

**FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION IN THE GAMBIA, 1965-
1994: SMALL WEAK DEVELOPING STATES AND THEIR
FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS AND CHOICES**

By

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To Mama and Papa and to the memory of Abu Jr.

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Abbreviations

ADB - Agricultural Development Bank.

AFPRC - Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council.

ANC - African National Congress.

APS - Agence de Presse Sénégalaise.

BADEA - Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa.

BWIs - Bretton Woods Institutions.

CCCE - Caisse Centrae de la Copération Economique.

CEAO - Francophonie Economic Community of West African States.

CILSS- Comité Inter-Etats de la Lutte Contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (The Permanent.

CNTS - Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal.

D - Dalasi (Gambian national currency).

ECOMOG - Economic Community of West African Monitoring Group.

EDF - European Development Fund.

EEC -European Economic Community.

ERP - Economic Recovery Programme.

EU - European Union.

FPA - Foreign Policy Analysis.

GLU - Gambia Labour Union.

GWC - Gambia's Workers Union.

GDWU - Gambia Dock Workers Union.

GDP - Gross Domestic Product.

GNA - Gambia National Army.

GNB - Gambia National Bulletin.

GNP - Gross National Product.

GPP - Gambia's People's Party.

ICFTU - International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

IDA - International Development Agency.

IDB - Islamic Development Bank.

IFIs - International Financial Institutions.

IMF - International Monetary Fund.

Inter-State Committee for the Fight Against Drought in the Sahel).

MEA - Ministry of External Affairs.

MFDC - Movement des Forces Démocratique de Casamance.

MOGA-G - Movement for Justice in Africa-Gambia.

MPLA - Movimento Popular de Liberação de Angola.

NIEO - New International Economic Order.

NLP - National Liberation Party.

NTC - National Trading Corporation.

OAU - Organisation of the African Unity.

OATUU - Organisation of African Trade Union Unity.

OIC - Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

OMVG - Organisation for the Development of the Gambia River Valley.

OMVS - Organisation de Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal (Organisation for the Development of the Senegal River Valley).

OTUWA - Organisation of Trade Unions of West Africa.

PDOIS - People's Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism.

PLO - Palestine Liberation Organisation.

PPP - People's Progressive Party.

PRC - People's Republic of China.

UN - United Nations.

RWAFF – Royal West African Force.

SAP - Structural Adjustment Programme.

SDR - Special Drawing Rights.

STABEX – Stabilisation of Export Earning Scheme.

SWAPO - South West Africa People's Organisation.

UP - United Party.

ZANU - Zimbabwean African National Union.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The Arguments

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, academic research in the field of international relations has taken on renewed momentum. This may be partly ascribed to the globalisation of political and economic thought and action, as communication has become more sophisticated. One may also look for an explanation to changes in the world economy that are grouping the political economies of core developed nations behind the walls of economic trading blocs and other forms of regionalism.

In this volatile and challenging arena, the ability of small developing states to cope with present political and economic changes on the world stage, that have the potential to further the peripheralisation and impoverishment of these states becomes critical. Consequently such striking disparities have served to expose structural and endemic weaknesses of developing states in the eyes of a more watchful and demanding populace. This work seeks to address these issues by analysing the components of foreign policy in small, dependent states and their relevance to political and economic developments, both domestically and externally.

The study of foreign policy becomes compelling since it not only enhances our knowledge of the dynamics and the constraints faced by small dependent states, it provides a panoramic view of the forces at play in a shrinking world, where the borders of states are slowly disintegrating. In addition, the concept of foreign policy and foreign economic policy are intimately linked to that of survival, since the provision of foreign aid gives weak states the necessary economic tools. Thus in a post-cold war environment, dependency remains a distinct feature.

Yet understanding the primacy of the leader irrespective of role is hardly sufficient to grasp the complexities of decision-making in the foreign policy of small, weak states. The re-democratisation process has ushered in a new ethos, which must take cognisance of pressure groups and other aspects of civil society, however minimal their roles are. As governments become more accountable to the populace for their conduct on the domestic scene, this accountability must extend to their foreign policy choices, since this area ultimately is seen to affect the lives of the masses, directly or indirectly. Foreign policy

therefore needs to be demystified, and taken away from the context of secrecy in which it has been shrouded, and thereby made accessible to a wider audience.

Scholarly attention has been rather biased in placing most emphasis on the foreign policy of great powers.¹ However, Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) has been greatly advanced by American scholars who, in analysing America's external relations, have studied the importance of selected variables in FPA and how they relate to each other.² There is an abundance of literature on FPA, made more complex, because foreign policy falls between two academic stools, international relations and political science.

Definitions of foreign policy abound, but in essence, they encapsulate that area of governmental activity that extends beyond the boundaries of the state. According to Wallace: "foreign policy is that area of politics which bridges the all-important boundary between the nation-state and its international environment".³ Frankel's definition seems broader, and thus better fits the general approach of this study asserting that: "foreign policy consists of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and another".⁴ 'Appreciable extent' may imply a regular and substantial flow of policy inputs and outputs, rather than one of a sporadic nature. This element of regularity in foreign policy is pivotal as the old Whitehall adage affirms, 'once is a cock-up, twice is a coincidence, three times and it's a policy'.⁵ Consequently, relations between one state and another involving decisions and actions, coupled with the element of consistency, make Frankel's definition applicable to our line of study.

The literature on developing states and their foreign policy choices has however also been significant. It has provided a basis for prospective research by enabling scholars to

¹ H. Morgenthau Politics Among Nations, 5th Edition. (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1978). A.B. Fox, The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1959).

² J. Rosenau, Linkage Politics (New York, Free Press, 1969), The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy (New York, Nichols Publishing Company, 1980), The Study of Political Adaptation (New York, Nichols Publishing Company, 1981), Comparing Foreign Policies (New York: Wiley, 1974). See also, J. Rosenau et al, World Politics: An Introduction (New York, The Free Press, 1976), A. Wolfers, Discord and Collaboration (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1969), G.T. Allison, Essence of Decision Making: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, (Boston, Massachusetts, Little Brown, 1971) J.S Nye et al, New Dimensions in World Politics (London, Croom Helm, 1975).

³ W. Wallace, Foreign Policy and the Political Process (London, Macmillan, 1971), p 7.

⁴ J. Frankel, The Making of Foreign Policy, (London, Oxford University Press, 1963), p 1,

⁵ M. Clarke, and S. Smith, 'Perspectives on the foreign policy system: implementation approaches', in M. Clarke. and B. White (eds.), Understanding Foreign Policy, The Foreign Policy Systems Approach (London, Edward Elgar, 1989), p 178.

make worthwhile contributions to comparative study, based on empirical investigation rather than conceptual generalisations on how foreign policy is conducted or how it ought to be. During the post-independence era, the foreign policy of newly independent African states was analysed mainly in terms of decolonisation, non-alignment, economic emancipation and the elusive concept of African solidarity.⁶ In May 1973, during the tenth anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), a total of 396 resolutions were passed, out of which 44 per cent were of direct relevance to external relations. Among the topical issues, the recurrent themes were apartheid, minority rule in South Africa and neighbouring states, and political emancipation for countries that were still under the yoke of colonialism.⁷ Bringing disparate states under the loose concept of the 'Third World' soon proved to be a misnomer. The term 'Third World' was and remains a diffuse concept.⁸

The notion of solidarity which new African states aspired to in the OAU was further pursued through the concept of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) and the linkage between colonialism and underdevelopment. As Akindele argues in the case of the OAU, African leaders, having shared similar experiences, looked upon the organisation as a collective instrument to reflect their difficulties and aspirations, thereby striving to present a common front on African or international issues.⁹ However, the call for solidarity has lately ceased to inspire enthusiasm among African leaders and has since resulted in splinter groups, with individual countries striving to maximise their own interests.

