

MILITARY SQUARE PEGS IN ROUND POLITICAL HOLES: THE CASE OF SIERRA LEONE

DANIEL TETTEH OSABU-KLE
Carleton University

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE CRISIS

Sierra Leone's political problems which have degenerated into military confrontation may be explained within the larger context of its historical past through which its society became a delicate and sensitive mixture of African, European, North American, and West Indian cultures. The declaration of slavery as illegal in England in 1772 did not end the suffering of the freed slaves there. Most of the freed slaves could not find employment in England. They lived in a state of abject poverty and suffering which constituted the *Black Poor* problem of England. Granville Sharp and his supporters sought to alleviate the sufferings of the *Black Poor* by founding for them a self-governing Colony in Africa where they could live peacefully under a democratic constitution. The Sierra Leone peninsula was chosen as the venue where an initial number of about 400 of people of African descent and some few whites were settled. Between 1772 and 1800 the settlers were joined by freed slaves from Nova Scotia who fought for the British against the Americans, and freed slaves from the Maroon community of Jamaica.

When in 1807 Britain outlawed the engagement of its citizens in the slave trade and based its naval patrol in Freetown to intercept slave ships, the newly liberated Africans called *recaptives* (mainly Ashantis and Yorubas from Ghana and Nigeria respectively) swelled the Colony's population for over half a century. The *recaptives* and the settlers gradually merged to constitute the Creole society of Sierra Leone as distinguished from the original African populations of the area. Sierra Leone is therefore a synthesis of African, European, North American, and West Indian cultures (Boahen, 1987, p.8). However, its Creole sub-culture African culture is not the same as those of the indigenous populations of Sierra Leone. One effect of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 on Sierra Leone was further expansion of British rule to include a Protectorate of indirect rule chiefs and their subjects so that the Colony comprised the peninsula and the islands, and the Protectorate comprised the coast and the interior. The educational process which was largely in the hands of the Christian Missions was so much open to the Creoles that by 1880 they emerged as the most educated community in West Africa (Fyle, 1981, pp74-76). As explained later, this skewness in education was to be one of the sources of political fissure in Sierra Leone society.

POST-WAR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Signs of translation of political awareness into organized political activity in Sierra Leone began in 1940 when Milton Margai organized a council of chiefs that met every year. Encouraged by political clout of the council of chiefs, in 1946, Milton Margai, John Karefa-Smart and their supporters proceeded to form the Sierra Leone Organization Society (SOS) to represent the political interests of all Sierra Leoneans. When in 1947 the Governor, Sir Hubert Stevenson recommended changes to place political power in the hands of an official majority of the Legislative Council, fissure began to emerge within the political fabric of Sierra Leone to which the present crisis may be related. The revised structure of Sierra Leonean representation in the Legislative Council which Stevenson proposed was: ten members from the Protectorate Assembly; and four members from the Colony. The Creoles of the Colony were very much displeased with the structure because they saw in it the domination of the Colony by the chiefs of the Protectorate.

The Creoles were not diplomatic enough in airing their grievance for they came out openly and angrily that they did not want to be ruled by less advanced people interested in stealing Creole country, the Colony. Apparently, the relatively more educated Creoles considered themselves to be more advanced than the indigenous societies of the Protectorate and saw themselves as the rightful owners of the Colony and not guests of the indigenous people. Their undiplomatic reaction so angered the indigenous populations that the chiefs, the SOS, and the workers of Freetown who were mainly Timnes united to form the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) under the leadership of Milton Margai. The main party of the Creoles was the National Council of the Colony of Sierra Leone (NCSL). It is in this context that the Sierra Leonean elite may be said to have been manipulated by Stevenson into inviting upon the country an alien partisan politics which has so far served to divide Sierra Leoneans rather than unite them.

Partisan politics could have been avoided if Stevenson had followed the consensual decision-making process of African political culture in constructing his structure of representation in the Legislative Council. Because partisan politics is alien to African political culture, both sides of the political divide demonstrated lack of party organization and mobilization by being too elitist. For example, the SLPP left mobilization in the rural areas entirely in the hands of the chiefs by simply assuming that their subjects would vote according to the wishes of the chiefs. The Creole leaders of the NCSL also assumed that their fellow Creoles would vote for them simply because they were Creole. Furthermore, because in most African languages, the English words *opposition* and *enemy* mean the same thing, there is a tendency to regard the member of another political party as an enemy rather than a person with different political views. Because of this linguistic problem, partisan political competition is so often charged with violence and hatred for the member of another party that election time is virtually a time of war among political parties. For this reason, partisan politics and may be viewed as not yet culturally compatible with the Sierra Leonean environment.

The 1951 elections resulted in a clear majority for the SLPP which won 15 seats against 6 for the NCSL. The results showed that partisan politics had polarized Sierra Leonean society into Creoles on one side and the rest on the other. This was dangerous for national unity! Furthermore, the winner-take-all character of this partisan politics which was emulated holus- bolus from the west meant the exclusion of Creoles entirely from government. This kind of exclusion is not possible in the indigenous African democracy in which every section of society is represented in the council on non-partisan basis. Indeed, under the indirect rule system in which some elements of the indigenous system were preserved, the Creoles not only had a say in the running of government but held responsible positions in government despite being a minority. Under partisan politics, they were to be some small opposition in the Legislative Council where their voice mattered little. Not surprisingly, the Creole leaders of the NCSL were so unhappy with the election results that in July 1952 they requested the Colony to be seceded from Sierra Leone and be granted its own independence. As expected, their selfish request was rejected by Britain.

The SLPP also had its own problems. Its elitist posture was not conducive to effective mobilization of a strong support base. Changes in the international environment which resulted in high prices for imported goods while wages remained stagnant as taxes increased relatively made it difficult for the SLPP to honour its election promises to maintain its support base or prevent erosion of its public confidence. On regional basis, the chiefs who traditionally supported the SLPP suffered some erosion of the traditional allegiance of their subjects. While in the northern countryside the relatively affluent chiefs were accused of being corrupt and applying tax laws unfairly, in most the rest of the country the SLPP was blamed for state of affairs because the chiefs were seen not to be directly responsible for the decisions of the central government. Thus, while respect for chiefs eroded substantially in the north, it was relatively high in the rest of the country. The prevailing social tension was reflected between 1955 and 1956 in riots which gave the political character some violent twist, strikes, and defections from the SLPP. Due to political mismanagement, the NCSL also suffered some defections. Defectors from both the SLPP and the NCSL formed a new political party, the United Progressive Party (UPP) to compete with the SLPP and the NCSL in the 1957 elections. Partisan fragmentation of Sierra Leonean society was in ascendancy.

