Minister for Development Cooperation. The issue of 'conflict-relatedness' of the activities involved is not discussed separately as, by and large, these political-diplomatic initiatives amounted to conflict-related interventions in the direct sense. Their

---

45) Such as the activities dossier of LR 003204 and a memorandum of the embassy in Abidjan.

46) See Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 51.

47) LR 0032001 to 0032004.

48) LR 004101.

rationales, moments of intervention and outcomes are discussed in section 4.4 as part of the general, tentative assessment of Dutch Liberia policy.

### *Departmental Missions*

The first departmental visit to Liberia in the course of the war, by DMP, took place in November 1991 and had as objectives the monitoring of ongoing emergency aid projects in Monrovia and its environs and the identification of potential, future projects. Besides this, however, the report on the mission contained descriptions of current developments in Liberia. These narratives betrayed considerable confidence, on the part of the department, in ECOMOG, which was seen as playing a stabilizing role in the country.<sup>49</sup> This was in line with the official standpoint taken on the Liberian conflict, as expressed at the time, which held that regional conflicts should preferably be solved within regional cadres. It was concluded that ECOMOG therefore deserved support.<sup>50</sup>

A second DMP visit to Liberia took place in October-November 1994 and aimed at collecting information on the current situation in Liberia, including on refugees in neighbouring countries and on emergency aid projects of the UN, NGOs and other donors. The mission's report noted that the new Council of State enjoyed little authority and did not have any funds to pursue policies. It also concluded that the 'Armed Forces of Liberia' (AFL) began behaving more and more as just one of the factions in the conflict – a rather belated observation as this had already been the case for a long time, even before the outbreak of war in 1989-1990. More accurately,<sup>51</sup> it observed that ECOMOG was beginning to show signs of despair and that Nigeria was contemplating a reduction of its forces.<sup>52</sup>

DCH undertook a fact-finding mission to Liberia in February 1997 in order to prepare a dossier for Minister Pronk.<sup>53</sup> The resultant report formed a background paper for his participation in the Special Conference to Support the Peace Process in Liberia held in New York shortly afterwards. The DCH visit thus focused on assessing recent political developments, observing the humanitarian situation and investigating the desirability and possibilities of expanding Dutch support to the settlement process. In a report to the Minister the process of disarmament and demobilization was considered successful, although by the time

---

49) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', pp. 8-9.

50) DAM/1985-1990/00041; Liberia/Binnenlandse Politiek; deel 01; jaar 1989-1990; DDI-DAM 911.3.

51) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', p. 62.

52) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 9.

53) DMP undertook a third mission in July 1995. Its objectives were, however, mainly related to evaluating project interventions. *Ibid.*



of this judgment the demobilization rate could not have been higher than forty per cent. It was deemed crucial that ECOMOG was involved in this process and essential that its presence be continued and reinforced. Since disarmament and demobilization were considered to be a success, the report argued that programmes for reintegration of former combatants should be taken up more fully. The rate of implementation of these programmes was deemed insufficient. The mission still assumed that elections would take place in May 1997 because of the preferences of ECOWAS. As refugees would be barred from voting, DCH pleaded for large-scale support for repatriation schemes. It argued that the international conference that would follow its mission should express itself on the acceptability of elections without the participation of some forty per cent of the Liberian population. Election monitoring was reconsidered crucial while the DCH report argued that priority should be given to the reorganization of Liberia's armed forces and police.<sup>54</sup>

A second fact-finding mission by DCH took place in September-October 1997 in order to assess the situation in Liberia and the functioning of the Taylor government and to formulate policy on future support for NGOs. In its report it expressed lack of confidence in the Taylor administration in view of its limited capacity, the emphasis put by government ministers on Liberian sovereignty when dealing with NGOs and UN agencies, Taylor's foreign policy, the humanitarian situation and the refugee problem. DCH nevertheless argued that, despite the distrust of Taylor, the Liberian government should be given assistance for the consolidation of the peace process. Dutch aid should concentrate on humanitarian matters, peace and security (including support for ECOMOG), reintegration and reconciliation. In the present circumstances one should, in particular, aid NGOs active in the area of civic education, human rights and democracy.

#### *Initiatives by the Minister for Development Cooperation*

As mentioned earlier, Dutch political interest in the Liberian conflict and its potential settlement began to grow considerably after the creation of the Abuja turning-point. This paralleled broad international concern with the country, which increased only markedly as of 1996. Rising Dutch interest partly manifested itself in this growing international activity.

Thus, in April 1996 the United States called an international conference to establish the International Contact Group on Liberia, the ICGL, in which the Netherlands participated. According to the Americans the ICGL should mobilize international support for the peace initiatives developed under the auspices of ECOWAS; emphasize, to Liberians, the commitment of the international community to implementation of the Abuja accords; underline the importance of demobili-

---

54) *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

zation and reintegration of former combatants; and advise ECOWAS and the UN on the steps that could be taken to further this process. The ICGL's communiqué expressed appreciation for the work done by ECOWAS and argued that the goal of peace in Liberia could be realized by strengthening ECOMOG. Security in Monrovia should be restored and faction leaders should be encouraged to return to the process stipulated by Abuja – implicit references to the serious fighting that had taken place in the capital that month. The communiqué made it clear, however, that continued assistance, including emergency and humanitarian aid to victims, depended on the restoration of normality in Liberia. It emphasized that responsibility for the settlement process lay primarily with the faction leaders, who were asked to return goods stolen in the looting spree that accompanied the April fighting.

The Dutch government supported the contents of the communiqué and expressed appreciation for the US initiative to establish the Contact Group. It also supported the American proposal to assess ECOMOG's technical capabilities with the object of finding additional donors who would be prepared to assist the intervention force. Aid should, however, be given on a neutral basis with priority for the needs of the victims of the war.<sup>55</sup>

The meeting was one of the first occasions at which the international community issued threats, admittedly still in veiled form, to Liberia's warlords that continuation of hostilities would lead to serious (economic) consequences.<sup>56</sup> At the second meeting of the ICGL the United States launched a proposal for economic sanctions. It was thinking of a ban on exports of Liberian natural resources, such as rubber, timber, iron ore, diamonds and gold, to isolate the faction leaders. Yet other Western countries responded hesitantly. Several of them, including the Netherlands, were prepared to make it impossible for warlords to travel abroad, but only Germany, the United Kingdom, Norway and France were willing to consider a freeze on assets.

The Dutch government concentrated more on support for ECOMOG and initiated a discussion to this effect. It launched proposals for the restructuring of the intervention force, but these were rejected, while its suggestions to add military advisors to ECOMOG were ignored. The conference could only agree that extra-African intervention was unrealistic and that ECOMOG remained the only instrument to bring the crisis under control.<sup>57</sup>

Thus it appears that the Dutch government did have doubts about ECOMOG's functioning, despite the logistical and financial support that it

---

55) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 13, based on ministerial documents DMP 00221.wp5 and DAM 1423.wp5.

56) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', pp. 66 and 74-75.

57) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 13; DMP 00221.wp5 and DAM 1423.wp5.

continued to provide to the intervention force. Critical remarks to this effect were made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The government also explained to parliament that it wished that the force's mandate be defined more sharply but that it failed to obtain support for this in the ICGL. In the discussions between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and parliamentarians there also appeared to be awareness about the role of ECOMOG contingents in some of the looting that took place in April 1996. Relevant departments in the Ministry knew about this and other aspects of ECOMOG's role in the April fighting.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, in pleading for the attachment of Western military advisors to ECOMOG, the government followed suggestions it had received from its contacts in Liberia. Nevertheless, it continued to argue that deployment of contingents from the region itself was useful and that the total force should be expanded, besides an improvement in its command structures and deployment capacity.<sup>59</sup>

Two months later, in July 1996, the ICGL met in Brussels to issue a signal of support for the expansion of ECOMOG. It praised the intervention force for restoring order in Monrovia in April of that year, thus ignoring the dubious role that it had played in the incidents. The conference encouraged ECOWAS to abide by the settlement process as stipulated by the Abuja accord and expressed support for a reasonable election schedule, respect for the cease-fire, demobilization and the redemption of donor pledges. It concluded, rather vaguely, that the international community could be moved to take punitive measures if the warring factions would continue to violate human rights and refuse to cooperate with ECOWAS. It also discussed the possibilities of training and the provision of equipment and logistical support to countries that would provide additional contingents to ECOMOG. However, only the United States, Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands stated explicitly that they might support such an expanded intervention force. The Dutch government pointed to the lorries it had already made available

---

58) Among others through regular contact by phone with a businessman who was stationed in Liberia and had befriended an ECOMOG logistical officer, Col. Yaduma. Another person, who cannot be mentioned, also had conversations with Ministerial officials in which it was pointed out that ECOMOG contingents, notably those of Nigeria and Sierra Leone, were corrupt and engaged in looting and had consciously not intervened when conflict erupted. On the contrary, they had even delivered arms to ULIMO-J to withstand the NPFL and ULIMO-K. ECOMOG's role in the looting was confirmed to DMP by the US State Department. The following Ministerial memoranda were consulted: NH-400, 418, 438, 450, 481, 513, 539, 585 and 640/96.