The idea of a common approach among African leaders to matters of common interest embodied in the establishment of the OAU has fractured into a multiplicity of bilateral and multilateral contacts within the international system. This reflects the idiosyncrasies, affinities, interests and foreign policy choices of African states and their leaders as well as each state's own colonial history. Moreover, the demise of the Soviet bloc and the global bi-polar structure has affected diplomacy in the whole developing

⁶ V. McKay, African Diplomacy: Studies in the Determinants of Foreign Policy (London, Pall Mall Press, 1966). I.W. Zartman, International Relations in New Africa (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1966). D. Thiam, The Foreign Policy of African States: Ideological Bases, Present Realities, Future Prospects (London, Phoenix House, 1965). O. Aluko, The Foreign Policy of African States (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977).

⁷ R.A Akindele, 'The Conduct of African Diplomacy', African Studies, 14, 1976, p 560.

⁸ P. Calvert, The Foreign Policy of New States (Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1986) p 53.

⁹ Akindele, op. cit., p 575.

world. The East/West cleavage provided a situational advantage that most African leaders used, not out of ideological affinity to either group, but as an instrument to obtain more political and economic leverage. In the post-cold war era, developing countries can no longer play one side off against the other in their quest for greater political support or economic assistance.

Scholars tend to concentrate on the inexperience of African states in foreign policy issues. Foreign policy is considered by most to be a colonial legacy.¹⁰ Zartman, however, affirms that foreign policy and foreign relations were not novel, especially in West Africa, where they existed even before the establishment of states.¹¹ Ayittey echoes the idea of a pre-colonial diplomacy in Africa, in which African chiefs would employ the services of envoys to mediate among disputing neighbours.¹² Adjaye, regarding Asante history, supports the existence of diplomacy in pre-colonial Africa:

The art, skills and technique of diplomacy were known to and practised by the Asante themselves in the 19th century. Diplomacy à l'Asante is neither an invention of the 20th century mind nor a conceptualization of the 19th century Western observer; diplomacy was indigenous to Asante...¹³

Kirk-Greene meanwhile, contends that what is contemporary in post-colonial Africa is the institutionalisation of diplomacy, i.e. the training of diplomatic cadres in a more professional fashion.¹⁴ Such contemporary aspects of diplomacy and statecraft, whilst relatively new to the majority of African states, do not negate the existence of foreign policy in pre-colonial Africa. The goal here then, is not to create a polemical debate on the novelty of foreign policy in Africa, or to romanticise on the merits of pre-colonial institutions. It is simply to state that foreign policy in its contemporary form is an attempt by the ruling élites in developing states to emulate Western leaders and above all a means of survival.

¹⁰ Aluko, op. cit., p 1.

¹¹ Zartman, op. cit., p 49.

¹² G.B.N Ayittey, Indigenous African Institutions (New York, Transnational Publishers Inc., 1991), p 66.

¹³ J. K. Adjaye, Diplomacy and Diplomats in Nineteenth Century Asante (Lanham, University Press of America, 1984), p 1.

¹⁴ A.H.M Kirk-Greene, 'Diplomacy and diplomats: the formation of foreign service cadres in Black Africa', in K. Ingham (ed.), Foreign Relations of African States (London, Butterworths, 1973), p 280.

The aim of this study is to examine foreign policy-making in The Gambia. However, the study, of necessity, places greatest emphasis on the period 1965-1994, which marks the emergence of the Gambian state to the end of the first republic in 1994.

The choice of The Gambia is important because of its dual character as a small and dependent state. The Gambia's experience in foreign policy formulation provides a microcosmic example of the many difficulties faced by new states. These difficulties encapsulate dependency and size constraints as constantly dominating in the domestic arena. What the study will attempt to do is to show the overwhelming difficulties The Gambia has been confronted with as a result of size and underdevelopment, thereby revealing the extent to which domestic policy has shaped The Gambia's foreign policy objectives and aspirations. In a broader framework, the Gambian experience typifies to some extent the experience of many small dependent states, where foreign policy is no more than an extension of existing domestic priorities. On the other hand, the study intends to demonstrate how the leadership of Sir Dawda Jawara, (the first Gambian Head of State) combined pragmatism and idealism, thus affording The Gambia a rather atypical, active foreign policy, irrespective of the country's relative geographical isolation, its small size and other constraints.

It is suggested here that previous studies on the foreign policy of small dependent states have neglected the decision-making factor, therefore this aspect is focused upon in some depth. The need for a better conceptual framework for the analysis of foreign policy-making can be perceived in the existing literature in general and in the studies on Gambian external relations in particular. While it is difficult to avoid making distinctions between small and large states, this study will attempt to show what is particularly distinctive or noticeably ordinary about The Gambia's foreign policy conduct in contrast to that of other states, both small and large.

The arguments are many, yet intricately linked. The intrinsic theme of the study is premised on the importance of domestic variables and their influence on foreign policy-making. The Gambia displays many of the characteristics that are symptomatic of foreign policy-making in small dependent states such as lack of sophistication, heavy dependence on foreign aid and assistance, primacy of domestic economic policy and the like. Conversely, in spite of all these constraints, The Gambia contradicts conventional wisdom since it has sought to assert itself irrespective of its small size and weak economic

structures. The politics of self-assertion have been particularly evident in The Gambia's relations with three main actors, Britain, Senegal, and other West African states. The Gambia's relations within these three "circles" have been clearly distinctive.

As already suggested, previous studies on The Gambia's external relations¹⁵ have either ignored the emphasis on decision-making or have given rather scant analysis to this vital factor. Decision-making is a complex process and cannot be separated into neat compartments (such as who does what). Yet the study of key decision-makers and their respective roles can be a prelude to penetrating the 'black-box' of decision-making. Most decision-making processes are shrouded in secrecy. However, empirical enquiry reveals the role of the Head of State, ministers and civil servants in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and other relevant ministries.

A further aim here is not only to acknowledge the importance of personalised politics and the idiosyncratic variable, but also to shift the argument slightly from this perspective to other potential participants such as political opposition groups. The role of parliament can be important, since it is in this forum that treaties are ratified and opposition parties can express their opinions regarding foreign policy choices, whether they be concordant or discordant with those views articulated by the ruling party.¹⁶ It is vital also to consider the role of civil society in developing states which differs from that in Western societies, yet understanding its contribution to foreign policy is important. Various elements such as the media, religious groupings, community associations and the youth may have an input. Hence, whilst reflecting on foreign policy concerns and why decisions are made, it is important to consider who are the actors involved. To provide a skeletal structure of the Ministry of External Affairs, albeit useful, would hardly be sufficient to comprehend the reasons and logic behind foreign policy formulation and selection.