The structure of representation in the Legislative Council in 1957 was different from that of 1951¹. The new structure provided for 51 elected members 14 of which were to be elected from the Colony, 12 paramount chiefs representing each district, and 25 to be elected from the Protectorate. Thus, it increased the representation of Creoles with respect to the traditional chiefs while the relatively large size of the Protectorate was reflected in its additional 25 seats. Again, because of the prevailing political polarization of the country into Creoles versus the rest, the SLPP succeeded in winning the 1957 elections including 11 seats from the Colony that reflected the large Timne population of workers in the Colony. The 12 elected chiefs aligned themselves with the SLPP, and because the popularly elected members of the Protectorate were mostly from royal families, they were also aligned with the SLPP.

Despite the success of the SLPP in the 1957 elections, its inexperience with partisan politics, including lack of adequate levels of party loyalty, political mobilization,

commitment, and political propaganda, was such that its leadership as well as its support base fragmented. Some of the leadership including Albert Margai (the half-brother of Milton Margai) and Siaka Stevens defected from the party to form the People's National Party (PNP) to which many members from the UPP flocked. Obviously, partisan politics had advanced from the stage of polarizing Sierra Leonean society into Creoles versus the rest to the stage of dividing society effectively along several party lines.

Sierra Leone, divided along party lines, experienced difficulties in presenting a common ground in its struggle for independence. Because the ruling SLPP government was regarded by the other parties as the common enemy, strong opposition mounted against its plans for independence. There was a common demand by the opposing parties for new elections before independence. Milton Margai, reputed to be a skillful negotiator, had a hard time convincing the members and leaders of the other parties to join his proposed United National Front (UNF) to present a common independence policy to Britain. Although the UNF finally materialized and a common independence policy was presented to Britain, later developments showed that Siaka Stevens was not pleased. On return from the constitutional conference, Siaka Stevens, in complete contravention of party loyalty expected of a matured politician of liberal democracy accused his own PNP members and the leaders of other parties of a sell out to Milton Margai and the SLPP in return for government appointments, reaffirmed his demand for new elections before independence, and left both the UNF and the PNP to form a new party - the All People's Congress (APC). However, the British, who apparently could not tolerate the behaviour of Siaka Stevens, ignored his call for new elections before independence and proceeded with the plan for granting independence in 1961 as agreed upon in the constitutional conference. Sustained protests and riots greeted the British decision leading to a declaration of a state of emergency in which Siaka Stevens and other leaders of the APC were jailed and released in May after the grant of independence on April 27 1961. The use of force in resolving political differences in Sierra Leone began even at the onset of independence. What brand of liberal democracy is this? Is the jail an arena for political competition?

Partisan elections were held again in May 1962 which the SLPP in alliance with independents dominated in the ratio 42 against 20 in the House of Representatives². Political behaviour during the campaign and the character of the parliamentary debates after the elections showed that the alien partisan politics that was emulated by the Sierra Leonean elite had advanced further to a stage where it had succeeded in dividing the country along class, ethnic, and regional lines. It was in this general political context that Margai died in 1964 and was succeeded by his half-brother, Albert Margai³ as the Leader of the SLPP. Albert Margai was not politically as skillful as his brother. His open advocacy for a one-party state as a means for uniting Sierra Leoneans under one political umbrella was greeted with suspicion that created more political tensions and rendered the SLPP less popular. It was not surprising therefore that in the 1967, elections the APC won 32 seats compared to 28 by the SLPP and six by independents.

THE BEGINNING OF MILITARY SQUARE PEGS IN ROUND POLITICAL HOLES

After the elections, the Governor General, Sir Henry Lightfoot Boston, made serious mistakes which landed the country in turmoil. Without waiting for the election results for the chiefs as provided in the constitution, he hurriedly invited Stevens and Margai to form a coalition government. Given the demonstrated political enmity between the two parties, and Steven's earlier accusation of leaders of the other political parties for a sell-out in exchange for political appointment when they entered into a compromise with Milton Margai, it became difficult for him to accept any compromise with the SLPP since that might be interpreted as his own sell-out for personal gain. He rejected the coalition option. The handling of the political situation after Steven's rejection of the coalition option required political skills, patience, and due respect for the constitution which the Governor General lacked. This deficiency on the part of the Governor General was to cost Sierra Leone a great deal by opening an opportunity window for military square pegs to enter the round but rough political holes of Sierra Leone. As soon as four of the six independent candidates declared their support for Stevens, the Governor General, in his impatience and knowing very well that the chiefs traditionally supported the SLPP, violated the constitution by not waiting for the election results of the chiefs. He swore in Steven as the Prime Minister on March 21, 1967.

Convinced that the Governor General had deliberately created political chaos by violating the constitution, Brigadier David Lansana, a Mende as Albert Margai, opted to resolve a political crisis by military means by stepping into the political arena to declare martial law. He justified his intervention by the Governor General's failure to await the election results of the chiefs. Stevens along with some of his APC leaders went into exile. However, Lansana miscalculated the possible response of the population and his own military to the intervention. Military discipline required unflinching support for the military leader by the rank and file of the military in time of any emergency. Under the assumption that the Sierra Leone army was a disciplined one, Lansana might have counted upon the loyalty expected of a disciplined army before deciding to intervene. He was in for a shock. The behaviour of the military after his intervention showed that *martiogocrazy*⁴ had been born in Sierra Leone. Because both Margai and Lansana were Mende, his action was interpreted by the non-Mende section of Sierra Leone society to which Steven belonged and derived his support as a Mende ploy to dominate the political scene.

