

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

THE FUTURE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICA AND THE ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE AFRICAN UNITY (OAU)

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Master of Arts in International Security and Civil-Military Affairs-June 1998

Master of Arts in National Security Affairs-June 1998

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This thesis examines the future of conflict resolution in Africa and the role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the process, based on the 1993 OAU's "Mechanism" (MCPMR). It argues that, in Africa, historical evidence suggests a continuing pattern of internal conflicts aggravated by destabilization attempts. It also seeks to demonstrate that for various reasons, the OAU has been weak in this type of conflict. This opens two options. One, making the OAU irrelevant, is to maintain the present track and end up between an evil and a lesser evil scenario.

The first is the intervention by a regional power, using a sub-regional organization. Here the risk is to see the regional power, in the absence of a watchdog, use the organization for its own agenda, as in the Nigerian interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The other scenario is the intervention by a country or group of countries for purely selfish reasons to change another country's political leadership, as in the Angolan interventions in Zaire and Congo.

The second option, less likely without substantial reforms, is for the OAU to use the support available from the international community to establish itself as a forum, an organizer, a legitimizer and a watchdog.

DoD KEY TECHNOLOGY AREA: Other (Conflict Resolution)

KEYWORDS: Peace Operations, Peacekeeping, Africa, Organization of African Unity, Mechanism, Preventive Diplomacy, Conflict Management.

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