The Gambia's external relations exhibit a blend of self-assertion and exigency through the pursuit of economic assistance. Relations with Britain tend to demonstrate a

¹⁵ W.C. Momen, 'The foreign policy and relations of The Gambia', unpublished Ph.D thesis, (LSE, University of London, 1978), S. Gomez, 'The external relations of The Gambia: a study of internal and external factors that influenced foreign policy positions, 1965-1975', unpublished Ph.D dissertation (School of Advanced International Studies, The John Hopkins University, 1978), O. A. Touray 'The foreign policy of developing micro-states: the case of The Gambia', Unpublished Ph.D thesis, 1975-1990, (Université de Genève, 1995).

¹⁶ Calvert, *op. cit.*, p 58.

deviation from the generally expected neo-colonial tendencies that typify relations between metropolitan nations and their former colonies. The Gambia has indeed looked to and relied on British assistance in the form of aid, technical assistance or investment, yet relations with Britain have not been akin to acquiescent tractability. In this light, The Gambia has to some extent invalidated the oft-expressed belief that former colonial powers retain the upper hand with and keep a constant eye on the affairs of their former colonies.

Relations with neighbouring Senegal have developed along in a different way to the widely predicted option of amalgamation. Almost completely surrounded by a larger neighbour, The Gambia, as with most small states, is conscious of its independence in an almost obsessive manner, and thus avoids any option that would result in a dilution of its sovereignty. The literature on The Gambia's external relations with Senegal has been abundant.¹⁷ Nonetheless, recounting Senegambian relations since the pre-independence period becomes inescapable. However, the main aim here is to understand the logic behind The Gambia's dual policy of appeasement and resistance to Senegal, and the latter's strategy of persuasion and co-operation. The primacy of Senegal as a major factor in the conduct of The Gambia's external relations cannot be over-emphasised.

Conventional wisdom predicts a high degree of participation of small states in their regional environment.¹⁸ The Gambia's participation in West African alliances such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the OAU has been quite active. This has stemmed from the belief that "big ambitions" should not be limited to large states with small states as observers. On this theme and in conjunction with its core beliefs and principles, The Gambia has provided much impetus in encouraging the OAU to adopt an African Charter of Human Rights. In addition, Sir Dawda Jawara, the former Gambian Head of State, has sought to reconcile the differences between other

¹⁷ J.C Senghor Politics and the Functional Strategy to International Integration: Gambia in Senegambian Integration, 1958-1974, unpublished Ph.D thesis, (Yale University 1979), A. Hughes 'The Collapse of The Senegambian Confederation', The Journal of Commonwealth and Comperative Politics 30, 1992, pp 200-22, 'From colonialism to confederation: the Gambian experience to independence, 1965-1982', in R. Cohen (ed.) African Islands and Enclaves (London, Sage Publications, 1983), pp 57-80, A. Hughes, 'The Senegambia confederation' Contemporary Review 244, 1417, 1984, pp 83-88, B. Omole, 'L'éclatement de la Sénagambie', Année Africaine, 1989 (Bordeaux, CEAN, 1990), Ebrima Sall, 'Petite dimension et gouvernementalité: essai d'analyse de l'édification de l'état en Gambie', unpublished Ph.D thesis, (Université de Paris, 1992)

¹⁸ M.A East, 'Size and foreign policy behaviour: a test of two models', World Politics 25, 1989, pp 556-76, see also P. J. McGowan and H. B. Shapiro, The Comparative Study of Foreign Policy: A Study of Scientific Findings (Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1973), p 108.

African leaders in dispute with one another, through personal diplomacy and his self-assumed mediatorial persona.

The character of The Gambia's relations within the three aforementioned circles has been eclectic rather than monolithic, with a conscious effort not to remain under the wing of any dominant group whilst avoiding policies that risk alienation. Moreover, The Gambia's conduct in foreign policy formulation is almost similar to that of a small state that seeks to replicate the attributes and aspirations of a larger one.

On the other hand, the politics of self-assertion that The Gambia displays within its three circles runs counter to the heavy dependency evident in external relations with the rest of the world where it pursues a policy of national interest through the pursuit of aid and technical assistance. However, whether the strategies a state may employ to alleviate size constraints are regarded with admiration or criticism, this does not invalidate the primacy of domestic policy over foreign policy.

The realist perception of the world as a hostile environment is not entirely inaccurate, yet this "hostility" in the context of developing states like The Gambia is more internally rooted. Such hostility is multifaceted and revolves around managing a weak economy, striking a balance between self-reliance and dependency and alleviating the difficulties endemic in underdeveloped, poverty-stricken societies. The international environment can be viewed as a common enemy to small developing states since it magnifies problems relating to underdevelopment and dependency, yet one cannot ignore that environment as a fund of potential resources.

This study then, tends to agree with previous academic work on the significance of domestic policy and the urgency of capital in-flow into a weak economy as important determinants of Gambian Foreign Policy. Yet our study goes one step further in arguing that foreign policy is an integral part of state building, particularly in new states. Foreign aid and assistance are indicators of worth often used consciously or unconsciously by leaders to satisfy popular economic expectations and as a means of secreting the weakness of the state from public scrutiny. The aid aspect of foreign policy is a highly controversial one and is often criticised as retarding growth instead of encouraging it. While this assertion is not entirely erroneous, the positive aspect of foreign aid as a means of buttressing weak entities is grossly understated.

Methodology

Study on the foreign policy of a small state on the periphery of the world-economy such as The Gambia inspires only modest scholarly interest. One may look to the abundance of scholarship on Nigerian foreign policy as an indication that scholarly scrutiny lies with bigger entities which rightly or wrongly appear to depict more interesting case studies. This study will endeavour to examine theoretical notions in the light of empirical evidence. However, the study will not review the literature on small states or their foreign policy in an isolated manner. The danger in adopting such a method is that this would tend to neglect the salience of empirical findings, thus diluting the cogency of the main arguments. In absence of sufficient scholarly material on The Gambia, the study attaches a great deal of importance to empiricism since it constitutes a principal element in the understanding of foreign policy in The Gambia. In a study of this magnitude, the need to provide the reader with the requisite background information is inescapable. This accounts for certain narrative passages. However, the study seeks to find a happy medium between the narrative and analytical contents of foreign policy in The Gambia, between 1965-94.

The study draws its sources from two main branches: theoretical analysis and empirical investigation. Given The Gambia's characteristic features as a small, underdeveloped new state, it is important to examine the literature of other African states for a broader understanding of African diplomacy. However, due to the limited research on foreign policy formulation in new states, it is perhaps necessary to examine the relevant Western models of policy formulation and evaluate how they relate to the African context. Moreover, as stated earlier, the institutionalisation of foreign policy in contemporary Africa is a reflection of Western precedents. Thus understanding African diplomacy is intricately linked to the understanding of Western diplomacy, since the latter has served either as a model or as a source of emulation among ruling African élites. It is also important to say that references to larger developing states such as Nigeria do not contradict our initial definition of a small dependent state, they simply widen the debate to the context of African and/or developing states.