There were demonstrations and riots against the military intervention particularly in the non-Mende north where, as explained earlier, respect for chiefs was relatively low. In the ensuing political confusion, a group of senior military officers, in complete contravention of military discipline, joined forces with some police officers to intervene, arrested Lansana and formed an interim government which they called the National Reformation Council (NRC). Like General Lansana, the NRC miscalculated the response of the civilian population and the military to their intervention. The ethnic representation within the NRC posed a problem for the North. Despite the Chairman of the NRC being a Timne, the presence of four Mende members out of the total of eight members was sufficient for the NRC to be perceived in the north as another kind of Mende domination. The chiefs who traditionally supported the SLPP considered the intervention of Lansana

appropriate felt alienated. Most commoners preferred the civilian politicians to the NRC. The preference of civilian politicians by the commoners is understandable given that Siaka Stevens was seen, at that time, as representing the interests of commoners in the north whose respect for chiefs was very low as well as the interests of the workers of Freetown who were mainly Timnes from the coast. On the other hand, like the chiefs, Mende commoners perceived the NRC as interfering with an appropriate action by Lansana against undue encroachment upon the constitutional provisions. Thus, the intervention of the NRC was perceived by the general public as further deepening of the political problem. Meanwhile, divisions developed and intensified within the military itself.

Non-commissioned officers and below had witnessed the intervention of the most senior officer in the armed forces, Brigadier Lansana, in defence of the constitution and the subsequent disloyalty and indiscipline displayed by military officers when they intervened and arrested Lansana. It was logical for them to conclude that if Lansana was wrong, then the Governor General was right. In addition, the NRC had no mandate from the people of Sierra Leone. If the military officers were justified in rising against the most senior officer, General Lansana, for his political miscalculation, then they -the non-commissioned officers and their men -would also be justified in rising up against the NRC to enforce the decision of the Governor General. In April 1968, the non-commissioned officers and the ranks below them mutinied, overthrew the NRC, and placed almost all commissioned officers under arrest. Stevens and his comrades in exile returned to the country within nine days and he was again sworn in as Prime Minister.

Steven did not have it easy governing Sierra Leone for through his own confrontational attitude in the partisan political process, the country had become very divided with mounting tensions. Although in 1971, Sierra Leone became a republic with Steven as President, the early 1970s of his presidency was characterized by political unrest to such an extent that he was compelled to bring in troops from Guinea to shore up his government and maintain order.

In this way, like General Lansana, Stevens opted to resolve a political crisis by military means. Seeing partisan politics more as a problem than a solution in uniting Sierra Leoneans toward the realization of nationalist objectives and not learning from the mistakes of Albert Margai, Steven proceeded in 1978 to create a one-party state under a new constitution. Instead of constituting a government of national unity that might have reflected a modernized version of African consensual democracy to bring Sierra Leoneans under one political umbrella Steven opted for an alien one-party state. The one-party state regime was even more partisan for it polarized Sierra Leonean society dangerously into those who identified with the party and those who did not. It therefore failed to unite Sierra Leoneans. The student and labour protests continued and intensified into the 1980s. In 1985, Major General Momo was elected unopposed as President.

THE PRESENT CRISIS

The present crisis began again with military square pegs attempting to enter political holes in Sierra Leone when in April 1991 a former corporal of the Sierra Leonean army, Foday Sanko, announced he was the leader of a rebellion that broke out in the east of the country. Because the one-party regime does not provide any peaceful alternative for a change in government, rebellion became the only choice for those who did not identify with the party. His movement, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was determined to overthrow the Sierra Leone government by force. By April 1992, about one-fifth of the country largely in the east and the south was in the hands of the rebels.

The loyalty and discipline of the Sierra Leonean Army was put to the test. It failed the test. Instead of protecting the government of the day in its dealings with the rebels, the army demonstrated its disloyalty to the government. It was apparently fed up with how the bush war was conducted, and the entrenchment of the President, Genera Joseph Momo, in power since 1985 under the single-party system. As explained earlier, the one party regime polarized the country politically and dangerously between those who belonged to the party and those who did not making rebellion a viable alternative for dissenters. A group of army officers led by Captain Valentine Strasser seized power with a goal of crushing the rebels within a short time and uniting all Sierra Leoneans. Since the rebels were also Sierra Leoneans and the military junta sought to unite all Sierra Leoneans, negotiation with the rebels would have been wise and credible but Strasser and his fellow officers chose the military option. That choice itself was a signal to the effect that members of the junta were military square pegs in round political holes. The junta appointed as one of their advisers, Mr. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, the present President of Sierra Leone.

In 1993, the military junta succeeded in forcing the rebels out but, in April 1994 the rebels were back and able to penetrate to the center of the country . The army had a hard time flushing the invaders out when the rebels resorted to guerrilla tactics in the central and northern areas. By the end of January 1995, the rebels frustrated the army further by operating from hills near Freetown and launching attacks close to that capital city. It was evident that the Sierra Leonean army could not win the war against the rebels so easily as Strasser had thought in 1991. A political solution had to be found, but Strasser was adamant . Confidence in Strasser's handling of the crisis declined to the extent that his own military colleagues perceived him more as a problem than a solution. In January 1996, Strasser was ousted by his own Vice-President, General Julius Maada Bio who subsequently arranged for a return to civilian rule, and peaceful negotiations with the rebels. The first meeting for negotiations with the rebels took place in Abidjan on February 25 of that same year.

Meanwhile, plans for return to civilian rule went ahead and on March 15, 1996, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, the leader of the SLPP was elected President in the country's first free elections since 1978. Within two days, the RUF accepted a cease-fire. The political climate and assurances between the new government and the rebels were such that

Sankoh returned to Sierra Leone from the Ivory Coast to negotiate a peace accord which was signed by Kabbah and Sankoh on November 1996 to end the five years of civil war. A peace commission with representation from both the government and the rebels was inaugurated on December 19. The signing of the peace accord and the inauguration might be seen as the opening of an opportunity window for Sierra Leoneans to heal the political wounds of their country, but it was not long when that opportunity was lost. Differences between the RUF and the government surfaced when on January 22, 1997, when the RUF accused the government for not abiding by the peace accord. The previous appointment of Kabbah as an adviser to the Strasser government that opted all along for a military solution cast doubts about the seriousness of his government to the peace accord. The political situation was complicated further by indiscipline within the RUF itself, and disloyalty of the Sierra Leonean army to the Kabbah government. A faction of the RUF reported to be attacking and looting villages announced on March 15, 1997 the dismissal of Sankoh as leader of the RUF.