59) DAM/ARA/01421; 1/LIBERIA/STATEN-GENERAAL; de informatieverstrekking aan de Eerste en Tweede Kamer van de Staten-Generaal t.a.v. Liberia; jaar 1996; DDI/DAM 08a08; DAM/ARA/01363; 1/LIBERIA/KAMERVragen; het opstellen van concept-antwoorden op kamervragen t.a.v. Liberia; jaar 1996; DDI/DAM 08108.

and said it was prepared to contribute financially to an expansion of ECOMOG's manpower.<sup>60</sup>

This financial pledge was reiterated during the first visit of Minister Pronk to Liberia in August-September 1996. During this visit he promised support for the return of democracy and civilian rule and expressed his willingness to give financial support for a new contingent to be included in ECOMOG from a country with which the Netherlands already entertained development relations. This assistance would come on top of the logistical support already decided on at an earlier stage. Rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, as well as humanitarian projects, would be continued. In his report the Minister concluded that an assistance programme should be started up as soon as possible.<sup>61</sup>

Pronk repeated this at the first Special Conference to Support the Peace Process in Liberia, which he co-chaired in Brussels a few months later. This meeting expressed support for ECOWAS and ECOMOG, whilst Pronk himself emphasized the regional necessity to solve the conflict. The conference discussed the cooperation between ECOWAS and the ICGL, donor assistance and the possibilities to reinforce the role of UNOMIL in the context of demobilization and disarmament. It also took a more explicit line on the consequences of non-compliance by the factions with the procedures stipulated by the Abuja accords.<sup>62</sup>

The second Special Conference took place against the background of the disarmament and demobilization process, in February 1997. As it was noted that demobilization was still very limited it was decided to fly in additional contingents from Ghana and Mali that were financed by the Netherlands. The Dutch government would also consider a financial contribution to contingents from Benin. As the demobilization programmes of the European Union were seen to be insufficient Pronk made it known that he would provide 2,5 million dollars to UNDP.<sup>63</sup> He also expressed his willingness to provide support for the organization and monitoring of the elections and led the conference to emphasize that sanctions would be held ready at hand in order to make clear to the factions that they might be applied if necessary.<sup>64</sup>

At two informal meetings of the Special Conference in New York in May the elections were discussed at greater length. The meeting took place against the background of serious disagreements between the United States and ECOWAS about the postponement of the plebiscite. The second meeting only resolved to

---

60) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 13; DMP 00221.wp5 and DAM 1423.wp5.

61) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 7.

62) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', pp. 14-15; DCH 00221.wp5; and DCH/2018/00221, DCG/Bijeenkomsten, jaar 1996; DDI-DCH.

63) See also the discussion of the two UNDP projects in the previous section.

64) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 15 and DCH 00222.wp5; DCH/2018/00222; DCG/Bijeenkomsten, jaar 1997; DDI-DCH.

express its hope that, in setting a new date, ECOWAS would take into account all the conditions for free and fair elections. There was little marked Dutch input at these meetings.<sup>65</sup>

However, a few weeks later Pronk paid a second visit to Liberia, as chairman of a mission by the European Union. This mission wanted to gain insight in the political situation that obtained in Liberia at the time and speak with the main presidential contenders about their intentions for the period after the elections. The mission also tried to investigate ways and means to support the election process and the conditions for reconstruction aid. According to Pronk such aid would depend, among others, on the policies pursued by the democratically elected government. He made it clear that EU countries would adopt a cautious attitude if the future administration would not meet certain conditions as regards good governance, sound socio-economic policies, respect for human rights and the formation of a broadly based government.<sup>66</sup>

Pronk reported on his visit to a meeting of the Special Conference in June. He stressed the importance of international coordination, discussed the issue of election monitoring and suggested the international community convene a pledging conference after the elections in order to contribute to the consolidation of peace and reconstruction. At a subsequent informal meeting of the Special Conference he remarked that, thanks to ECOMOG, security problems were now limited. After the elections, at the fourth official Special Conference in October, the Dutch government reiterated the need to prevent a 'wait and see' attitude as regards donor pledging. Capacity building was considered of great importance, notably with regard to Liberia's judiciary and police. The government also asked special attention for the debt issue. Finally, it applauded the establishment of a Liberian human rights commission but argued that non-governmental groups should get a greater role in its work.<sup>67</sup>

Pronk paid a third visit to Liberia in January 1998, when he spoke with Taylor, the force commander of ECOMOG and representatives of NGOs and UN agencies. He expressed concern about human rights violations, the lack of press freedom, intimidation by the police and security forces and the security situation generally. He also repeated the conditions for continued aid as expressed during his previous visit to the country, namely the installation of a broad and inclusive cabinet, and respect for human rights and good governance, including sound and transparent management of natural and financial resources. However, after the visit Pronk concluded that the Taylor government should be supported under

---

65) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 15 and DCH 00223.wp5; DCH/2018/00223; DCG/Bijeenkomsten, jaar 1997; DDI-DCH.

66) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', pp. 7-8.

67) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', pp. 15-16; DCH 00081.wp5; DCH 00082.wp5; DCH 00083.wp5; DCH/2019/00081-83; DCG/Bijeenkomsten, jaar 1997; DDI-DCH.

strict conditions as there was no alternative. He argued that Taylor personally did not inspire much confidence but that he might be willing, under permanent international pressure combined with external assistance, to pursue Liberia's national interest and abide by the rule of law.<sup>68</sup>

At the first donor pledging conference, held in Paris in April, Pronk, who co-chaired the meeting at the request of Liberia, repeated the political and socio-economic conditions for aid. Nevertheless, he also mentioned several arguments why the country deserved external support: among them figured the scale of destruction; the expectations of the civilian population, especially the victims; Liberia's economic potential; and the need for successful conflict resolution and consolidation of the peace – also as a positive signal to the West African region. Pronk said he hoped that the conference would express a long-term commitment for assistance to the country and suggested that a multi-donor mission be dispatched to Liberia in the autumn to investigate and monitor needs and support. The conference agreed in principle. Pronk again pointed to the debt problem and argued for a general approach to the debts of countries in post-conflict situations. At the meeting he pledged twenty million dollars to Liberia.<sup>69</sup>

An informal donor meeting did, indeed, take place in Washington in October 1998 to decide on the timing of the multi-donor mission and discuss the general situation in Liberia. The meeting was considerably affected by the serious incidents that had taken place in Monrovia the previous month. Fighting had broken out between Taylor's government forces and the militias of Roosevelt Johnson, who took refuge in the US embassy and was airlifted out of the country by the Americans. The three days of fighting led hundreds of Monroviaans to flee the capital whilst dozens of people died. Johnson and another former faction leader, Alhaji Kromah, and several others were subsequently indicted on charges of treason.<sup>70</sup>

These events led the international community to realize that political stability was still extremely limited. Consequently, the informal donor meeting decided to postpone the implementation of new aid projects. Current projects, however, would not be affected. The Dutch government said it would still make available seven million dollars for aid but channel this money through NGOs and multilateral agencies. The conference called for an independent inquiry into the September incidents and decided to postpone the multi-donor mission until after the inquiry.<sup>71</sup>

---

68) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 8.

69) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', pp. 16-17 and DCH 00107.wp5; DCH/2019/00107; DCG/Bijeenkomsten, jaar 1998; DDI-DCH.

70) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', p. 70.

71) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 17 and DCH 00486.wp5.

#### 4.4 Tentative Assessment of Policies and Interventions

As mentioned in section 4.1, the Dutch government showed an interest in the developments taking place in Liberia throughout the civil war. However, this should be qualified in one important sense. Dutch interest and activity with regard to Liberia was only continuous in so far as they involved conflict-related interventions of an indirect nature. In this area the Dutch government showed considerable initiative, both in terms of the number of projects approved to softening the effects of the war, the total sums of money involved and the stages of the conflict during which they were undertaken. Moreover, aid was provided in a variety of ways, which roughly conformed to and showed an understanding of the dynamics of the conflict. Although these project interventions did not exhibit increases or reductions in relation to high-water marks in the hostilities, by and large they followed the development of the war: emergency and/or humanitarian aid proper predominated until 1996; projects supporting peace initiatives, involving conflict-related interventions of a direct nature, became more important after 1995; and rehabilitation and reconstruction aid grew in significance from 1997 onwards.

However, one may question the rationale of projects aimed at rehabilitation and reconstruction undertaken before April 1996 as they involved an incorrect assessment of the political and military situation that obtained at the time. The marginalization of Roosevelt Johnson's ULIMO-J as ingrained in the Abuja accord seriously undermined the stability of the cease-fire. This received clear confirmation in armed clashes even before the spring of 1996, such as in the fighting between ULIMO-J and ECOMOG in December 1995. As a result there were, indeed, Dutch-funded projects which suffered damage in the fighting that engulfed the capital during the spring of the following year. Similarly, one could question the rationale of reconstruction and rehabilitation aid even for 1997, in view of the limited degree of demobilization obtaining at the time. However, one could equally argue that aid projects such as that of Susukuu helped to compensate for this by encouraging a higher degree of demobilization.

On the whole one cannot say that the choice of instruments employed in trying to attenuate the conflict was inappropriate. Most projects involved the provision of emergency and humanitarian aid. Such aid was clearly needed and, as shown above, at least managed to alleviate some of the suffering of the Liberian population. This in itself, we would argue, was sufficient justification for providing emergency assistance. The popular objection to such aid that it may help fuel rather than reduce a conflict did receive partial confirmation during the Liberian war. However, it was also pointed out that in the context of the Liberian war economy this aid constituted an additional if welcome resource for factional armies that had already secured ample resources with which to continue the hostilities. In itself the plundering of resources of aid agencies can therefore not be presented as an argument against the provision of emergency assistance, at least not in the context of the Liberian conflict. As shown further below, the limitations

of Western policy lie more in the failure to tackle the development of economies of war and to confront warlords violating human rights with punitive measures.

Several of the Dutch-funded projects put emphasis on reinforcing the position of non-governmental actors. This focus was appropriate for the period after the conclusion of hostilities and the installation of the Taylor government, as it could help in developing checks and balances vis-à-vis a new and dubious political elite. Aid projects supporting, for example, the Justice and Peace Commission and independent media thus carried a strong logic. One could question, however, the provision of aid to such groups before the end of the war as they could barely present a counterweight to those holding the key to the future – the warring factions. It is therefore difficult to see what the funding, in 1993-1994, of reconciliation workshops by the Carter Center and of the participation of NGOs in the latter's training programmes in Atlanta could have done to affect the hostilities raging in Liberia. Similarly, one should question the funding of mediation initiatives by non-governmental groups such as International Alert. Even if such groups could boast a higher degree of popular representation one should be aware of their limited significance in the harsh world of power politics. To some extent, then, one could conclude that the channels for the disbursement of certain types of aid ought to be reviewed.