Previous scholarship on The Gambia's external relations has revealed a paucity of fieldwork.¹⁹ Interviews with key decision-makers have been fairly minimal and have not succeeded in advancing empirical knowledge of The Gambia. Given a rather poor system

of record-taking and inadequate filing systems in most developing states it is important that decision-makers are thoroughly probed in order to reveal the general intentions and aspirations that have motivated them. In this light the study is distinctive in offering a greater scope for empirical investigation in order to understand the logic behind key foreign policy decisions. Primary sources are in the form of archival studies as well as interviews conducted during field trips in England, The Gambia, (the author spent six months in The Gambia) and Senegal, with key Gambian decision-makers, particularly with the former Head of state, Sir Dawda Jawara.

Jawara's role has been instrumental in the foreign policy formulation of The Gambia from its genesis in 1965 until 1994, when he was ousted from power in a military coup and replaced by a military junta headed by Lieutenant Yaya Jammeh. Jawara's account of foreign policy making in The Gambia gives the study a unique opportunity to understand the preoccupation of a small state, and the relevance of the Head of State in the conduct of African diplomacy. The coup d'état ushered in an exceptional period during which former politicians and key civil servants within the decision-making structure in The Gambia, were more receptive, and were prepared to recount their experiences more willingly than they otherwise would. The need to set the record straight was felt among former key decision-makers.

However, it would also be fair to suggest that the 1994 coup and the 'repressive' regime that this event ushered in, in some cases, could have inhibited the free expression of the views of respondents in The Gambia itself. With this in mind, the nature of the interviews were both formal and informal depending on the situation at hand. Overall though, interviews of key decision-makers undertaken in The Gambia, Senegal and the United Kingdom have served as an important premise to the understanding of foreign policy formulation in The Gambia.

The 1994 coup dramatically changed the political landscape and the nature of personal relations in The Gambia. In such an introverted society, the task of academic research was made more difficult by the climate of suspicion and scepticism that seemed to reign in the aftermath of the coup. Certain people whose identity would have otherwise added more weight to the veracity of their claims requested to be kept off the records. However, most of the interviews that were conducted informally, offering a relaxed

¹⁹ Touray, unpublished Ph.D thesis op. cit., p 372.

atmosphere, proved more revealing. Nonetheless for greater validity and more thorough field work, interviewees were categorised as: former politicians, former civil servants, opposition leaders past and present, religious leaders, journalists, trade unionists and others participants in Gambian civil society.

In addition, as an insider with an insight into the preoccupation and knowledge of personalities and issues, the author experienced certain limitations. For instance there was a reticence among some government officials past and present, and certain members of civil society, to reveal details that they would possibly disclose to an outsider. Yet the perception of the insider cuts both ways, allowing the latter to benefit from information not otherwise disclosed to 'strangers'. On the other hand, the need for former politicians or decision-makers to present a more glowing account of their experiences for parochial interests or due to personal allegiances is inescapable in a study of this nature.

Equally, the need for present decision-makers to consolidate their positions through self-congratulatory assertions was felt and allowed for in some cases. However, in the main, interviewees proved to be reasonably dispassionate, and in the interest of greater veracity, their allegations were further tested with proponents or opponents depending on the argument at hand. In cases where key decision-makers were not available for interview during the author's field trip, letters and faxes were sent in the form of a questionnaire in order to benefit from their views and experiences on foreign policy formulation in The Gambia. This method, in spite of its limitations, proved to be very rewarding as it gave the interviewees the opportunity to elaborate on issues that would otherwise have received scant attention in a one to one interview. It also gives the author the chance to ask for further clarifications of previous responses.

Newspapers articles were a useful source of information, being highly informative both in terms of their chronological precision of events regarding The Gambia's external relations, and in relation to loan agreements concluded between The Gambia and external financial institutions or donors. The choice of newspapers was not indiscriminate as the study was particularly interested in evaluating both the views of government-owned newspapers such as The Gambia National Bulletin, independent papers such as the The Torch and The Nation, and opposition political newspapers such as Foroyaa. Papers such as Foroyaa and The Torch served as important barometers in gauging public opinion,

while presenting a counterweight to the official version of events, particularly regarding Senegambian relations.

The author spent six months in The Gambia (May 1996-October 1996), during which several trips were made to Dakar. Public record offices in The Gambia and in London (Kew) were frequently visited in order to provide a range of archival study relating to The Gambia and its external relations, i.e. the United Kingdom and Senegambia issues. A visit to the Centre of Black African studies in Bordeaux (CEAN) was made in order to assess relevant literature on The Gambia and Senegal. Thus the study seeks to differentiate itself from previous scholarship on the subject insofar as it extends empirical investigation to include Senegal. This necessitated a visit to Senegal where key Senegalese decision-makers were interviewed. A study of The Gambia's relations with other states would be incomplete if one excludes Senegal, its closest neighbour and one of the most important external actors in the conduct of foreign policy in The Gambia. It was thus imperative to talk to Senegalese decision-makers and understand their logic and assessment of Senegambian relations to arrive at a more balanced view. Likewise, Senegalese newspapers have written abundantly on Senegambian issues, and it was important to evaluate a wide array of these journals to gauge the independent views of ordinary Senegalese people on their relations with neighbouring Gambia. Occasionally, government officials used newspapers to test certain policies or simply to heighten certain tensions between the two countries.

Outline

The study is divided into two sections. Section 1 looks at the domestic determinants and foreign policy choices in The Gambia and section 2 analyses the decision-making structure and foreign policy formulation. The need to structure the study in two distinct parts is essential if we are to understand the domestic determinants (Section 1) and how these in turn have conditioned the decision-making aspect of foreign policy (Section 2), which further throws light on The Gambia's foreign policy choices and decisions. The study does not attempt to provide answers to the numerous questions posed, it merely highlights the difficulties and the positive aspect of foreign policy-making in a small developing country. However, due to the author's background in international politics, much of the analyses in the study will be looked at from a political rather than an economic angle.

Chapter 2

Chapter two is a background study of The Gambia in its geographical and historical context. The historical aspect is important in that it examines the legacy of newly independent states, especially their relations with former colonial metropoli. On the other hand, the colonial inheritance can be an important determinant since it creates certain affinities between states that have had the experience of a shared past. Size, geographic location, and domestic political structure are similarly decisive since they constitute component national attributes of any state. Cultural aspects will be examined, in order to determine whether any form of Gambian culture is transposed from a national to an international level. This chapter seeks to provide a general setting in which to understand the global framework wherein foreign policy choices are formulated.

Chapter 3

Chapter three gives a detailed outline of The Gambia's foreign policy objectives. This chapter, based on these objectives, assesses the character of foreign policy-making in The Gambia. Examining the country's foreign policy choices will provide a basis from which to judge whether it has adopted a permissive, autonomous, defensive, initiative or reactive foreign policy stance. Conventional wisdom has argued that weak and/or small states are hardly in a position to initiate foreign policy. The extent to which this contention validates or invalidates The Gambia's experience in terms of its foreign policy aspirations is examined. The chapter also discusses the difficulties of policy implementation, especially when there is a yawning gap between rhetoric and resources.