Sankoh himself was arrested by the Nigerian authorities while on visit to that country. There was suspicion that Nigeria which was then training the Sierra Leone army had involved itself in the political affairs of the country and was cooperating with the Kabbah government. Then, on May 25, 1997 the Kabbah government was overthrown in a military coup led by Major Paul Koroma in which Kabbah succeeded in fleeing to Guinea. The behaviour of the Sierra Leonean army towards the Kabbah government might be interpreted partly in the context of its mistrust of Kabbah who was an adviser to the military junta of Strasser that opted all along for a military solution to the crisis, and partly in terms of development of support for the cause of the rebels within its rank and file⁵. The new military junta called for a return of Sankoh from Nigeria and although the Nigerian authorities refused to release him, it proceeded in June to appoint him its vice-president in absentia as a strategy to win the support of the RUF.

Apparently, the military was tired with the war with the rebels and wanted a compromise solution in which the rebels would participate. If that was their objective, then the military should have exerted pressure on the Kabbah government through the ministry of defence to continue negotiations with the rebels or to honour the accord it previously signed with the rebels. By overthrowing Kabbah at a time when experiment with western-style democracy had become in the international arena the most popular prescription for African countries, the junta embarked on a course which made it difficult for achieve international recognition and legitimacy. The coup demonstrated that, after 36 years of independence and experiments with military intervention, the Sierra Leonean army was far from being that type of disciplined organization that has learnt the lesson of unflinching loyalty to the government of the day. It challenged the ability of the 16 - member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to respond to military confrontation in the region through its military wing, ECOMOG, which had been praised for its success in returning Liberia from a situation of civil war to democratic rule. It opened the gates for mercenaries, geopolitical interests, and profit-driven companies in the international scene desperate to sell their inventories of arms to enter the political waters of Sierra Leone.

Nigeria, which was itself being ruled by Abacha's government (another military square peg in a round political but with plans for a return to civilian rule), objected strongly to the military takeover in Sierra Leone and refused to release Sankoh. It attempted to use its small force in Freetown to intervene but that force was humiliated when it found itself outnumbered and short of ammunition. Nigeria responded to this humiliation with a heavy bombardment of Sierra Leonean military positions in Freetown by its navy to such an extent that the military junta was compelled by the resulting casualties to request a truce and to accept deployment of ECOMOG troops peace-makers in Sierra Leone. Instead of playing its peace-making role, the Nigerian-led ECOMOG troops were quickly drawn into military confrontation with the military junta and the RUF. In this way, ECOMOG apparently became a military square peg even in the arena of peace-keeping. However, it was not only ECOMOG that was engaged in violent confrontation with the junta. Certain groups of Sierra Leonean society formed the Civil Defence Force (CDF) under the command of Captain Hinga Norman to challenge the authority of the junta. Popular among the CDF were the Kamajors, a group of traditional hunters. With the support and influence of Kabbah, the CDF succeeded in obtaining arms to challenge the junta-RUF alliance and made it difficult for the junta to govern the country effectively.

ECOMOG AND THE RESTORATION OF KABBAH AS PRESIDENT

ECOMOG has not been as successful in Sierra Leone as it was in resolving a similar conflict in Liberia⁶. The military junta and the and the RUF which together constitute the rebels of Sierra Leone today have so far demonstrated openly their reluctance and insincerity in peaceful negotiations with the Kabbah government, and their disrespect for fundamental human rights. They have been encouraged in their uncompromising attitude by interference from outside which have given the crisis an international dimension. Divisions within ECOWAS on the Sierra Leone issue have led to member countries such as Liberia, Burkina Faso, and Ivory Coast to be accused of siding with the rebels. The luke-warm attitude and lack of material support from the Security Council despite several appeals from the legitimate Kabbah government are definite incentives to the rebels.

The insincerity of the junta-RUF alliance towards peaceful resolution of the crisis compelled ECOWAS to impose economic sanctions on the junta on August 30, 1997, and to put pressure on the Security Council of the United Nations to do the same. In an effort to bring the warring factions to the negotiation table, the Security Council proceeded to ban arms shipment to Sierra Leone as a whole. The effect of this ban was to deprive ECOMOG and the Kabbah government of the arms they urgently required while the rebels continued to receive arms from various sources. Meanwhile, there were several clashes between the ECOMOG forces and the Junta-RUF alliance, and between the junta-RUF alliance and the CDF. In an apparent yield to both military pressure and the sanctions, the junta agreed to negotiate for peace. On October 24, 1997 foreign ministers from ECOWAS and the junta agreed on a peace deal which involved a program for restoration of Kabbah to power in April 1998. However, by January 1998, it became

evident that the junta only used the peace process as a strategy for buying time for arming itself. It was not interested in restoring Kabbah to power. It continued to challenge ECOMOG in a series of armed confrontations including ambushes and laying of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. After serious clashes between junta-RUF forces and forces of ECOMOG beginning January 27 1998, by February 12 the junta had been ejected from Freetown. On March 10, 1998, Kabbah returned to Freetown to resume his responsibility as the democratically elected President of Sierra Leone.

ECOMOG was hailed in international circles as an organization capable of resolving violent conflict in the region. The prestige of the Nigerian army which dominated ECOMOG went so high that the Nigerian task force commander of ECOMOG, Maxwell Khobe, was appointed the commander of the new Sierra Leone army. However, the ejection of the junta from Sierra Leone did not mean the end of the crisis for the rebel alliance withdrew to the north and into the bush where they received both training and arms, and launched attacks against both ECOMOG and the civilian population. Mercenaries including fortune-seeking adventurers from Liberia, Burkina Faso, Italy, and Ukraine joined their ranks. The rebels were able to pay for the arms and mercenary services with diamonds obtained from areas under their control. Thus, as the rebels made mercenaries richer, their own country became poorer in its endowment of diamonds. In their desperation, the rebels resorted to atrocities which sent signals to the Kabbah government that negotiations might serve no purpose because the insurgents have nothing to offer their country but blood, maiming of innocent civilians including children, and senseless destruction of property. In this sense, Kabbah seems right for the rebels can only be known and judged by what they do to their own countrymen.

The return of Kabbah to Sierra Leone as President was received with joy and much celebration, but the high hope of Sierra Leoneans for permanent peace soon turned into a mirage. Kabbah did not display the qualities of a skillful negotiator willing to forgive and forget about the past. He failed to introduce political strategies for winning the confidence support of his adversaries. However, his vindictive posture is understandable given the inhuman behaviour of the rebels and the tendency of the military to intervene in the political arena. While it cannot be denied that some measure of deterrence was desirable to discourage cooperation with the rebels, and to discipline and discourage the Sierra Leone military from future intervention, Kabbah's insensitivity to political repercussions of personalities affected by such punitive acts of deterrence leaves much to be desired.