Nevertheless, with the exception of the issue of sanctions (on which more below) the various instruments used in the execution of Dutch Liberia policy were by and large employed in a coherent way. This is particularly true for the period after 1995, when the government began to take political and diplomatic initiatives to contribute towards settlement. As shown in the preceding sections these were accompanied by various project interventions, such as financial and logistical support to ECOMOG, which aimed at reinforcing the effects of these diplomatic initiatives. Beyond this, however, the coherence of different instruments is more pronounced diachronically in the sense that emergency and humanitarian aid proper predominated until 1996, while projects supporting the peace initiatives rose in importance after 1995, to be followed in subsequent years by rehabilitation and reconstruction aid. By and large the government also managed to coordinate its policies and interventions with other external actors. This was especially the case with the diplomatic initiatives and attendant project interventions aimed at effecting a settlement. Here the Dutch more or less coordinated their activities with, or followed up on suggestions from, other actors such as the United States, the UN and the European Union.

This is not to say that there were no weaknesses in Dutch Liberia policy. There were, in fact, two fundamental contradictions that restricted the effectiveness and significance of Dutch attempts to contribute to the restoration of peace and stability in that country. Firstly, while being aware of the dubious aspects of ECOMOG's role in Liberia the government nevertheless went along with its leadership in the search for a settlement and the basic parameters stipulated for that process by those who controlled the intervention force. Secondly, once



settlement had been reached the government decided to continue with the provision of aid to the Taylor government even though it did not have much confidence in his administration. We will first discuss the issue of support to the Taylor regime and then analyse the problems and contradictions engendered by the acceptance of ECOMOG as the point of departure for Dutch policy on Liberia.

On several occasions both Ministerial departments and the Minister for Development Cooperation expressed their doubts about the Taylor government while at the same time concluding that aid ought to be continued. In the autumn of 1997 DCH pointed to the humanitarian situation in Liberia, the refugee problem and Taylor's foreign policy as some of the flaws of the new administration. While giving vent to its lack of confidence in the President, DCH nevertheless argued that his government should continue to receive assistance. Tellingly, the department added that aid should especially be provided to NGOs working in the field of human rights, civic awareness and democracy. The Minister himself was even more explicit in exhibiting this contradiction. On two occasions he expressed concern about the situation in Taylor-led Liberia and also stipulated clear conditions for the continuation of aid projects. However, the government continued with the disbursement of aid, through multilateral agencies and NGOs, even though it was clear that Taylor's regime did not meet the conditions of respect for human rights or abide by the standards of good governance.

In fact, developments showed quite the opposite. During his first year in office Taylor proceeded to rearm his loyalists and get his supporters into both the police and the army, in contravention of the Abuja accords. Police and other security agencies were militarized and equipped with heavy weapons. The police quickly built up a record of serious human rights violations, not only targeting common criminals, the homeless and unemployed, but also political rivals of the President. Journalists and human rights activists, including some enjoying the support of the Dutch government, were frequently harassed and forced to flee the country. Numerous murders took place, people disappeared, and others became the victim of intimidation and extortion by poorly paid police.<sup>72</sup>

Then, in September 1998, fighting broke out for a second time that year between Taylor's government forces and the militias of Roosevelt Johnson. The events of that month were too serious to ignore and, thus, the international community portrayed it as constituting the last straw. It decided to postpone new aid projects as the instability of Taylor's rule had now been exposed. Yet the dangers ingrained in his factionalized regime had been clear from the very start. In that respect one could query all aid projects implemented after July 1997 and aimed at 'consolidating the peace' and helping in the reconstruction of the country.

---

72) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', pp. 69-70.

It is thus interesting to understand the rationales behind the decision of the Dutch government to continue its aid programmes. In some cases Dutch officials justified their continued concern with the country by arguing that one should not wait until peace was established but actively work towards its realization. In this one should be prepared to take risks and not be content with a situation somewhere in between war and peace.<sup>73</sup> At a later date it was even argued, by the Minister himself, that one should assist the Taylor government because there was no alternative.<sup>74</sup>

If this was the rationale behind Dutch development aid it would mean that Dutch involvement in Liberia took place against the Minister's own better judgment and that policy was built on quicksand. As a rationale for policy these arguments were insufficient.<sup>75</sup> However, at one time both the Minister and one of his officials in DCH argued that Taylor might be persuaded to pursue more constructive policies by a combination of pressure and assistance. Warnings and rewards, according to the DCH functionary, managed to induce Taylor to make timely concessions to the international community.<sup>76</sup> Such a 'carrots and sticks' perception of international politics could, indeed, to some extent explain the contradiction in Dutch policy vis-à-vis the Taylor government, even if the optimistic assessments involved were to prove unwarranted.

More generally, to the extent that the international community, led by ECOWAS, collaborated in facilitating the execution of the latter's exit strategy and Taylor's concomitant rise to the Presidency, one could conclude that the Western world was in part responsible for the installation of the criminalized regime that reigned over Liberia's unstable peace. It is in this respect regrettable that the Dutch government did little to work for an extension of the election schedule as pleaded by Liberian parties, the UN and the United States in the spring of 1997. It could at least have provided more forceful back-up to the American position at the informal meeting of the Special Conference, which was convened in New York in May partly to discuss this issue. It is true that the transition arrangement in force in Liberia was rather precarious and that Taylor had threatened to pull out of the settlement process if the elections would be postponed much longer. Yet it could equally be argued that the NPP could have been pressed in accepting a more reasonable delay, had ECOMOG taken a tougher stand on this and been backed up by the international community. As later noted by Dutch officials themselves, Taylor proved to be susceptible to pressure on several occasions, only to give in at

---

73) DCH/2019/00080; DCG/Beleid Structureel/Bijeenkomsten, jaar 1996; DDI-DCH.

74) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 8.

75) The same could be said for the additional argument used by DCH, when approving funding for the UN Trust Fund for Liberia, that the Minister's response to the UN had given rise to expectations. See LR 001601.

76) Weening, 'Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Liberia', p. 8 and DCH/2019/00089; DCG/Bijeenkomsten, jaar 1998; DDI-DCH.

the eleventh hour. In the absence of a coordinated Western stand on this issue the international community, including the Netherlands, thus became associated with a settlement that did not involve a circumspect and balanced process leading to a properly elected peace but, rather, the repudiation of international responsibility at the cost of the presidential elevation of a predator. This conclusion is not negated by the fact that 75% of Liberian voters approved this option, as their response has to be set against the constricted nature of the choice on offer.

This brings us to the more general yet fundamental flaw in Dutch Liberia policy, namely its acceptance of ECOWAS parameters as the premise of Dutch intervention. Indeed, as mentioned earlier the Dutch government only became really active in trying to affect the hostilities once West African governments had stipulated the outlines for a settlement. The period of the most intensive fighting (1990-1994) triggered little to no political initiatives. Moreover, the steps that were taken in that period involved activities focusing on non-governmental actors as the Carter Center and International Alert, which were too weak to affect the conflict. Overall Dutch intervention concentrated on attenuating the effects of conflict rather than influencing the hostilities themselves: as noted above, of some 75 project interventions roughly ten could be considered to be conflict-related in the direct sense. Once this type of interventions began to gain importance they appeared by and large as reinforcement of objectives and priorities set by others. Dutch Liberia policy was, thus, secondary and not initiatory in character.

The explanation for the nature and contents of Dutch Liberia policy seems to lie in an incorrect assessment of the phenomenon of ECOMOG, coupled to an unwillingness to act decisively on signals disproving official analysis. It is, moreover, also related to the failure to thoroughly gauge the manifestations of Africa's post-Cold War marginalization and a refusal to act on the implications this should have for Western policy. Thus, just like in the case of the United States, the role and presence of ECOMOG in Liberia was not sufficiently problematized. This can be seen in the Dutch perception of the intervention force's objective as aimed at keeping the peace or even solving the conflict, rather than thwarting Taylor's rise to power and, when this failed, opting out at all costs. The regular use of teleological concepts such as 'peace process', 'peace-building' and 'peace initiatives' is particularly revealing here. It did nothing to make policy-makers realize that ECOMOG's specific elite and personal, thus partisan, interests were hidden behind a façade of formality as constituted by Western style mandates and resolutions.<sup>77</sup>

On the contrary, the Dutch government persisted in its official view of ECOMOG and continued to act accordingly, despite the fact that it *knew* that the conduct of the intervention force, as manifested on the ground, was not congruent

---

77) Van Walraven, 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States', pp. 77-79 and *ibid.*, 'When Conflict Masquerades as Conflict Resolution' (note 44, ch. 2).

with the classical Western perceptions on peace-keeping. Thus it was fully aware, through its contacts in Liberia and confirmations by the State Department, of the corruption that tainted the record of several contingents and of their participation in the looting spree of April 1996. It also realized that ECOMOG's conduct was far from impartial and knew of its partisan role in the fighting at several stages in the conflict. Finally, it was also abreast of the fact, at a relatively early stage, that the Nigerians and Ghanaians were not averse to Taylor's rise to the Liberian Presidency.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, it even launched proposals to reform ECOMOG but, in spite of their rejection, continued its support of the intervention force as the corner-stone of its policy.

In supporting ECOMOG and the parameters of settlement as set through ECOWAS the Dutch government by and large followed the United States. However, the fact that its reform proposals were brushed aside as unrealistic showed that other Western countries, while having similar doubts, had fewer qualms in working out the exit option. Thus, the Americans declined to press their view on the postponement of elections. Western support to the ECOWAS settlement, in the final analysis, masked an indifference to the restoration of genuine peace in Liberia. In this context the Dutch government simply took the role of ECOMOG too seriously, while its branding of the exit option as a peace settlement was, at the very least, naive.

The Western tendency to allow ECOMOG a free hand was a manifestation of the degree of marginalization to which Liberia had succumbed. This had initially led to a Western refusal to intervene when the civil war broke out and, consequently, Nigeria's decision to intervene on its own peculiar terms. Once ECOMOG was in, it did not accept and could easily preclude real interference by extra-African actors. Oddly, while Minister Pronk frequently showed to be aware of the dangers of Liberia's marginalization, for example by urging donor support for rapid post-war reconstruction, he provided unwitting justification to the country's marginalized peace – ECOMOG's exit and Taylor's victory – by defending the ECOWAS settlement as a 'regional necessity'. A consistent follow-up to the realization of Liberia's marginalization, however, should have led him to plead that other actors, such as the United Nations, take control of the settlement process. The years during which the Abuja accords were formulated (1995-1997) thus constituted a window of opportunity that Western countries let pass by.