Chapter 4

Chapter four examines the role of civil society. The importance of civil societies is a favourite topic among contemporary scholars in assessing the foreign policy of industrial nations. What is the state of civil society in developing countries? Are the roles of opposition parties, public opinion, the press and religious groups in policy formulation a reflection of the feebleness of civil society in developing states? The general contention is that in small states like The Gambia, there is a high level of consensus among governments

and political parties. Yet this must not be taken for granted and the boundaries of consensus should be properly established. The press is often perceived to be 'guided'. How does this affect its ability to portray certain key areas of policy-making, especially in a society where illiteracy is widespread? To what extent has the absence of a vibrant civil society accorded decision-makers more elbowroom in both foreign policy decisions and implementation?

Chapter 5

Chapter five discusses the decision-making process itself. The way The Gambia perceives itself both in its immediate environment and in the international environment at large will determine to what lengths it will go to pursue its foreign policy choices. Therefore self-image is an important aspect in order to understand the foreign relations of a particular state. How did former Head of State Jawara contribute in shaping policy options through his general perception of international relations? To what extent was he able to steer The Gambia away from Senegalese domination, and remain assertive, despite dependence on the former colonial overlord and other donors? The bureaucratic variable will also be discussed, in spite of the fact that received wisdom dismisses this variable as irrelevant. This chapter will also assess the role of respective ministries, especially the Ministry of Finance in foreign economic policy.

In addition, the role of the cabinet in foreign policy formulation will be investigated. The diplomatic service is an important branch of the overall foreign policy structure, and is described as a linchpin of Nigerian foreign policy. The following questions are tackled. Can this factor be transposed to the Gambian situation? Is the foreign service in a position to initiate and/or act on foreign policy decisions? Can the foreign service analyse discernible patterns in the foreign policy behaviour of other states? Is it a participating or an observatory organ? Is there a clear agenda for different foreign missions that are representing The Gambia around the world or do they simply play a protocol role?

Chapter 6

In chapter 6 we explore The Gambia's relationship with its immediate West African neighbours, this being the central theme of its African international relations. The Gambian example seems to support the prognosis that predicts the active participation of small states in their regional environment. This is motivated by a self-perception of Gambian decision-makers that The Gambia could use its inspiring example of democracy and human rights to encourage other African states to follow in a similar direction. The scope of The Gambia's African relations, particularly within subregional bodies and continental organisations, underlines its enthusiasm to demonstrate the part that it intends to play in African international relations. In addition, the chapter outlines the strategies employed by The Gambia to buttress its domestic security structures and thus safeguard the regime. Relations with Nigeria not only served the initial purpose of a security anchor, but also were used by Gambian decision-makers as an insurance policy in the event of a more conflictual relationship with The Gambia's putative enemy, Senegal.

Chapter 7

Chapter seven describes The Gambia's relations with Senegal. As has already been stated, The Gambia, as with most small states, is demonstrably possessive in its autonomy and seeks to avoid any options that mean a loss of sovereignty, particularly where Senegal is concerned. This chapter evaluates the nature of Senegambian relations since the dawn of Gambian independence and assesses the high and low points of the period between 1965 and 1994.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 examines The Gambia's foreign economic policy as a survival strategy. The chapter evaluates pragmatism in foreign economic policy whereby The Gambia clearly sought to maximise economic gains. This strategy tallies with the concept of rational approach in which decision-makers are preoccupied with the quest for national survival, adopting policies that are in accordance with the 'national interest'. The chapter examines the relations between The Gambia and its former colonial overlord, Britain. It

highlights the Gambian dependency on British aid and technical assistance particularly in the first ten years of The Gambia's independence. Although Britain continues to play a vital role in providing foreign aid, The Gambia has diversified its aid sources over the years. With a reputation for democracy and respect of human rights (before the events of the 1994 coup), The Gambia was able to gain support from Western donors including the US, the EU, France, Germany and Canada to mention a few. These countries are all sympathetic to the principles of a liberal democracy and human rights.

However, domestic pressures and the character of the Gambian society have encouraged decision-makers also to turn to Middle Eastern countries. Thus, The Gambia played the Islamic card in its aim to obtain more assistance from rich Arab states in the name of Islamic solidarity, i.e., "Ummah". Principles were relegated to secondary level when they clashed with the national interest. The importance of pragmatic politics came to the fore in The Gambia's two Chinas policy and the decision to sever ties with Israel at the height of the Arab/Israeli conflict. The role of non-state external actors, particularly financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, is also extremely important in the foreign economic objectives of developing states such as The Gambia and, whilst these are covered in some detail elsewhere, are also relevant to this study.

The main focus in this penultimate chapter is to demonstrate the importance of foreign economic policy as a survival mechanism. Decision-makers in The Gambia have essentially used basic domestic features such as: small size, political stability and the like, to curry favour all around the world. Consequently, foreign policy tends to serve as an instrument in national development, especially in new states. Leaders may perpetuate their stay in office using foreign policy, while their economies are given a new lease of life through a regular in-flow of foreign aid. Thus the attention of the public is diverted from an inept and impotent government, thereby enhancing the credibility and, by implication, the electability of an otherwise weak administration. Meanwhile the ruling élite enjoy the fruits of a government that cannot guarantee the aspirations of its people on its own and is obliged to live on international hand outs.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 is the concluding chapter in which the study summarises the accumulated evidence presented in the preceding chapters drawn from primary and secondary enquiry. The key features of foreign policy formulation and execution in The Gambia and their impact on the country itself as well as on external actors, are singled out and analysed. Finally, the author presents her personal interpretation of the findings

CHAPTER 2: Background Study to The Gambia's Domestic Setting

The Historical Inheritance.

One can hardly discuss the foreign policy of African states without taking into consideration their colonial legacy and how this relates to the general prosecution of policy formulation. Scholars such as Aluko have made reference to the salience of colonial heritage in the general conduct of foreign policy in African states.¹ Colonial heritage has left its mark in different areas; the legal, educative and administrative systems are but a few examples. The adoption of currency zones, in particular that of the CFA Franc, and the Commonwealth sterling zone reflected the almost umbilical ties that were symbols of this heritage.

From the colonial heritage stemmed a special relationship between the metropoli and their former colonies. Nowhere else is the colonial bond so perpetuated and ubiquitous as in new states, where organisations such as 'La Francophonie', and the Commonwealth continue to carry the resonance of a shared past. Even though some African countries blame colonial masters for their present predicament, they are still clutching to the last remaining vestiges that link Europe to its former colonies. Moreover, the tendency to consider themselves first and foremost as francophone or anglophone countries persists. This attitude is reflected in membership of certain economic and subregional bodies such as the Francophone Economic Community of West African States (CEAO).

Relations between colonial metropoli and their former colonies tend to oscillate between harmony and disharmony. This however is a trend typical of many inter-state relations, especially if cultural diversity is a relevant feature and even in cases when there is a great degree of affinity between members. Thus, leaders of francophone states have complained of French interference in their internal matters, yet most of them have enjoyed the protection they get from the military and defence protocols which allow France to provide assistance in the case of political upheavals or external aggression. This has led some African leaders to bask in the secure knowledge that they could count on France's

¹ Aluko (1977) op.cit., p 10.

paternalistic and neo-colonial disposition, to maintain them in power in the event of any major internal upheaval.