Kabbah himself had been an adviser to the military junta of Captain Strasser and should have known that providing constructive advice or responding to a call to serve a military junta that has succeeded in usurping power might be purely a neutral act of patriotism.. Furthermore, in the interest of peace and harmony, military officers who may not be involved in a coup might agree to be loyal to the government of the day. Kabbah was unable to factor and fathom these dimensions into the punitive trials that followed his resumption of office. Contrary to international pressure, including appeals from Amnesty International, the Commonwealth and the United Nations, on October 19, 1998, 24 officers of the of the Sierra Leone army were executed by firing squad for their

complicity in the 1997 coup. On November 23, Sankoh, the leader of the RUF who had been repatriated from Nigeria was sentenced to death for treason, and on November 25 the former President, General Joseph Momo was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. Several Sierra Leoneans were sentenced to prison for cooperating in various ways with the rebels. These punitive measures of deterrence had the unintended consequence of strengthening the resolve of the rebels to overthrow the government for they concluded that only death or imprisonment awaited them so long as Kabbah remained President. As Kabbah opted for a military solution to the crisis with the help of ECOMOG, the rebels continued to train, main innocent civilians, abduct hundreds of Sierra Leonean youths forcibly into their ranks, procure arms, and engage the services of more mercenaries. Recent events have shown that the crisis cannot be resolved on the battle field alone and that ECOMOG might as well be an unreliable square peg in a round hole even in the military arena.

ECOMOG AS A SQUARE PEG IN A ROUND HOLE

The success of ECOMOG in driving the junta out of Freetown and in reinstating Kabbah as the legitimate President of Sierra Leone earned it much reputation in international circles. Within a short time the regional force claimed to be in control of 90 percent of Sierra Leone. These initial successes and the promises of ECOMOG commanders of the possibility of military victory over the junta-RUF alliance might have been behind Kabbah's intransigent option for a military solution. Although ECOMOG faces numerous problems, its internal lapses which have enabled the rag-tag rebels to achieve embarrassing successes, including their invasion of Freetown on January 6, 1999 cannot be overlooked. The initial successes of ECOMOG might have rendered it so complacent that gross indiscipline set it.

There were reports of involvement of some Nigerian officers of ECOMOG in diamond mining operations that were detracting them from military operations against the rebels, undermining discipline, jeopardizing security, and frustrating the troops under them. It raised questions as to whether these Nigerian officers were in Sierra Leone principally to enrich themselves or primarily for peace-keeping operations aimed at resolving the political crisis of the country. However, the engagement of some few Nigerian soldiers in diamond mining operations should not be generalized to include the mostly dedicated and honest ones. But it should not be forgotten that there were elements of the Sierra Leone army fighting alongside ECOMOG. Definitely, the engagement of some undisciplined Nigerian officers in diamond mining operations cannot be expected to enjoy their support. It is not surprising therefore that, as time went on, many elements of the Sierra Leone army developed reluctance to fight against the rebels and defected in large numbers to join the ranks of rebel army. The threat to security posed by the mining activities was reported by Africa Confidential (Jan, 1999) as follows.

The involvement of some Nigerian officers in diamond-mining operations in the east did not just detract them from

peacekeeping operations and frustrate their troops (whose pay was months in arrears) but also caused major security breaches. Several clandestine RUF militants, male and female, offered their services to the Nigerian officers in their diamond mining operations as a means of gathering information about Ecomog troop deployments. (p.1)

Despite the growing firepower of the rebels, and defections from the Sierra Leone army to join the rebels or their open display of cowardice and unwillingness to fight the rebels, ECOMOG did not take appropriate measures to beef up its strength or to adequately arm its allies, the Kamajors and the CDF.

Meanwhile, divisions within the Kabbah government on security issues including the tendency of some members of the Cabinet to distrust of the Kamajors and the CDF undermined the effectiveness of the ECOMOG alliance with the CDF and the Kamajors. Although the Kamajors and the CDF had demonstrated their unflinching support for the Kabbah government through their voluntary and active engagement against the rebels alongside ECOMOG, some members of the government considered them as products of the political ambitions of the deputy Defence Minister, Sam Hinga Norman. Under such conditions, it became difficult for the government to equip these allies of ECOMOG adequately to match the growing firepower of the rebels. Both the government and ECOMOG embarked upon suppressing and denying any reports about the growing superiority of the rebels in battle and in firepower apparently to calm the population. For example, when the journalist, Dominick Kabba Kargbo reported in a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) interview that he witnessed a December 20 attack by the RUF rebels in which the rebels appeared militarily superior to ECOMOG, he was arrested and detained in jail. These lapses and denials were to cost both the government and ECOMOG a great deal for lapses are no remedies and denials may delay but never kill the truth.

Concrete signs from the battlefield revealing ECOMOG as square peg in a round hole emerged powerfully in December 1998. Early in that month, the Nigerian head of the Sierra Leone army, Maxwell Khobe, warned that divided loyalties among the 3000 Sierra Leonean troops supposed to be under his command, including their collaboration with the rebels were seriously undermining military operations. That same month, the rebels intensified their attacks against ECOMOG in the interior. With the combination of growing collaboration between the Sierra Leone army and the rebels and the poor firepower of its allies - Kamajors and the CDF ECOMOG was compelled to withdraw disgracefully from strategic towns including Makeni, Lunsar and Port Lokko. As many strategic towns fell one after the other, the rebels were emboldened to announce their intention to invade Freetown by the first of January, 1999. That announcement should have served as warning to ECOMOG to beef up its defence of Freetown but apparently that did not happen. Tactically, the rebels did not attack Freetown on January first as they promised, but on January 6, they did so and found ECOMOG napping. Without much

resistance, the rebels quickly captured the State House (the symbolic seat of government), burned down the Nigerian embassy, the main police headquarters, the headquarters of the special branch, and executed scores of policemen. They stormed the city's main prison and freed prisoners including many rebels held there.

The ability of the rebels to penetrate to Freetown, a city situated at the tip of a narrow peninsula, without much resistance was not only an embarrassment to the Kabbah government that had invested so much trust in ECOMOG, but also cast doubts about the commitment of the Nigerian commanders of the regional force in fighting the rebels. The inability of the thousands of ECOMOG soldiers in Sierra Leone in stopping the rebels from entering Freetown through the narrow peninsula conveyed the suspicion that the commanders of ECOMOG deliberately allowed the rebels in.