Their objection that extra-African intervention was unrealistic in the face of West African opposition represented a facile excuse and did not tell the entire story. Pronk's defence of the ECOWAS settlement conformed, however, to one of the tenets of Dutch and other Western countries' post-Cold War policy, namely the oft heard dictum that one should strengthen the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of peace and security or, in its more banale manifestation, that 'African conflicts' required 'African solutions'. In the Liberian context this dictum

---

78) See note 58 above.

amounted to Western indifference elevated to the status of foreign policy. The civil war and the involvement of ECOMOG also underlined that African solutions are not a panacea for the continent's ills. This mirrors, conversely, the limitations of Western involvement and concomitant 'solutions' to conflicts during the Cold War era. Neither African nor Western cadres or settlements should therefore be taken as the point of departure in conflict management policy. Their utility in a particular conflict is tied up with the configuration of power and interests at stake and is thus context-dependent.

Of course, it would not have been easy, especially not for the Netherlands, to oppose West Africa's exit strategy. By coordinating policy on this point Western countries could, however, have made a bigger difference. Western attempts to smooth the transition process were half-hearted and insufficient to change the fundamentals of the settlement. In the case of the Netherlands this is the more regrettable as its government, spurred on by a flawed analysis, exhibited considerable enthusiasm to get involved by participating in international fora, visiting Liberia, mobilizing aid and pledging finance and logistics to the point that it became the country's third largest donor. Yet, in the absence of ECOMOG's problematization, Dutch Liberia policy did, in the end, not amount to more than what could irreverently be called lorry politics. The willingness to take risks as expressed by Ministerial officials as well as Pronk himself may have been courageous, but in the face of superficial analysis it should be deemed unjustified.

Moreover, the desire to end the fighting may have been commendable, but since it only manifested itself once the outlines of settlement became clear it was not unlike jumping on a bandwagon that headed towards a dubious destination. In this respect Western countries should have tackled two central features of the Liberian conflict at a much earlier stage, *i.e.* the development of the war economy and the systematic misconduct of the warring factions against the civilian population. As noted above, the combination of violence and economic exploitation had become an important characteristic of the civil war, especially in the case of Taylor's NPFL. Taylor had rapidly developed a broad range of economic activities and in the process amassed millions of dollars and built up trade linkages stretching to all corners of the world. These also benefited numerous businessmen and politicians in the West African region as well as companies from a large number of countries in the European Union, the United States and the Far East. Western responsibility and leverage were thus to be found much closer to home.<sup>79</sup>

ECOWAS itself was slow in introducing economic and military sanctions, in 1992, against the NPFL and other factions refusing to comply with the cease-fire. This self-interested hesitation, however, also affected the stance of the Security Council, which only instituted a military embargo on Liberia that excluded economic sanctions. As shown above, even by 1996, in the wake of the April

---

79) Especially Prkic, 'Economy of the Liberian Conflict'. See also Reno, 'Foreign Firms and the Financing of Charles Taylor's NPFL' (note 43, ch. 2).

battles, the international community could not bring itself to take on the warlords by getting to the heart of the matter – the sources of factional wealth and influence. US proposals to this effect received only half-hearted support.

Had supply lines been cut or affected at an early stage this could have helped in limiting the expansion of the war. It would also have provided important sources of leverage over the belligerents. Notably in the case of Charles Taylor the war economy served a longer-term, political objective – the capture of Liberia's Presidency – that could have been played out more effectively if external linkages had been put under control. Similarly, international recognition of militias shooting their way to power could have been made conditional on the absence of atrocities and gross misconduct. However, while organizations like Human Rights Watch reported on serious human rights abuses throughout the war no action was taken. Threats of the establishment of a war crimes tribunal were issued only belatedly.

Negative experiences with sanctions could not justify inaction. However difficult it might be to uphold them, their presence is crucial in more effective crisis reduction, especially if the alternative of Western military intervention is only a theoretical option. Yet sanctions would not, of course, be sufficient by themselves but would have to be applied in conjunction with other – political and military – measures. In Liberia, however, the West continued, with cynicism or conviction, to attribute a key role to ECOMOG and refused to contemplate on decisive intervention itself. In addition to the reticence on punitive measures it underlined Liberia's marginal position in world politics.

## 5 Conclusions and the Relevance for Policy and Research

.....

Did the Netherlands help in ending the war? One can answer this positively, as its financial and material assistance contributed to the process of disarmament, the organization of elections and the repatriation of refugees. In accordance with foreign policy documents it did, indeed, show an active interest in Liberia throughout the civil war. The government took several initiatives to help the stricken population, working itself up to the position of the third largest donor to Liberia, and the structure of its aid programmes showed a rough understanding of the dynamics of the conflict.

One could, of course, question the rationale of certain individual projects, as well as the non-governmental channels chosen for the odd mediation efforts taken during the hostilities. The rationale of reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes was also dubious in view of the limited political stability obtaining in Liberia after the conflict. However, while emergency aid, which constituted the larger part of Dutch aid efforts, played a part in the dynamics of war, one cannot argue that Western aid represented the key resource for the belligerents nor, at any rate, that its theft or destruction reinforced arguments against its distribution to those Liberians in need.

Beyond this Dutch efforts were of minor interest. Interventions aimed at ending the hostilities as such represented only a small part of Dutch policy. In waiting until other actors had worked out the outlines of a settlement it was secondary and not initiatory in character. Here one also finds the major flaw in Dutch Liberia policy. It failed to gauge the phenomenon of ECOMOG and the implications that the marginalization of Liberia's war and settlement should have for Western policy. Information on ECOMOG's conduct on the ground was not acted upon, not only because it did not conform to preconceived ideas but probably also because it was not *understood*. Policy towards ECOMOG and ECOWAS was based on the likeness with the externalities of Western international institutions and attendant instruments of intervention. Contrary signals were thus not integrated in the analysis of the situation. This could also in part be related to insufficient time and overall capacity to process data into systematic analysis.

Support to ECOMOG as the corner-stone of policy was legitimized by reference to the ideological tenets of the post-Cold War era. However, one must conclude that neither African nor Western cadres or settlements should be taken as the general point of departure for policy on conflict management. Their utilities and dividends depend on contexts determined by the configuration of interests, the quality of inter-state ties and the degrees of interdependence. It is these factors which should answer how conflicts should be tackled, through which institutions one could intervene and whether and how different institutions might collaborate.

Generally, however, one might conclude that successful management of African conflicts requires greater Western involvement than has been the case since the collapse of the Berlin wall. This observation is closely tied to the question of Africa's marginalization and how to respond to it. Shying away from action for fear of African accusations of interference merely reinforces this process and may unwittingly help interests that are inimical to genuine peace and development. The propagation of 'African solutions' may, moreover, reinforce Western, schizophrenic views of violent conflicts in Africa, in the process masking their linkages to interests and attendant responsibilities in the West.

This is, of course, not a plea for unwarranted Western meddling since that might, as during the Cold War, result in conflicts with significantly higher levels of intensity. Rather, Western involvement in African crisis management should, in view of the above arguments, be conditioned by a reformulation of the long-term interests underlying Western-African relations. Such reformulation should in any case involve adherence to certain minimum standards obtaining in, and establishing coherence between, different areas of interaction, such as trade policy, debt, political conditionalities and arms trade.

It should also involve better coordination among Western actors themselves, among others to prevent tensions and rivalries from hampering effective crisis management. Thus, while the Liberian conflict was, fortunately, largely free from such competition, Western action in the Great Lakes has been considerably affected by such unnecessary complications.

A reformulation of Western long-term interests in Africa should, above all, lead foreign policy circles to resume control over the conduct of foreign affairs vis-à-vis that continent. At present Western interaction with Africa is too much driven by private actors, such as multinational companies, private security agencies, humanitarian institutions and NGOs, whose actions and postures are understandably dictated by shorter-term horizons and narrower fields of competence. Both the Congo and Liberia are pertinent examples of countries where private actors exercise(d) considerable influence over the dynamics of conflict – more often than not with negative effect. Thus, there is no logic in a situation where the Dutch government resolves that it is worth taking a mediation initiative, concludes that it might stand a chance and subsequently delegates the effort to private actors that lack the required powers and competencies.



Western policy towards Africa should, naturally, involve careful coordination with African actors. However, greater Western commitment to African crisis management should be coupled to, at the African end, compliance with higher standards of political conduct – by state elites as well as aspirant warlords. This would be in keeping with the times, as witnessed in the controversial area of human rights and elite accountability in the West, and (re)integrate Africa with global developments. Moreover, while the West has, comparatively, gone to some lengths to stipulate conditions for political behaviour at the sub-state level, the conduct of African foreign affairs has continued in an arena where state elites are largely unhindered by minimum standards of comportment. The West African context of the Liberian war and the Pan-African ramifications of the present crisis in central Africa bear witness to the destructive powers of subversive modes of interaction.

In terms of research the above points to the nature and functioning of African international institutions, the implications of marginalization for conflict management, and the role of sanctions in international crisis reduction as topics that require more thorough reflection and analysis. With regard to the specific case of Liberia one may, at any rate, conclude that developments since 1997 show a positive improvement as compared to the years of outright war. However, in view of the protracting effect of intervention by ECOMOG and Western indifference, as well as the country's present level of instability,<sup>1</sup> it is a fragile peace with a bitter taste. Dutch policy did little to solidify or sweeten it.

---

1) In April and August 1999 the Taylor government was confronted by incursions of militias in the north-west of the country – probably former ULIMO-K –, who took hostages among officials of Western aid agencies and diplomats – including at one time a Dutch diplomat stationed in Ivory Coast. The events generated fresh flows of refugees. See, for example, the bulletins of the Pan-African News Agency of 22/4/99, 14/8/99 and 20/8/99 and of Star Radio of 22/4/99 and 17/8/99 (both via Africa News Online).