Yet the relationship between former colonies and their colonial overlords is an uneasy one. Attempts by African leaders to extricate themselves from the colonial grip are all too familiar, but the gap between capability and intent is often too difficult to bridge. Nkrumah's radical views and anti-western stance did not prevent him from enlisting Ghana as an associate member of the Yaoundé Convention between the EEC and former African colonies. As Nkrumah himself asserted: 'You cannot cancel 100 years of history, and history has brought Africa and Europe into close community'.²

In this vein, the study of foreign policy formulation can in part be understood in the light of its historical context. This is partly because most African states, insofar as contemporary aspects of diplomacy are concerned, have had to rely heavily on assistance from former colonial masters, since their experience in this domain was fairly limited.³ The lack of diplomatic expertise is perhaps more acute in the case of small states, where there is a profound deficiency of training and skills, also an aspect of the colonial heritage. Since independence, like so many of its counterparts in the developing world, The Gambia has also suffered a dearth of skilled labour. Even those who have been fortunate enough to gain skills that would be valuable to the country, have largely left in order to seek better opportunities and remuneration elsewhere. Indeed, the problem of skilled workers was so acute in the post independent years, that the government had to rely on British civil servants coupled with a handful of Gambian senior civil servants to forge domestic and foreign policies.

Nonetheless, the history of The Gambia cannot be re-written within the confines of this chapter. Moreover, the aim is not to embark upon such an exercise, but to delve into history as a prelude to the understanding of its foreign policy. The history of The Gambia is not dissimilar from that of many other African states as it includes European imperialism and expansion in Africa.

² Loc. cit.

³ G. Evans, 'A small state with a powerful neighbour: Namibia/South Africa relations since independence' *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 31, 1, (1993), pp 134-5.

The reasons that brought Europeans into the hinterland of Africa are numerous. However, historians contend that the dominant reason was economic gratification. Europe in the 19th century was at the height of industrial development. Africa was perceived to be inundated with the raw materials and new markets that would grant the two main protagonists for economic hegemony in the emerging world economy, Britain and France, a considerable edge over other competitors in the race for geopolitical supremacy in Europe. Thus at the time of the 'scramble for Africa' in the late 1880s, the procurement of African territory in which to create economic dependency was perceived by the two main rivals as a vital opportunity that had to be seized at all costs.

The early image of the River Gambia being inundated with gold mines was soon proved to be a gross exaggeration as the first Portuguese settlers discovered between 1455-1588.⁴ In 1458, Portuguese explorers sent out by Prince Henry the Navigator discovered the mouth of the river Gambia and sailed past it. Later Portuguese settlement was brief in comparison to that of the British. Although the British had no difficulty in supplanting the Portuguese settlers, it is noteworthy that the latter were responsible for the importation of a number of crops such as pawpaw, limes and oranges. Most of all, as Gray contends, it was the Portuguese that introduced groundnuts to The Gambia, which is today the main cash crop.⁵

The Gambia was subsequently 'discovered' by the Dutch, the French and the British respectively. However, with the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, the Gambia came under the jurisdiction of Britain. Although The Gambia was by no means a coveted territory insofar as it was not endowed with mineral resources, its navigable river was regarded as one of the "best sub-Saharan waterways into the interior".⁶ The river was said to be navigable 150 miles upstream, irrespective of the season.⁷ This important feature was no negligible factor to the British, to whom trade was an established priority. The idea of exchanging The Gambia for French trading posts in the Gulf of Guinea or the territory of Gabon was debated by the British and the French governments, but discussion were aborted in 1876. The failure of the discussion was partly due to considerable opposition from some of the indigènes who wished to remain under British

⁴ J.M. Gray *A History of The Gambia* (London, Frank Cass, 1966), pp 5-12.

⁵ Ibid, p 15.

⁶ Claude E. Welch Jr. *Dream of Unity: Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1966), p 252.

⁷ Loc. cit.

influence, and also due to the trading advantages of the River Gambia, as perceived by the British.

The French by contrast, having lost the Franco-Prussian War, were determined to restore lost pride and a shattered economy. They set about conquering the hinterland of Africa and consolidating their position by setting up administrative posts and proceeding with trade and the imposition of taxes, even before the British had the opportunity to do so. The French demonstrated real enthusiasm in their quest for hegemony in West Africa, contrary to the relative passivity of the British. They expanded their sphere of influence from the Senegalese coastal area to the Casamance River in the south, likewise east to the valley of the upper Niger. Faidherbe, the French military leader and governor in 1854, brought together the territory that was to become the colony of Senegal.

However, Faidherbe's ambition was to extend this parcel of land to the north, east and south. The French government wanted a tidier arrangement that would neatly demarcate lines and establish areas of influence between France and Britain. Possession of The Gambia would tidy up matters given that the Island of St Mary and the town of Bathurst, were under British control. In 1889, the British and French governments came to an agreement that that would mark the boundaries between their respective influences.

These boundaries in spite of their arbitrariness afforded the British exclusive rights to The Gambia. The agreement was ratified in a convention that meant both parties had to respect it until definitive arrangements were made. However, this agreement, initially meant to be an ad hoc agreement, soon showed signs of becoming a permanent arrangement. The 1889 border agreement, was indicative of the very expression of French and British rivalry in West Africa. The boundaries of The Gambia, absurd and totally unrealistic, are an extension of European diplomacy in the 19th century that took no consideration of geographical, or cultural affinities between the people in the surrounding area. As Gailey rightly argues:

Viewed not from its present position, but in reference to its role in the 'scramble for Africa', the Gambia becomes a key factor for understanding West Africa at that time. Its present boundaries attest to the passivity of the British and the activity of the French, not only in the field, but also at the conference table. The Gambia in

this type of analysis becomes a classic case of the unreality of European diplomacy in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century.⁸

This view is echoed by Welch: 'Thus Gambia was left a riverain enclave, ten times as long as it was wide, half the size of Wales. Surely such few geographic oddities have ever been created'.⁹

Nonetheless, the artificial boundaries have created two distinct states, Senegal and The Gambia, with striking dissimilarities in their administrative institutions. In Senegal, local officials (partly due to the French system of colonisation and assimilation, which gave the Senegalese the status of "assimilés") had a tendency to consider themselves as superior to their Gambian colleagues. This attitude of superiority exhibited by Senegalese officials vis-à-vis their Gambian counterparts created certain inhibitions on the Gambian side and contributed to the subsequent division between the two states.