The folly of Kabbah's government in failing to update the firepower of the Kamajors and the CDF also came to light too late. The onslaught of the rebels was spectacular. In less than four days, eastern and central Freetown were totally in their hands and they controlled nearly 70 percent of the western sector of the city. The strategy of the rebels included infiltrating Freetown months ahead of their scheduled attack and outwitting ECOMOG by sneaking in weapons and supplies past the checkpoints. In their attack on Freetown, they tactically used civilians as human shields to confuse and discourage ECOMOG commanders from any prompt response. Although ECOMOG was supposed to have launched a face-saving counter-attack code named "Death Before Dishonour" on January 7, it has not been an easy task dislodging the rebels completely from Freetown and its surroundings. It was in this process of counter-offensive that thousands of Sierra Leoneans including rebels lost their lives, the retreating rebels maimed hundreds of innocent civilians, and many houses were burnt down. Hundreds of Nigerian soldiers are reported to have lost their lives. Rag-tag rebels tarnish the image of ECOMOG. All these losses in lives and property might have been avoided if ECOMOG had been more vigilant and responsible as a competent military force.

Recent revelations have modified earlier suspicions that the rebels were let in through the irresponsibility of some Nigerian commanders. According to *Sierra Leone News* of February 3, several officials of the Ministry of Defence had been arrested for providing the rebels with inside information about ECOMOG troop deployment in Freetown. It is alleged the suspected officials informed the rebels about the inadequate deployment of ECOMOG troops in Freetown and that encouraged the rebels to attack. This behaviour and other treacherous events have both projected and confirmed Sierra Leoneans as the most treacherous people on the continent. Given the very treacherous tendencies of Sierra Leoneans are they really worth the sacrifices of others? The answer is surely a big NO! If Sierra Leoneans think they are kings and queens who have to fold their arms for others to liberate them from the RUF criminals despite their treacherous behaviour, they are deceiving themselves for it will not be long when the whole world will be fed up with them.

However, is it true that ECOMOG did not have adequate troops protecting Freetown despite the earlier announcement by the rebels that they intended attacking Freetown on

the first day of January, 1999? If so, then the competence of the commanders of ECOMOG is seriously called into question. In another development on February 9, Brigadier-General Maxwell Khobe told the Guardian newspaper of Nigeria that the rebels were able to invade Freetown because a commanding officer of the Nigerian army failed to do his job. He acknowledged that the rebel incursion was a big disgrace which nobody in the headquarters of the Nigerian armed forces was happy about. The officer who failed in his duty was to be court-martialed. Under situations of embarrassment and disgrace, there is a tendency to find scapegoats upon whom to dump blame and sacrificial lambs to appease the wrath. The suspected officials of the ministry of defence and the Nigerian officer singled out for court-martial might as well be the respective scapegoats and sacrificial lamb. Whatever explanation is advanced, the competence of the officers of ECOMOG is questionable and the deep dent of disgrace in the image of ECOMOG as a square peg in a round hole in the Sierra Leone environment will be difficult to erase from the military history of West Africa.

The hasty announcement by the then Nigerian head of state, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, to withdraw the Nigerian contingent from ECOMOG before handing over power to a civilian government in May, 1999 has served to widen and deepen the dent of disgrace in the image of ECOMOG. It sent a signal to the rebels that ECOMOG lacked the will to continue fighting. It convinced the rebels that sustaining military pressure on ECOMOG would lead eventually to its withdrawal from Sierra Leone and assure them of the victory they had hoped for all along. Heavy rebel attacks on Kenema, Kambia and other areas in the interior following Abubakar's announcement confirmed the view that rebels had been encouraged to be tough.

RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT

However, the announcement has also had the effect of influencing Kabbah to enter into negotiations with the rebels which might not be easy or necessarily lead to a lasting peace. Negotiations or dialogue assume fundamentally that the rebels are normal human beings with due respect for human values and human rights. While it might not be doubtful that the rebels were initially normal human beings, their behaviour since their eviction from Freetown points in the opposite direction. Severing the limbs of innocent civilians, indiscriminate killings, embarking on genocidal operations code named *Operation No Living Thing*, and taking on names *such as Captain Blood and Captain Rambo* are all symptoms of mentally sick people. How can Kabbah be sure of how such mentally sick people will behave during and after the dialogue? If Kabbah is capable of negotiating peace with the rebels, why did he not do so a year ago when their behaviour was then normal? Why does he want to enter into dialogue at a time when there is sufficient evidence to substantiate the view that the rebels and their commanders are mentally sick? Have Kabbah, the rebels, and Sierra Leoneans as a whole finally learnt the lesson that military square pegs do not fit political round holes even if the political holes are rough?

Justice will not be done if the failure of ECOMOG in Sierra Leone is not explained in the larger context of imperialism. The dirty hands of imperialism can be seen through the subsequent Lome Peace Accord it shamefully organized to grant amnesty to the RUF criminals who committed heinous crimes against humanity. The Sierra Leone crisis would have ended long before the death of General Sani Abacha had it not been for the interference by imperialism which also manipulates both the United Nations and comprador imperialists within ECOWAS. The same imperialism which now hails Nigeria the regional power in West Africa hated both Sani Abacha and the idea of Nigeria becoming popular in the region. Simultaneously as it praised the efforts of ECOMOG to resolve the crisis, it appealed to its business community engaged in the arms trade to supply large quantities of sophisticated weapons to the RUF to frustrate the efforts of ECOMOG. Imperialism further sent mercenaries to train and fight alongside the RUF.

Africans are not Barbarian savages for they are not descendants of Barbarians. African wars have never been characterized by the barbaric act of chopping off limbs. How come that the RUF resorted to chopping off limbs? The answer is both easy and obvious. The RUF did not resort to chopping off limbs until they had imperialist mercenaries in their ranks who knew the tricks of how to attract international attention. It was these wicked mercenaries who injected the RUF with drugs to alter their way of thinking, converted them into monsters and taught them how to draw international attention to their cause by chopping off limbs of fellow Africans.