## Bibliography

- 
- Adeleke, A., 'The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The Ecomog Operation in Liberia', in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1995, pp. 569-593.
- Adibe, C.E., 'The Liberian conflict and the ECOWAS-UN partnership', in *Third World Quarterly*, 1997, pp. 471-488.
- Alao, A., *The Burden of Collective Goodwill: The international involvement in the Liberian Civil War* (Aldershot, 1998).
- Aning, E.K., 'Managing Regional Security in West Africa: Ecomog, Ecomog and Liberia' (Centre for Development Research Working Paper 94.2: Copenhagen, 1994).
- Biaya, T.K., 'Acteurs et médiations dans la résolution et la prévention des conflits en Afrique de l'Ouest' (*Project Conflict Prevention in West Africa*: Dakar, 1998).
- Boele van Hensbroek, P., *African Political Philosophy, 1860-1995: An Inquiry into three families of discourse* (Ph.D. thesis Un. of Groningen: Groningen, 1998).
- Brownlie, I., *Principles of Public International Law* (3rd ed.: Oxford, 1979).
- Clapham, C., *Liberia and Sierra Leone: An Essay in Comparative Politics* (Cambridge, 1976).
- Clapham, C., 'Liberia', in T.M. Shaw and J.E. Okolo (eds), *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in ECOWAS* (Basingstoke and London, 1994), ch. 5.
- Daddieh, C.K., 'Ivory Coast', in T.M. Shaw and O. Aluko (eds), *The Political Economy of African Foreign Policy* (Aldershot, 1984), pp. 122-144.
- Duton, C., 'Black Africans in Libya and Libyan Images of Black Africa', in R. Lemarchand (ed), *The Green and the Black: Qadhafi's Policies in Africa* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988), ch. 9.
- Ellis, S., 'Liberia 1989-1994: A Study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence', in *African Affairs*, 1995, pp. 165-197.
- Ellis, S., 'Liberia's Warlord Insurgency'; paper for the conference on African guerrilla movements, African Studies Centre: Leiden, 30 January 1997.
- Evans, G. and Newnham, J., *The Dictionary of World Politics: A Reference Guide to Concepts, Ideas and Institutions* (New York, 1990).

- Fleischman J. and Whitman, L., *Easy Prey: Child Soldiers in Liberia* (New York, 1994).
- Gaud, M. and Porgès, L., 'Biographies de quatorze chefs de guerre', in *Afrique Contemporaine*, 4th trimester 1996, pp. 173-198.
- Geiss, I., *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe and Africa* (London, 1974).
- Gershoni, Y., *Black Colonialism: The Americo-Liberian Scramble for the Hinterland* (Boulder and London, 1985).
- Gershoni, Y., 'From ECOWAS to ECOMOG: The Liberian Crisis and the Struggle for Political Hegemony in West Africa', in *Liberian Studies Journal*, 1993, no. 1, pp. 21-43.
- Hlophe, G.S., *Class, Ethnicity and Politics in Liberia: A Class Analysis of Power Struggles in the Tubman and Tolbert Administrations from 1944-1975* (Washington, 1979).
- Howe, H., 'Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping', in *International Security*, Winter 1996/97, pp. 145-176.
- Jean, F. and Rufin, J.C. (eds), *Economie des guerres civiles* (Paris, 1996)
- Jones, A.B., 'The Republic of Liberia', in J.F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds), *History of West Africa*, vol. 2 (London, 1978), ch. 8.
- Langley, J.A., *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900-1945: A Study in Ideology and Social Classes* (London, 1978).
- Lemarchand, R., 'On Comparing Regional Hegemons: Libya and South Africa', in R. Lemarchand (ed), *The Green and the Black: Qadhafi's Policies in Africa* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988), pp. 167-181.
- Liebenow, J.G., *Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1969).
- Lovejoy, P.E., *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge, 1983).
- Lowenkopf, M., *Politics in Liberia* (Stanford, 1976).
- Lyons, T., 'Peace and Elections in Liberia', in K. Kumar (ed), *Postconflict Elections, Democratization, and International Assistance* (Boulder and London, 1998), ch. 10.
- Mortimer, R.A., 'Senegal's Rôle in ECOMOG: the Francophone Dimension in the Liberian Crisis', in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1996, pp. 293-306.
- Otent Kufuor, K., 'The Legality of the Intervention in the Liberian Civil War by the Economic Community of West African States', in *African Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 1993, pp. 523-560.
- Prkic, F., 'The Economy of the Liberian Conflict'; paper presented at the Conference on Defence Economics and Security in Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Countries', CEAs/IDN, Lisbon, 5-6 June 1998.
- Prkic, F., 'Privatisation du pouvoir et guerre civile: l'émergence de l'Etat-phénix au Liberia dans les années 1990 (paper CEAN, Institut d'études politiques de Bordeaux, n.d.).

- Reno, W., 'Foreign Firms and the Financing of Charles Taylor's NPFL', in *Liberian Studies Journal*, 1993, no. 2, pp. 175-188.
- Richards, P., 'Sur la nouvelle violence politique en Afrique: le sectarisme séculier au Sierra Léone', in *Politique Africaine*, 70, June 1998, pp. 85-104.
- Riley, S. and Sesay, M., 'Liberia: After Abuja', in *Review of African Political Economy*, 1996, pp. 429-437.
- Sabin, J.T., *The Making of the Americo-Liberian Community: A Study of Politics and Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia* (Ph.D. thesis Columbia Un.: New York, 1974).
- Sawyer, A., 'Elements of an Institutional Approach to Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa: Keynote Address'; Conference on Nature of Conflicts and Policy of Containment of Conflicts in West Africa (CODESRIA-Clingendael conference on the causes of conflict and practices of conflict prevention in West Africa), Saly, Senegal, October 14-18, 1998.
- Sesay, M.A., 'Bringing Peace to Liberia', in *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives*, issue 1, 1996, pp. 9-26 and 75-81.
- Sesay, M.A., 'Politics and Society in Post-War Liberia', in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1996, pp. 395-420.
- St John, R.B., *Qaddafi's World Design: Libyan Foreign Policy, 1969-1987* (London and Atlantic Highlands, 1987).
- Uche, K.O., *Ebony Kinship: Americo-Liberians, Sierra Leone Creoles and the Indigenous African Populations, 1820-1900: A Comparative Analysis* (Ph.D. thesis Howard Un.: Washington, 1974), ch. VII.
- Van Walraven, K., 'The Privatization of Violence in Africa: The Role of ECOMOG in Liberia' (seminar paper African Studies Centre: Leiden, April 1998).
- Van Walraven, K., 'Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States: Lessons from the Intervention in Liberia, 1990-1997' (*Project Conflict Prevention in West Africa*: The Hague, 1999).
- Van Walraven, K., *Dreams of Power: The Role of the Organization of African Unity in the Politics of Africa 1963-1993* (Aldershot, 1999).
- Van Walraven, K., 'When Conflict Masquerades as Conflict Resolution: The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia, 1990-1997'; paper for the Brown Bag Seminar, National Defence University, Washington DC, 10 May 1999.
- Wippman, D., 'Enforcing the Peace: ECOWAS and the Liberian Civil War', in L. Fisler Damrosch (ed.) *Enforcing Restraint: Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts* (New York, 1993), ch. 4.

## Annexes

.....

## Annexe 1 – Political Dossiers

### 1. Situatie Liberia (13x),

subcategorieën:

- economie(/macro-economie) (5x):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01362 (ddi/dam/daf-08A08, 5090), (P.4);
  - \* -, (P.4);
  - \* DAM/1985-1990/00243, (p.8);
  - \* OSAF/1985-1990/06153 (ddi/daf/dam), (p.8);
  - \* DAM/ARA/00771, (p.24);
- mensenrechten (4X):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01361, (p.5);
  - \* -, (p.5);
  - \* DAM/1985-1990/00237, (p.10);
  - \* DAM/ARA/00374, (p.24);
- vluchtelingen (2x):
  - \* DAM/2002/00137, (p.7);
  - \* -, (p.7);
- politiek (1x):
  - \* OSAF/1985-1990/07086 (ddi/daf/dam), (p.9);
- onderwijs (1x):
  - \* -, (p.5).

### 2. Binnenlandse politiek (11x),

subcategorieën:

- regering (1x):
  - \* -, (p.2);
- staatshoofd(1x):
  - \* -, (p.2);
- veiligheidssituatie (2x):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01426, (p.2);
  - \* -, (p.2);
- verkiezingen (1x):
  - \* -, (p.2);
- algemeen (6x):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01427, (p.2);
  - \* -, (p.2);
  - \* DAM/1985-1990/00041, (p.10);
  - \* DAM/ARA/00368, (p.24);
  - \* DAM/ARA/00369, (p.24);
  - \* DAM/ARA/00370, (p.24);

### 3. Buitenlandse politiek (15x)

subcategorieën:

- Burkina Faso en Liberia (2x):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01121, (p.1);
  - \* DAM/ARA/00067, (p.12);
- Ghana en Liberia (1x):
  - \* -, (p.1);
- Guinee en Liberia (1x):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01288, (p.1);

- **Ivoorkust en Liberia (2x):**
  - \* -, (p.1);
  - \* DAM/ARA/01311, (p.1);
- **Liberia en Afrika (1x):**
  - \* -, (p.2);
- **Liberia en landen uit Europa (1x):**
  - \* -, (p.2);
- **Liberia en Nederland (2x):**
  - \* -, (p.2);
  - \* DAM/ARA/00372, (p.24);
- **Liberia en de VS (2x):**
  - \* DAM/ARA/01458, (p.3);
  - \* -, (p.3);
- **Sierra Leone en Liberia (1x):**
  - \* -, (p.7);
- **algemeen (2x):**
  - \* DAM/1985-1990/00235, (p.10);
  - \* DAM/ARA/00371, (p.24).