Between 1821 and 1888, excluding the years between 1843 and 1866, The Gambia was administered as part of Sierra Leone. This explains how key positions within the Gambian administration at the time, came to be held by Sierra Leonean Creoles, (the Akus) distinctive in their style, pro-Western and Christians in a predominantly Muslim society, with a somewhat Victorian outlook. The Akus in the Gambia and the "assimilés" or the "évolués" in Senegal manifested the antipathy that was rather stereotypical of their different colonial overlords, the British and the French.¹⁰ With a somewhat distinctive colonial philosophy on both sides, the road to integration between Senegal and The Gambia seemed, even during this early period, was to be paved with irreconcilable differences. As Welch contends, colonial heritage had attributed to each state different identities which stalled the progress of a truly Senegambian association.¹¹

Due to the colonial legacy, certain patterns of the independent Gambian administrative machinery could be linked to British influence. Even in cases where the structure adopted was of a skeletal nature, the ideology and philosophy were to a large extent conceived by Gambian decision-makers with the British administrative system in mind. Notwithstanding, foreign policy-making in its general evolution has lost its British

⁸ H. A. Gailey Jr. *A History of the Gambia* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p 110.

⁹ Welch, *op. cit.*, p 257.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 257-260.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 260.

stamp and acquired an air of “Gambianness”, although its organisational aspects are a colonial remnant. However, the size factor, an intrinsic characteristic that has been a key determinant in the general conduct of Gambian foreign policy, should not be understated.

The Size Factor.

For eighteenth century geopoliticians, space was power. In other words, spatial area determined the power of a state. Consequently, geographical space equated with viability. However, there is no significant relationship between the size of a state and its ultimate strength. For instance, the territorial area of the Netherlands is 13,000 sq. miles, and Bolivia’s more than 420,000, but irrespective of the vast territory of Bolivia, the Netherlands is by far the stronger state in economic terms alone.¹²

Conventional wisdom has made up substantially for the initial myopia in the literature on small states.¹³ However, despite the fact that the literature has been quite prolific, analyses on the conduct of small states are still obscured with pitfalls and misconceptions. After decades of research studies, scholars have still not come up with a common denominator to define what constitutes smallness.¹⁴ This is indicative of the contradictions pervasive in the literature on small states.

According to a UNITAR study¹⁵, the regrouping of states in Europe from small political units into bigger entities has brought about the disappearance of many small states.¹⁶ Elsewhere, in Africa, the Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean, the decolonisation period brought into existence new states that never existed as separate entities. As a result the majority these states had to embark on state building on the domestic scene, and on the international scene they had to assume their newly found roles.

¹² D. Whittlesey, The Earth and the State, A Study of Political Geography (London, Arno Press), 1972, p 10.

¹³ D.Vital, The Inequality of States (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967), The Survival of Small States :Studies in Small Power-Great Power Conflict (London, Oxford University Press, 1971); R.O Keohane, ‘Lilliputians dilemmas :small states in international politics’, International Organisation 23, 2,1969, pp 291-310; R.L Rothstein Alliances and Small Powers (New York, Columbia University Press, 1968).

¹⁴ Burton Benedict (ed.) Problems of Smaller Territories (London, The Athlone Press, 1967), pp 1-11.

¹⁵ The UNITAR study published in 1971 deals primarily with the problems of microstates and their roles within the global international community and international bodies. For further reference see J.Rapaport et al, Small States and Territories:Status and Problems (New York, Arno Press, 1971)

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p 11.

Liliputian states had to find their niches and voices in an international environment in which the power of a nation was measured in terms of its spatial supremacy technological economic and military might. This intrinsically overt bias in the general conduct of states was rendered more difficult by a latent bias in the literature of international relations. The tendency for scholars to cast their uneven scrutiny on the conduct of great powers and their efforts to maintain equilibrium through the balance of power system was all too readily perceived in the literature.¹⁷ The role played by small powers both in the international arena or in political alliances, (especially from a security perspective) has been analysed and examined by different scholars.¹⁸ However, studies tend to be either praiseworthy or critical, with often atypical cases in which the conduct of small states is portrayed as exemplary.¹⁹ Efforts should therefore be geared towards evaluating the formulation of policies on a daily basis, rather than in a crisis situation.

How do you bring together different states with striking disparities under the shared conditions of smallness, weakness and poverty? For instance Namibia has a population of 1.6 million²⁰ yet is two and a half times the size of Germany, Singapore with a population of under three million has a GNP per capita of \$22,500²¹ and Kuwait is rich in oil but small in state capacity. Thus, the tendency to equate small with paucity of resources is not entirely tenable. While most small weak states figure among the least developed countries, other small states appear at the opposite end of the poor/rich spectrum. Small states such as Kuwait, Botswana, and Singapore, are relatively rich, Kuwait due to its oil, Botswana its diamonds and Singapore by virtue of its high level of economic development. However, the important thing is not how much wealth a country commands but how that wealth is employed. Singer shares this view:

¹⁷ Considering the all too exhaustive list on the subject, see H. Morgenthau, (1978) op. cit., M. Beloff, The Balance of Power (Montreal, McGill University Press, 1967)

¹⁸ W.E. Patterson, 'Small States in International Politics, Co operation and Conflict .2, 1969, pp 119-123. R.L Rothstein, Alliances and Small Powers (New York Columbia University Press, 1968).

¹⁹ Vital, (1971). In this study, Vital describes the foreign policy conduct of small states like Czechoslovakia, Finland, and Israel and in a rather maverick manner, examines their efforts to survive in a hostile environment.

²⁰ Africa South of the Sahara 1997 (London, Europa Publications Limited, 1996) p 692.

²¹ World Development Report 1997: from Plan to Market (New York, Oxford University Press for World Bank, 1996) p 189.

Neither a large number of people nor vast reserves of resources - by themselves - make a country wealthy. A country can become wealthy only when it is in a position to mobilize its human and natural resources for production.²²

The definitional aspects of smallness are still blurred with numerous contradictions and inaccuracies. What criteria determine whether a nation is small or large? Should population size be an indicator of smallness, or should the balance be struck between measurements such as resources, GNP per capita, or level of economic development?

With regard to previous writings on The Gambia, the definition of smallness has not advanced. Although definitions of small size are usually hazy, Sall²³, Touray,²⁴ Cooke²⁵ classify The Gambia as a typical example of a small state. Cooke adopts a benchmark of 1-7.5 million to include small states, rather than focus primarily on microstates.²⁶ His twin definition of population and GNP per capita offer more accuracy than those drawn by previous scholars. Cooke by using GNP per capita seems to endorse the use of economic indicators to define "smallness".

For instance, Azar, defines a small state as "an international political actor whose total GNP accounts for less than one percent of the world's GNP".²⁷ However, he fails to state how relevant this is. Although, GNP can reflect the strength and weakness of a particular economy, it does not necessarily give an accurate picture of certain aspects of smallness. This is because the global economic performance of a rich state, with a small population, may be close or equal to a state with a large population. Similarly, per capita income is often misleading when applied to small states, as there are cases when it is relatively high in areas where economic performance is low. This is because in some areas due to high salaries of expatriates, per capita income tends to remain high.

²² M.R. Singer, 'The Foreign Policies of Small Developing States' in Rosenau, Thompson, Boyd (eds.) *World Politics: An Introduction* (New York, The Free Press, 1976) p 264

²³ Sall, unpublished Ph.D thesis, op.cit., pp 17-23

²⁴ Touray, op. cit., pp 9-10. In fact Touray refers to The Gambia as a micro-state, and his thesis is premised on the notion that contrary to received wisdom, small states' conduct in foreign policy is more important than the oft-accepted administrative and protocol affairs.