When Abacha died, imperialism seized the opportunity to exert pressure on ECOMOG to disgracefully withdraw from Sierra Leone. The hidden agenda was to dissuade the particular Africans labeled Nigerians from acting as Good Samaritans in the region and to transfer that honour to the United Nations where imperialism was assured of total control. The imperialist monster continued to invoke the use of its forked tongue. The peacekeeping troops were to be largely Nigerians but not to be commanded by a Nigerian.

Peacekeeping was defined as totally different from peace enforcement. My 22 year experience in the Ghana Air Force is sufficient enough to enable me discern the hypocrisy. How can one keep peace without enforcing that same peace? Although the United Nations recognizes the legitimate government of Sierra Leone and it was that same government that let in the peacekeeping troops, the peacekeepers were to be neutral in the conflict between the RUF and the government. It may appear that since the days of Lumumba the Security Council of the United Nations has not been able to draw any lessons from its operations in Africa including Congo, Rwanda, and Somalia. But that appearance is an illusion.

The Security Council is very rational and knows what it is doing. Given that it is dominated by imperialism, it cannot be expected to be fair. It should not be forgotten that it is the same imperialism, which constructed the vertical mosaic of racism and placed Africans at the bottom of that ladder. Be it known to all Africans that the Security Council is essentially racist and never to be trusted. Evidence from the days of Patrice

Lumumba to the present substantiate the fact that the Security Council which manipulates the Secretary General of the United Nations is an integral part of the international Ku Klux Klan which has no respect for the humanity of Africans. That is why Lumumba was arrested, tortured and assassinated at the behest of imperialism; that is why genocide was allowed to occur in Rwanda under the very nose of the United Nations despite ample warning; that is why the UN was quick to act to drive Iraq out of Kuwait to satisfy the interest of imperialism, quick to act in Kosovo but slow to act in Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Angola, and in Kabila's Congo.

The support given to the so-called Lome Accord confirms that the humanity of the African is not recognized by the powers that control the Security Council. The implication of the Lome Accord which allowed the perpetrators of crime against humanity including Foday Sanko and Miskita to go free is that Africans are only some inferior beings whose hands and feet can be chopped off with impunity to the amusement of the arch racists of the international Ku Klux Klan. The long time it has taken to establish a tribunal to try those responsible confirms how racist the Security Council is. The low pay of the peacekeepers who are largely African is the icing on the cake. A small boy working in an imperialist restaurant earns far more than a Nigerian General serving as a peacekeeper does! The plight of the ordinary soldier is even worse! The African is not considered to possess that dignity for earning even the same pay as a small boy working in a restaurant in imperialist country at no risk of his life.

Now there is talk of imperialism arming and training Nigerian and Ghanaian troops to keep peace in Sierra Leone. Since the peacekeepers are to be neutral, what is the purpose of the arms and the training? Imperialism only wants to be seen as having an interest in peace in Sierra Leone whereas, in actual fact, it is arming the Sierra Leone government, the RUF and the peacekeepers simultaneously. In this way, imperialism aims to earn more money through the shedding of African blood. The major imperialist fractions – the British, French, Russia, China - who arrogated to themselves have virtually refused to send troops to Sierra Leone to serve under the United Nations for their blood is sacred while those of others can be sacrificed! They happily and easily send Indians, Jordanians Africans in the name of the United Nations to go and die in Sierra Leone but reluctant to send their own troops in large numbers to serve in that same international force. Britain, for example, has wisely refused to allow its troops to serve under the United Nations for they know too well that the troops of the United Nations are a bunch of easy-to-manipulate robots who wait for orders from irresponsible people sitting in the air-conditioned rooms of the headquarters of the United Nations smoking cigarettes and drinking champagne.

The British first sent troops to Sierra Leone in the year 2000 not to die in helping to restore order in Sierra Leone but to demonstrate that they are part of the imperialist regional power and to steal the show. They went there to make themselves more popular than the Nigerians. If the British really had an interest in peace in Sierra Leone, they would have sent a large force as the Nigerians did to confront the RUF in the interior. What happened? The British sent a small force that was not capable of confronting the RUF and while the Nigerian Good Samaritan Nigerians faced the RUF bravely in the

bush and died, the British stole the show and popularity by parading within the safe corridors of Freetown brandishing their weapons as if they were poised to fight the RUF. As the RUF intensified their activities, the British, sensing danger, simply withdrew with the excuse that time was up. Considering that the Nigerians were in Sierra Leone long before the British troops arrived makes nonsense of this claim of time is up. How can time be up for the British who for a century plundered the riches of Sierra Leone and still continue to do so, but not up for Nigerians who have never plundered Sierra Leone but have died in hundreds helping to keep the peace? It was an indirect message to Africans that no imperialist is prepared to risk his life for Africans. Fortunately for the British, the RUF did not send 20,000 men into Freetown as they did in 1999. Had they done so, Sierra Leoneans might have been convinced that the few British soldiers were no saviours and that the Nigerian Good Samaritans deserve some measure of respect.

Mental slavery inherited by Sierra Leoneans from the events of slavery and the colonial past helped the British, for it encouraged Sierra Leoneans to sing the praises of the British play-actors and not the Nigerian Good Samaritans. The attitude of the Sierra Leoneans justified any decision by the Good Samaritans to withdraw completely from helping their fellow Africans who were so ungrateful. However, Good Samaritans do not behave that way and because the Nigerians are generally more matured than Sierra Leoneans, Nigerian troops continue to serve under the flag of the United Nations. They have really proved beyond reasonable doubt that they are Good Samaritans and the pride of all Africans. But let them not make the mistake of accepting the imperialist label of Regional Power for they are not, and even if they want to be so, the real regional power the imperialist fractions of British, French, and Euro-Americans - will never allow them.

The British are back in Sierra Leone but still wise enough not to place their troops in danger by placing them under United Nations command for they are aware of how General Jetley of India was manipulated by the Security Council into jeopardizing the lives of his own country-men.

The Sierra Leone experience has demonstrated very clearly partisan politics which was responsible for the crisis is not capable of resolving it. The talk about conducting elections when the mandate of the Kabbah government expires does not make sense. Which cat will volunteer to bell the cat in supervising elections in the RUF controlled areas and get its limbs chopped off in the process? The possibility of exclusiveness arising from partisan politics as exemplified by the particular experience of the Creoles, the declaration of emergency just before independence, the political turmoil since independence, the emergence of the RUF in 1991, and the sustained activities of the rebels are clear signals that neither multi-party politics nor one-party regimes can create encompassing coalitions capable of enjoying the support of all sections of society. The resolution of the crisis demands a government of national unity in which a culturally compatible and encompassing coalition capable of enjoying the support of all sections of society assumes the reins of government. Since the indigenous political culture of Sierra Leone has the characteristics of a government of national unity, can Sierra Leoneans behave like the Roman god Janus to factor and fathom their indigenous past into their

political equation to ensure a lasting peace? In the final analysis, political problems in Africa have to be solved in an African way because the attitudes and orientations of Africans towards political objects (political culture) may not be the same as those of outsiders and Sierra Leone is no exception.