#### 4. Diplomatie (7x)

subcategorieën:

- **diplom. vertegenw. v. Lib. in Nl. (2x):**
  - \* DAM/2002/00136, (p.3);
  - \* -, (p.3);
- **diplom. vertegenw. v. Nl. in Lib. (1x):**
  - \* -, (p.4);
- **consulaire aangelegenheden (2x):**
  - \* DAM/1985-1990/00242, (p.8)
  - \* DAM/1985-1990/00243, (p.8);
- **dipl. betrekkingen (2x):**
  - \* DAM/1985-1990/00240, (p.10);
  - \* DAM/1985-1990/00238, (p.10).

#### 5. Afrikaanse actoren (4x),

subcategorieën:

- **ECOMOG (2x):**
  - \* -, (p.1);
  - \* -, (p.4);
- **ECOWAS (1x):**
  - \* -, (p.4);
- **ADB (1x):**
  - \* -, (p.1).

#### 6. Internationale actoren (37x),

subcategorieën:

- **IMF (2x):**
  - \* -, (p.5);
  - \* DMP/MZ/ARA/00310, (ddi/dmo-09C11, 4763), (p.18);
- **WB (1x):**
  - \* VN/1985-1994/10135, (ddi/dvn-05B12, 6690), (p.25);
- **EU (10x),**
  - waaronder:
    - **EPS (2x):**

- \* DAM/1985-1990/00236, (p.10);
  - \* DAM/ARA/00373, (p.24);
- EOF (1x):
  - \* OSAF/1985-1990/06152, (p.9);
- voedselhulp comite (1x):
  - \* -, (p.17);
- derde landen (1x):
  - \* -, (p.17);
- gbvb (2x):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01424, (p.4);
  - \* -, (p.4);
- Liberia en de EU (3x):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01425, (p.4);
  - \* -, (p.4);
  - \* -, (p.6);
- VN (20),
  - waaronder:
  - VR (1x):
    - \* -, (p.10);
  - avvn (4x):
    - \* VN/1985-1994/07837, (p.11);
    - \* DPV/ARA/00807, (ddi/dvn-05B12, 6690), (p.22);
    - \* DDI-DVN/2008/00016, (p.23);
    - \* -, (p.23);
  - ECOSOC (1x):
    - \* VN/1985-1994/11142, (p.11)
  - organisaties VN (1x):
    - \* DCH/2019/00453, P.14);
  - UNDP (2x):
    - \* -, (p.23);
    - \* VN/1985-1994/11040, (p.24);
  - UNICEF (1x):
    - \* -, (p.23);
  - UNIDO (1x):
    - \* VN/1985-1994/10135, (p.25);
  - VN-vredesoperaties (1x):
    - \* *DDI-DIO/2006/00342, (ddi/dvn), (p.17);*
  - VN-mensenrechten (1x):
    - \* *DDI-DIO/2007/00476, (ddi/dvn), (p.17);*
  - peacekeeping operaties algemeen (2x):
    - \* ORD: DVB/CV, (ddi/dvn), (p.22);
  - UNOMIL (1x):
    - \* ORD: DVN/PZ, (ddi/dvn), (p.23);
  - vluchtelingen hulpverlening (1x):
    - \* VN/1985-1994/08809, (p.11);
  - hulpverlening (1x):
    - \* VN/1985-1994/08741, (p.10);
  - Liberia en de VN (2x):
    - \* DAM/ARA/01044, (p.7);
    - \* -, (p.7);
- IUCT (1x):
  - \* OSAF/1985-1990/03297, (p.9);
- NGO's (2x),
  - waaronder:
  - algemeen NGO's (1x):
    - \* -, (p.14);



- Rode Kruis (1x):
  - \* VN/1985-1994/08763, (p.11);
- WFP (1x):
  - \* -, (p.23).

## 7. Bijeenkomsten (23x)

subcategorien:

- conferenties (2x):
  - \* -, (p.3);
  - \* DAF/ARA/00510, (p.3);
- conferenties/vredesproces (4x):
  - \* -, (p.3);
- bijeenkomsten (14x):
  - \* -, (p.14);
  - \* DCH/2019/00088, (p.14);
  - \* DCH/2018/00221, (p.15);
  - \* DCH/2019/00083, (p.15);
  - \* DCH/2019/00082, (p.15);
  - \* DCH/2018/00223, (p.15);
  - \* DCH/2018/00222, (p.15);
  - \* DCH/2019/00081, (p.15);
  - \* DCH/2019/00080, (p.15);
  - \* DCH/2019/00107, (p.15);
  - \* DCH/2019/00089, (p.15);
  - \* DCH/2019/00114, (p.16);
  - \* DMP/NH/2017/00402, (ddi/dch/dob), (p.19);
  - \* DMP/NH/2017/00094, (p.19);
- ICGL (3x):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01423, (p.5);
  - \* -, (p.5);
  - \* DMP/NH/2017/00221, (ddi/dch/dob), (p.19).

## 8. Bezoeken (25x):

- \* DAM/ARA/01428, (p.1);
- \* -, (p.1);
- \* DAF/ARA/00611, (p.1);
- \* -, (p.2);
- \* -, (p.2);
- \* -, (p.7);
- \* -, (p.8);
- \* OSAF/1985-1990/06154, (ddi/daf/dam-08A08), (p.9);
- \* DAM/1985-1990/00241, (p.10);
- \* DAF/2012/00249, (p.12);
- \* DAF/2014/00246, (p.12);
- \* DCH/2019/00469, (p.14);
- \* -, (p.14);
- \* -, (p.14);
- \* DCH/2018/00171, (p.14);
- \* DCH/2019/00087, (p.14);
- \* DCH/2019/00166, (p.16);
- \* DCH/2018/00105, (p.16);
- \* DCH 2018/00099, (p.16);
- \* DMP/2025/01350, (p.18);
- \* DMP/NH/2017/00102, (p.19);
- \* DMP/NH/2025/01349, (p.19);

- \* DMP/NH/2025/01329, (ddi/dmo-09C11), (p.19);
- \* DVL/BZ/OS/200200205, (p.23);
- \* DAM/ARA/00367, (p.23).

## 9. OS-activiteiten Nederland (12x)

subcategorien:

- **cultuur** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.3);
- **gezondheidszorg** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.4);
- **landbouw en regionale ontwikkeling** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.5);
- **onderwijs** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.5);
- **waterbeheersing** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.7);
- **appeals regio Afrika** (4x):
  - \* -, (p.16);
  - \* DMP/2010/00334, (ddi/dmo), (p.20);
  - \* DMP/NH/2017/00354, (ddi/dch/dob), (p.20);
  - \* DMP/NH/2017/00350, (p.20);
- **UNESCO (afgewezen projectvoorstellen)** (1x):
  - \* DDI-DIO/1998/00053, (ddi/dvn), (p.17);
- **MFP** (1x: P. 22):
  - \* DSI/2004/00083, (p.22);
- **NCDO** (1x):
  - \* DSI/2004/00008, (p.22).

## 10. Nederlandse overheid m.b.t. Liberia (5x),

subcategorien:

- **Kamervragen** (2x):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01363, (p.5);
  - \* ORD: DCH/beleid/parlement, (p.14);
- **Redevoeringen** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.6);
- **Info. aan Staten-generaal** (2x):
  - \* DAM/ARA/01421, (p.7);
  - \* -, (p.7).

## 11. Beleid Westelijk Afrika varia (4x),

subcategorien:

- **jaarplannen** (2x):
  - \* -, (p.8);
- **overzichten** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.8);
- **taskforce mbt. econ. pol. en os. in Lib. en S-L.** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.8).

## 12. Beleid Liberia varia (17x),

subcategorien:

- **hulp van derde landen** (1x):

- \* OSAF/1985-1990/06156, (ddi/daf/dam), (p.9);
- **landen/-info** (6x: P. 14, 20, 23, 22):
  - \* ORD: DCH/beleid/landen/afrika, (p.14);
  - \* ORD: DOB/beleid/landen, (p.20);
  - \* DPV/ARA/01649, (p.22);
  - \* ORD: DVL/WO/, (archief dvl/os/bz), (p.23);
  - \* DDI-DVN/2008/00166, (p.23);
  - \* ORD: DVN/PZ/-alg., (p.23);
- **jaarrapporten** (1x):
  - \* DAM/1985-1990/00239, (p.9);
- **adviezen** (2x):
  - \* DCH/2019/00458, (p.13);
  - \* ORD: DCH/beleid/adviezen, (p.13).
- **documentatie en beleid** (2x):
  - \* DGIS/CM/ARA/00005, (ddi/kabinet-04D48, 4205), (p.17);
  - \* DGIS/CM/ARA/00333, (p.17);
- **structureel, overzicht humanitaire hulp** (1x):
  - \* DMP/2025/01328, (ddi/dmo), (p.19);
- **noodhulp** (2x):
  - \* DAM/2002/00013, (p.5);
  - \* DAM/1985-1990/00040, (p.9);
- **projectvoorstellen** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.6);
- **landbouwproject** (1x):
  - \* OSAF/1985-1990/03320, (p.9).

### 13. Overig (9x),

subcategoerieen:

- **Archiefonderzoek** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.1);
- **K&O** (kind in moeilijke omst.h.) (1x: P. 21):
  - \* DPO/2017/00088, (ddi/dob-07E17 of ddi/dco-05D05 of ddi/dsi-06C41), (p.21)
- **afhandeling goederen, werken en diensten in Lib.** (1x):
  - \* DGIS/CTR/200700048, (archief fez-09B12), (p.12);
- **persartikelen** (2x):
  - \* -, (p.6);
- **verdragen met Liberia** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.7);
- **wapenembargo div. landen** (1x):
  - \* -, (p.10);
- **suppletie-aanvragen & -beoordelingen** (2x: P. 22):
  - \* DPO/2003/00278, (p.22);
  - \* DPO/2002/00194, (p.22).

### 14. Niet van toepassing (67x):

- felicitaties, e.d. (1x: P. 4);
- particulieren (5x: P. 6);
- personenverkeer (2x: P. 6);
- Antillen (5x: P. 7, 11);
- studiebeurzen/fellowship (3x: P. 9, 22, 23);
- Guinea/Sudan (2x: P. 11, 14);
- visumzaken/laisser passer (3x: P. 12, 24);
- nationaliteits-/asiel-/verblijfszaken (23x: P. 12, 13, 20, 21);
- luchtvaart (4x: P. 8, 16);

- verkeer & vervoer (3x: P. 16);
- zeescheepvaart (1x: P. 17);
- coordinatie (13x: P. 17, 18, 20);
- ambtsberichten (2x: P. 20).