CONCLUSION

Sierra Leone's crisis has its roots in the introduction of partisan politics, which from the very beginning served to divide Sierra Leoneans rather than unite them. The indigenous democracy of Africa – Jaku democracy - had been non-partisan and consensual with the characteristics of a government of national unity. Because of a linguistic problem through which the member of another political party is considered an enemy in the Sierra Leone environment, partisan competition is translated into war among political parties. Partisan politics with its winner take all characteristic first eliminated the Creoles from participating in government and, hence, in the decisions affecting them. It proceeded to divide Sierra Leoneans along regional and ethnic lines, and because the civilian politicians and the Governor General were unable to resolve their differences constitutionally, the military intervened in the political arena for the first time to ensure that the constitution was respected. However, the ethnic background of the military commander, General Lansana, raised the suspicions of a Mende ploy to dominate. The confusion of military interventions which followed should have sent an early signal that the military was not competent to rule in Sierra Leone. The one-party regime established under Siaka Stevens and continued under General Momo failed to unite Sierra Leoneans for it polarized Sierra Leone dangerously into those who belonged to the party and those who did not. By its very nature the one-party regime breeds rebellion.

Sanko emerged, in April 1991, as the head of a rebellion challenging the authority of the one-party Momo government. A year later, instead supporting the government in power in its fight against the rebels, a military junta under the leadership of Captain Strasser took over power with the goal of crushing the rebels within a short time. The present President, Kabbah was an adviser to the Strasser government. As the rebels proved difficult to defeat, his military colleagues saw Strasser more as liability than a solution. He was overthrown in 1996 by his own second in command, General Maada Bio who, in March 1996 handed over power to the civilian government of Kabbah when the SLPP won the elections. A peace accord subsequently signed between the rebels and the Kabbah government fell through. Again, instead of the military being loyal to the government in power, it overthrew it on May 23, 1997 and formed an alliance with the rebels. ECOMOG intervened and restored Kabbah to power. Relying on ECOMOG, Kabbah pushed dialogue aside and embarked upon a military solution to the problem, which has so far failed. Like the Sierra Leone Army, ECOMOG has also proved that when it comes to solutions to political problems, it is an entirely a square peg in a round hole. Kabbah learnt this lesson too late. He finally called for a dialogue with the rebels at a time when evidence leads to the conclusion that the rebels and their commanders are mentally sick. It might now be evident that the continued political crisis of Sierra Leone stems from the tendency to put military square pegs, including ECOMOG and United

Nations troops, in round political holes. However, justice will be incomplete without the recognition of the dirty hands of imperialism which profits from selling arms to all parties in the conflict. This same imperialism manipulates the United Nations through the Security Council it dominates in such a manner as to prolong the conflict.

The resolution of the crisis demands a government of national unity in which a culturally compatible and encompassing coalition capable of enjoying the support of all sections of Sierra Leonean society assumes the reins of government. Sierra Leonean political history, including the rise of the RUF, and the activities and achievements of the rebels especially in the hinterland have provided sufficient evidence that neither multi-party politics nor one-party regimes can create such an encompassing coalition. Sierra Leoneans might have to behave like the Roman god Janus to factor and fathom appropriate aspects of the structures and practices of their indigenous political culture into creating that culturally compatible coalition of national unity. A fool and his money are soon parted. Sierra Leonean diamonds are funding the war and it will not be long when these diamonds will get finished. At that time, Sierra Leoneans including the RUF criminals will have no other alternative but to face the consequences of their own folly. However, there is a way out and that way is Jaku democracy – the indigenous democracy of Africa – in which all ethnics are so represented by merit that the dictatorship either of the few or the many is impossible and crooks never the chance to campaign to the people to elect them.

NOTES

Before the 1957 elections, the British abolished the protectorate Assembly and expanded the size of the Legislative Council. The authority of the Council was also expanded. See Irvin Kaplann et al, Area Handbook for Sierra Leone, Washington D. C: US Printing Office, 1976, p.34

1. 2. The independence constitution changed the name of the Legislative Council to House of Representatives.

2. 3. Albert Margai had by this time become a member of the SLPP again.

3. 4. In my Ph.D dissertation (Osabu-Kle, 1995), I developed the new concept “*martigocrazy*” as a short form of “*martial-organizations-gone-crazy*” to represent the irrational, divisive, and detrimental behaviour of the martial organizations (the army, navy, and air force) during blind implantation of the alien ideology of military rule.

5. The former President, Major General Momoh was found to be sympathetic to the junta. For his part in conspiring with the rebels, a High Court sentenced Momoh to 10 years imprisonment on November 5, 1998 The

alliance forged between the junta and the RUF and the appointment of Sanko as Vice-President confirmed the suspicion that sympathy for the RUF had developed within the army. Also, when the rebels launched their offensive in December 1988, the majority of the Sierra Leonean army deserted to join the rebels.

4. 6. In Liberia too, rather than playing its peace-keeping role only ECOMOG was drawn into military confrontation with Taylor’s faction of the conflict. However, in the end it succeeded in bringing the warring parties together, and to return that country to civilian rule through the ballot box. That success might have encouraged it to enter into military confrontation with the junta hoping to bring the warring factions - the CDF and Kamajors on one side and the junta and RUF on the other -together for peace in which the legitimacy of democratically elected government of Kabbah is respected.

5. 7. As a retired senior military officer, I was perplexed by the ease with which the rebels entered and almost succeeded in capturing Freetown. At first, I thought it was some tactical maneuver by ECOMOG to draw the rebels in, encircle them and force them to surrender. Later events, including the heavy loss of life by ECOMOG, civilians and rebels, and the difficulty encountered by ECOMOG in

flushing the rebels out revealed that the rebel incursion resulted from a total and very embarrassing blunder on the part ECOMOG.

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Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Carleton University.