## Annexe 2 - International Conferences on Liberia

Belangrijkste bijeenkomsten van de internationale gemeenschap met betrekking tot Liberia			
ICGL Bijeenkomsten	ICGL Meeting I	26 april '96, Genève	DMP00221.wp5 en DAM1423.wp5
	ICGL Meeting II	24 mei '96, New York	DMP00221.wp5 en DAM1423.wp5
	ICGL Meeting III	18 juli '96, Washington	DMP00221.wp5 en DAM1423.wp5
Special Conferences to Support the Peaceprocess in Liberia. Op ambtelijk en ministerieel niveau	Special Conference I Ministerial Meeting	21 nov.'96, Brussel	DCH00221.wp5
	Special Conference II Ministerial Meeting	20 feb.'97, New York	DCH00222.wp5
	Special Conference II Informal Meeting	6,13 mei '97, New York	DCH00223.wp5
	Special Conference III Ministerial Meeting	12 juni '97, Genève	DCH00081.wp5
	Special Conference III Informal Meeting	26 juni '97, New York	DCH00082.wp5
	Special Conference IV Ministerial Meeting	3 okt.'97, New York	DCH00083.wp5
Eerste Donorconferentie	Special Conference V Ministerial Meeting	7 april '97, Parijs	DCH00107.wp5
Informeel Donorconferentie	WB Donors' Meeting	8 okt.'98, Washington	DCH00486.wp5

### Annexe 3 - Projects in Liberia with WW and RF codes

Year	Activity no.	Duration	Name activity/ executing agency
1991	RF 90060B	Jan.-March 2001	Espace regional Cerealier/ECDPM
1992	RF 85002B	Jan.-Dec. 1992	Onchocerciasis Control Program/IBRD/WHO
	RF 90054C	Jan.-Dec. 1994	Global Coalition for Africa/GCA
	WW 034702	Sept.-March 1994	Diversification towards and restructuring of natural rubber production Africa vis-à-vis Asia CIRES/ESI
1993	RF 014302	Dec.-April 1994	African Management Service Company related to RF/87/021/ AMSCO/IFC WB
1995	RF 028105	Jan.-Dec. 1997	Beijing RFFIs, RFFI for Anglophone West Africa/ UNIFEM
	RF 038901	Jan.-Dec. 1995	Contribution to Emergency Appeal 1995 for West Africa/ ICRC
	RF 013502	April-Sept. 1999	Sustainable Agricultural Production and Market Development Project, phase 3/IFDC
	RF 038801	July-Dec. 1998	Contribution food progr. region West Africa/WFP
	WW 086901	July-Oct. 1995	Spanish Publications/ Arms to Fight Arms to Protect/PANOS
	RF 038601	Aug.-Dec. 1995	Contr. IFRC Appeal 1995 for Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone/IFRC/RCCI/ RCGN/RCLR/RCSL
Year	Activity no.	Duration	Name activity/

			<b>executing agency</b>
1996	RF 041301	Jan.-Dec. 1996	Contr. IFRC Appeal for Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone/ IFRC/RCSL
	RF 042801	April - ? 1997	Reflection meeting on leadership of African women in conflict prevention, management and resolution/SYNCA
	WW 099201	April 1996 Additional costs	Hercules 1996: medical transport AZGBe for Liberia/ Defense
	WW 099202	May 1996	Additional costs Hercules 1996: Liberia WFP food aid
	RF 045701	Oct. 1996	New contr. YMCA/SOH
	WW 099206	Oct. 1996	Additional costs Hercules 1996: WFP food aid Liberia /WFP
	WW 094717	Nov. 1996	PON 1996: research mission radio station Monrovia/SEARCHFCG
1997	RF 013503	Jan./-June 1998	Sustainable Agr. Prod. and Market Dev. Project phase 3/IFDC/ Evaluation/NEI
	WW 111401	Febr. 1997 Symposium	Freedom and Democracy/SCO
	RF 053601	Sept.-Febr. 1998	African Conflict and the Media/Conciliation Resources
	RF 053401	Sept.-Dec. 1997	Purchase 100 DAF lorries/EC
	RF 053402	Sept.-Dec. 1997	Selection, painting and transport 100 DAF lorries/EC
	RF 051302	Nov.-March 1998	African Audit Institutions: set-up & training (INTOSAI -project)/AR

<b>Year</b>	<b>Activity no.</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Name activity/ executing agency</b>
-------------	---------------------	-----------------	--

	WW 113419	Nov.-April 2001	PIN/OS-means: Building capacity in West Africa of regional network for wetland & waterbird management/WETLANDS
1998	WW 045403	Jan.-Dec. 2003	Ph.D. programme for researchers from the the South, fellowships 1998, 1999 & 2000/WOTRO
	RF 051301	Apr.-March 2001	African Audit Inst. training/AR/Div.



## Annexe 4 - Projects in Liberia with LR codes

Jaar	Act. nr.	Act. naam	Kanaal/ Beherende organisatie	Looptijd	Fase	Directie	Committ. Bedrag
1992	LR92901	Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Programme	Multilaterale organisatie: UNICEF	jan. t/m juni 1992	E	DCH/HH	2.000.000, -
	LR92902	Bijdrage aan voorbereidende activiteiten in de verkiezingen in Liberia	NGO: Carter Centre	jan. t/m maart 1992	E	DSI	68.400, -
	LR92903	Wederopbouw Japanese Friendship Maternity Centre	NGO : AZGBe	maart t/m juli 1992	E	DCH/HH	208.390, -
	LR92904	UN Operational Centres in Greater Liberia	Multilaterale organisatie: UNDP	maart t/m aug. 1992	E	DCH/HH	258.260, -
	LR92905	Agricultural inputs via UNDP in Liberia	Multilaterale organisatie: UNDP	maart t/m aug. 1992	E	DCH/HH	500.000, -
	LR92906	Noodvoedselhulpverlening n.a.v. WFP Appeal voor ontheemden	Multilaterale organisatie: WFP	dec. t/m maart 1993	E	DCH/HH	500.000, -
	LR92907	Noodhulpprogramma voor ontheemden n.a.v. WFP Appeal	Multilaterale organisatie: UNICEF	dec. t/m maart 1993	E	DCH/HH	1.000.000, -
1993	LR000601	Medische noodhulpactiviteiten AZG	NGO : AZG	april t/m aug. 1993	E	DCH/HH	472.320, -
	LR000701	Kind-CE-8/Mobilisation for and the establishment of revolving educational supplies bookstores	NGO : SoH	juli t/m juni 1994	E	DSI	110.000, -
	LR000901	Bijdrage aan het WFP-programma in Liberia	Multilaterale organisatie: WFP	okt. t/m dec. 1993	E	DCH/HH	1.659.450, -
	LR001001	Bijdrage aan ICRC Extension Appeal	NGO : ICRC	okt. t/m dec. 1993	E	DCH/HH	1.000.000, -
	LR001101	Hulp aan vluchtelingen en inheemse ontheemden	Multilaterale organisatie: UNHCR	half okt. t/m dec. 1993	E	DCH/HH	2.500.000, -
1994	LR001301	Bijdrage aan UN Interagency Appeal 1994	Multilaterale organisatie: WFP	feb. t/m dec. 1994	E	DCH/HH	2.000.000, -
	LR001302	Bijdrage aan UN Interagency Appeal 1994	Multilaterale organisatie: UNICEF	feb. t/m dec. 1994	E	DCH/HH	1.000.000, -
	LR001303	Bijdrage aan UN Interagency Appeal 1994 Health and Nutrition	Multilaterale organisatie: UNICEF	feb. t/m dec. 1994	E	DCH/HH	900.000, -

	LR001501	Steunverlening vredesinitiatief	NGO: International Alert	juli t/m dec. 1994	E	DCH/HH	154.000, -
	LR001601	Bijdrage aan UN Trustfund for Liberia	Multilaterale organisatie: VN	aug. t/m jan. 1995	U	DCH/HH	460.650, -
	LR001701	Transportpool VN NGO's	NGO: LWF	sept. t/m aug. 1995	E	DCH/HH	880.000, -
	LR001801	Bijdrage aan Emergency Appeal	Multilaterale organisatie: UNICEF	nov. t/m maart 1995	E	DCH/HH	2.000.000, -
	LR001901	Bijdrage aan Emergency programma voor Liberiaanse vluchtelingen	Multilaterale organisatie: UNHCR	nov. t/m maart 1995	E	DCH/HH	2.000.000, -
	LR002001	Noodhulpproject in de gebieden rond Monrovia	NGO: AZG	nov. t/m april 1995	E	DCH/HH	1.089.070, -
1995	LR002501	Bijdrage Emergency Appeal voor Liberia 1995	NGO: ICRC	jan t/m dec. 1995	E	DCH/HH	800.000, -
	LR002301	Voedsel- en herintegratie programma voor getraumatiseerde kinderen via YMCA	NGO: SoH	april t/m maart 1996	E	DCH/HH	241.750,89
	LR002401	Bijdrage Emergency Appeal 1995 Liberia	Multilaterale organisatie: UNICEF	april t/m dec. 1999	U	DCH/HH	1.925.000, -
	LR002002	Medische noodhulp West- en Centraal-Afrika	NGO: AZG	mei t/m okt. 1995	E	DCH/HH	1.004.226, -
	LR000702	Ae-Kind-53/Mobilisation for and the establishment of revolving educational bookstores	NGO: SoH	juni t/m maart 1997	E	DSI/SB	257.250, -
	LR002601	Voorlichtingscampagne in het kader van ontwapening en opvang van ex-strijders	NGO: SoH	juli t/m feb. 1997	E	DCH/HH	636.837,16
	LR002402	Bijdrage Emergency Appeal 1995-1996	Multilaterale organisatie: UNICEF	nov. t/m juni 1997	E	DCH/HH	1.189.320, -
	LR002801	Noodhulpprogramma in West- en Centraal-Afrika	NGO: AZG	nov. t/m juli 1997	E	DCH/HH	1.356.245, -
	LR003101	Noodhulp interventie n.a.v. gele koorts-epidemie	NGO: AZG	dec. t/m dec. 1995	E	DCH/HH	129.907, -
1996	LR002901	Bestrijding gele koorts epidemie	Multilaterale organisatie: WHO	jan. t/m maart 1997	U	DCH/HH	499.999,50
	LR003001	Opvang ex-kindsoldaten en zwerfkinderen 1996	NGO: SMN	jan. t/m dec. 1996	E	DCH/HH	367.434,35
	LR003201	Inzet trucks Liberia: inspectiewerkzaamheden	NGO: ELRA	feb. t/m april 1996	E	DCH/HH	82.815, -

LR003203	Inzet trucks Liberia; Aankoop 117 vrachtauto's	Ministerie? MINFINNL	feb. t/m april 1996	E	DCH/HH	1.930.500, -
LR003202	Inzet trucks Liberia; Transport en aankoop onderdelen	NGO: ELRA	maart t/m feb. 1997	E	DCH/HH	342.007,30
LR003301	Voedings- en recreatieprogramma in twee distructen via YMCA	NGO: SoH	april t/m juli. 1997	E	DCH/HH	268.436,27
LR003401	Hulpverlening slachtoffers Liberiaanse crisis	NGO: AZG	april t/m aug. 1996	E	DCH/HH	718.445, -
LR003501	Noodvoedselhulp slachtoffers gewelddadigheden	Multilaterale organisatie: WFP	mei 1996	U	DCH/HH	57.145,28
LR003601	Bijdrage IFRC programma voor de opvang van Liberiaanse vluchtelingen	NGO: RCNL	mei t/m juni 1996	E	DCH/HH	151.500, -
LR003701	Medisch noodhulpprogramma voor Monrovia	NGO: AZGBe	mei t/m sept. 1996	E	DCH/HH	1.184.144, -
LR003204	Tweede transport en aankoop onderdelen trucks	NGO: ELRA	aug t/m nov. 1996	E	DCH/HH	693.558,75
LR003801	Bijdrage aan 'the National Women's Commission of Liberia'	NGO: SoH	aug. t/m aug. 1997	E	DCH/CP	1.047.873,61

Jaar	Act. nr.	Act. naam	Kanaal/ Beherende organisatie	Looptijd	Fase	Directie	Committ. Bedrag
1996	LR003702	Vervolgbijdrage medisch noodhulpprogramma in Monrovia	AZGBE	sept. t/m maart 1997	E	DCH HH	2.138.090,69
	LR004001	Voedselverstrekking aan kwetsbare groepen	SMN	okt. t/m nov. 1996	E	DCH HH	163.374,17
	LR002302	Vervolgbijdrage aan YMCA	SoH	okt. t/m sept. 1997	E	DCH HH	348.620,07
	LR003901	Bijdrage t.b.v. programma ter ondersteuning van het Liberiaanse Nationale Rode Kruis	RCNL	okt. t/m maart 1998	E	DCH HH	446.559,03
1997	LR003002	Opvang ex-kindsoldaten en zwerfkinderen	SMN	jan. t/m dec. 1997	E	DCH/CP	589.794,82
	LR004101	Bijdrage voor het opzetten van een radiostudio	SEARCHF CG	jan. t/m juni 1997	E	DCH/CP	1.170.650,90
	LR004201	Bijdrage aanschaf kleding voor ontheemden in Liberia	RCNL	jan. t/m juni 1998	E	DCH/HH	972.880,08
	LR004301	Bijdrage t.b.v. een programma in de basisgezondheidszorg	AICF	jan. t/m maart 1998	E	DCH/HH	676.597,18
	LR005101	Basisgezondheidszorg-project in Ivoorkust t.b.v. o.a. Liberiaanse vluchtelingen	RCNL	jan. t/m maart 1999	U	DCH HH	1.639.230, -
	LR005201	UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Liberia 1997	UNICEF	jan. t/m dec. 1999	U	DCH HH	1.000.000, -
	LR004401	Opzet van Civil reconstruction Teams	UNDP	maart t/m mei 1997	U	DCH CP	3.753.750, -
	LR004402	Vocational Training Programma ex-strijders	UNDP	maart t/m mei 1997	U	DCH/CP	1.204.417,50
	LR004501	Bijdrage sanitatieprogramma te Monrovia	SoH	mei t/m juli 1998	E	DCH HH	229.005,05
	LR004701	Programma ter ondersteuning van plattelandsorganisaties	SoH	juni t/m aug. 1998	E	DCH/CP	152.318,80
	LR002303	Vervolgprogramma voor kansarme kinderen via YMCA 1997-1998	SoH	juli t/m sept. 1997	U	DCH CP	672.075, -
	LR004601	Vorbereiding verkiezingen	EG	juli t/m sept. 1997	U	DCH/CP	1.947.211,80
	LR004801	Verkiezingswaarneming Liberia 1997	DGIS	juli t/m aug. 1997	U	DCH/CP	152.000, -

Jaar	Act. nr.	Act. naam	Kanaal/ Beherende organisatie	Looptijd	Fase	Directie	Committ. bedrag
1997	LR005001	Aankoop en distributie keukengerei aan terugkerende vluchtelingen	NGO: RCNL	sept. t/m juni 1998	U	DCH/HH	355.116, -
	LR005301	Medisch programma SwedRelief Hospitaal te Monrovia	NGO: AZGBE	okt. t/m april 1998	U	DCH/HH	1.404.773, -
	LR005401	Bijdrage t.b.v. "Justice and Peace Commission"	NGO: SoH	dec. t/m nov. 1998	U	DCH/CP	433.618, -
1998	LR004102	Vervolgbijsdrage aan een onafhankelijke radiostudio in Liberia 1998	NGO: Search For Common Ground	jan. t/m dec. 1998	U	DCH/CP	1.035.664, -
	LR006901	Ondersteuning repatrieringsprogramma Liberiaanse vluchtelingen	Multilateraal: UNHCR	jan. t/m dec. 1998	U	DCH/HH	2.925.000, -
	LR005302	Medisch programma SwedRelief Hospitaal te Monrovia	NGO: AZGBE	maart t/m dec. 1998	U	DCH/HH	1.500.000, -
	LR006001	Weeropbouw rurale gezondheidszorg in Nimba county door ICR	NGO: Vluchteling Stichting	maart t/m dec. 1998	U	DCH/HH	210.622, -
	LR005901	Landbouwrehabilitatie Cape	NGO: WVISIONNL	mei t/m april 1999	U	DCH/HH	251.471, -
	LR005501	Ondersteuning International Foundation for Education and Self-help	NGO: IFESH	juli t/m juni 2000	U	DCH/CP	4.242.000, -
	LR005601	Bijdrage aan het radiostation "Star Radio"	NGO: Hirondelle	juli t/m jan. 1999	U	DCH/CP	223.673, -
	LR002304	Vervolgbijsdrage YMCA programma 1998-1999	NGO: SoH	sept. t/m aug. 1999	U	DCH/CP	391.638, -
	LR006601	Geïntegreerd hulpprogramma voor terugkerende vluchtelingen en interne ontheemden	NGO: RCNL	okt. t/m juli 1999	U	DCH/HH	661.399, -
	LR005402	Verblijfskosten familie Woods	NGO: SoH	dec. t/m dec. 2000	U	DCH/CP	131.455, -
	LR006201	Traumabehandeling voor schoolkinderen	NGO: WVISIONNL	dec. t/m mei 1999	U	DCH/HH	118.230, -
	LR006401	Sanitatieprogramma te Monrovia door UMCOR	NGO: SoH	dec. t/m nov. 1999	U	DCH/HH	603.845, -
	LR006701	Reïntegratieprogramma t.b.v. door de oorlog getroffen kinderen	Multilateraal: UNICEF	dec. t/m nov. 1999	U	DCH/HH	1.023.750, -
	LR004104	Vervolgbijsdrage onafhankelijke radiostudio periode 1999-2000	NGO: Search For Common Ground	dec. t/m dec. 2000	U	DCH/CP	1.267.500, -

## Annexe 5 - ODA (net) given to Liberia

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total
USA	19,0	42,0	10,0	14,0	17,0	12,0	13,0	12,0	139,0
Germany	7,3	3,3	3,6	2,3	2,3	2,6	73,0	-5,7	88,7
Netherlands	5,7	2,2	1,6	2,4	6,1	5,5	6,6	8,3	38,4
UK	1,0	1,6	0,6	1,9	2,1	1,7	7,1	4,3	20,3
Sweden	0,1	0,3	3,8	0,8	1,0	1,4	2,7	5,8	15,9
Canada	0,2	3,4	1,8	1,3	1,0	1,8	1,5	0	11,0
Switzerland	0,2	0,4	1,5	0,2	1,9	3	1,9	1,1	10,2
Norway	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,8	1,0	1,9	2,8	2,2	9,2
Japan	6,4	0,6	0,2	0,1	0	0	0	0,5	7,8
France	1,0	0,6	0,6	1,1	1,5	0,4	0,4	0,9	6,5
Spain	0,1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0,2	5,3
Finland	0,5	1,3	0,5	0,4	0,7	0,2	0,7	0,3	4,6
Belgium	0	0,1	1,2	0,1	0	0,1	1	0,6	3,1
Italy	0	0	0	1,7	0	0,1	0	0	1,8
Ireland	0,1	0,1	0	0	0,1	0,3	0,8	0,3	1,7
Austria	0	0,1	0,2	0	0,2	0,3	0,3	0,3	1,4
Denmark	0,6	0,6	0,5	-0,4	0	0	0	0,1	1,4
New Zealand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0,1	0	0,1
Australia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Portugal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total bilateral	42,4	56,8	26,2	26,7	34,9	31,3	116,9	31,2	
multilateral	69,8	101,4	92,7	98,2	29,0	92,0	94,2	64,4	