²⁵ D. Cooke, 'Structural adjustment in small states: the case of The Gambia, 1985-1994', p iv

²⁶ Cooke, op.cit, p iii.

²⁷ P.R. Baehr, in 'Small states a tool for analysis', *World Politics* 27, 1974-1975, p 460

Another characteristic of small states, according to Cooke, is reliance on taxation derived from imports and exports as a means of buttressing domestic revenue.²⁸ Cooke speaks of the advantages derived by small states such as The Gambia by adopting a more liberal approach to tariffs on imports and exports. In essence, he shows that revenue garnered by governments imposing lighter tariffs have been at least equivalent to that obtained by those countries, which chose to impose a much higher tariffs, e.g., Liberia and Sierra Leone. However, this factor is not necessarily pertinent to the smaller state argument as virtually all states in the developing world adopted external trade tariffs to some degree in response to the writings of dependence theorists.

Touray, on the other hand, notes that the three most common determinants of smallness are population, area and size of the economy however he notes that these indicators could be erroneous since not all small states are small in size, economy or population.²⁹ Hence The Gambia and Guyana have a population of one million but an area of 11,295 and 214,969 square kilo metres respectively.³⁰ Although, the most common criteria used as a measurement for small size are population and area, any attempt to define size on the basis of measurements such as population, spatial area, paucity of resources and economic strength could be rather arbitrary. This is mainly because such factors are relative not absolute. This view is shared by scholars such as Rosenau³¹, and Benedict³² who argue that size is a relative factor, invariably used in polar cases when small states are compared to states that are perceived as bigger. Touray fails to justify his one million benchmark, but admits to the arbitrariness of using population as a yardstick to define size.

While the UNITAR study concentrates primarily on micro-states, its findings though highly innovative in advancing the research on small states is now obsolete since the majority of micro-states have now witnessed their population double or triple. For instance, the estimated population of The Gambia is tabled as 336,000, the latter's population is according to recent figures estimated at 1,025,867,³³ i.e., slightly over the one million yardstick and three times over the UNITAR figure.

²⁸ Cooke, op. cit., pp 5-6

²⁹ Touray, op. cit., p 3

³⁰ Loc. cit.

³¹ Rosenau (1981), op. cit., p 104.

³² Benedict, op. cit., pp 45.

What is most evident in Gomez's analysis of small states is the absence of linkage between secondary sources and empirical findings. Thus his mastery of the theories seem totally inappropriate given his failure to point out their merits or limits.³⁴ Gomez's definition takes into account the security factor. Consequently, small states are more inclined to pacifist behaviour in the light of their vulnerability and weaknesses in terms of military might.³⁵ However, small states such as Vietnam, have fought against large powers such as the United States, using guerilla fighting and other methods of warfare to make up for military inferiority. Although small states in general tend to conform to international law and principles, their degree of passivity or pacifism is dependent on the leader and the priorities of the state.

Sall, in accepting Vital's unrestricted population benchmark of 20 to 30 million, confuses the reader.³⁶ Vital's definition of a small state is far too vague. In the case of economically advanced states, he draws a benchmark of 10 to 15 million and 20 to 30 million inhabitants in the case of underdeveloped states.³⁷ Surely a population this size, could not realistically be termed as "small". Vital implicit logic especially in the case of underdeveloped states, suggests an a priori bias, i.e. that a low economic performance is the main determinant in the classification of small and large states. Thus by seeking to broaden the definition of small size he only contributes to amplifying the existing ambiguities. Similarly, Baehr,³⁸ by categorising states as "small", "middle" and "very large", obscures the discourse on small states even more.³⁹

Nonetheless, population and GNP by themselves, are inadequate measurements to define a small state. The population criterion should be supplemented by another factor, i.e. aid percentage of GNP. By considering aid as a percentage of GNP one is defining a fundamental dependency factor common to the majority of the countries in our study. For instance, according to the World Development Report 1997, the aid percentage of GNP for The Gambia stood at 24.4 per cent in 1980 and 19.4 per cent in 1994 thus emphasising a high dependency level.⁴⁰

³³ The Gambia, in Africa South of the Sahara 1997 op. cit., p 432.

³⁴ Gomez, op. cit., pp 11-8.

³⁵ Ibid, p 9.

³⁶ Sall, op. cit., pp 17-23.

³⁷ Baehr, op. cit., p 460.

³⁸ Ibid, p 459

³⁹ Loc. cit.

⁴⁰ World Development Report 1997 (New York, Oxford University Press for the World Bank, 1997) pp 214-7.

The study, in comparison to Cooke's thesis, does not consider GNP an accurate measurement of economic smallness. For instance the World Development Report 1997 lists 24 countries in which aid represents in excess of 15 per cent of GNP.⁴¹ Of these 21 are in Africa, yet GNP per capita often used as a benchmark of economic smallness differs widely within this category. Notably, The Congo and Chad in 1995 each received aid as a proportion of GNP of approximately 25 per cent, yet Tanzania comes third lowest in the overall GNP per capita rating with \$120 per head.⁴² Interestingly, The Congo appears forty-sixth lowest within the same category with a much higher GNP per capita of \$680 per head.⁴³ These figures further show that GNP cannot be relied upon as an accurate measurement. Consequently, this study in using aid as a percentage of GNP strengthens the argument that chronic dependency on external aid is a further test of small-scale economies. Although these definitions are still fairly relative they go further than those already outlined, by recognising the fact that small size cannot be defined by a single variable. They also underlines the danger of "lumping" all states together, since small states tend to exhibit different characteristics.

Scholars almost unanimously perceive economic smallness as a disadvantage. Rothstein states that small dependent states lack the potential to expand their domestic demand either through an increase in employment or agricultural output.⁴⁴ Yet, according to Kuznets, the disparities between the economic structures of both small states and large states are such it would be inaccurate to compare them.⁴⁵

The literature on the economic constraints of smallness is filled with assumptions that are often flawed. Scholars almost unanimously affirm the importance of foreign trade for small states.⁴⁶ Knox agrees with many others scholars that many small countries are more heavily dependent on foreign trade than are large countries.⁴⁷ However, foreign trade is important for all states since it could be the means to economic prosperity. Notwithstanding, in a world where the notion of interdependence is increasingly gaining

⁴¹ Loc. cit.

⁴² Loc. cit.

⁴³ Loc. cit.

⁴⁴ R.L Rothstein, *The Third World and US Foreign Policy: Co-operation and Conflict in the 1980s* (Boulder, Colorado, 1981) pp 148-9.

⁴⁵ S. Kuznets, 'Economic growth of small nations', in E.A Robinson, (ed.), *Economic Consequence of The Size of Nations* (London, Macmillan & Company, 1960) pp 18-23.

⁴⁶ P. Streeten, 'The special problems of small countries', *World Development* 21, No 2 p 198, N. Amstrup, 'The perennial problem of small states', *Cooperation and Conflict* 11, 1976, p174.

⁴⁷ A.D. Knox, 'Some economic problems of small states', in Benedict (ed.), p 35.

ground, countries large or small around the globe are forging trade relationships with each other.

It is also important to underline that many small states are greatly circumscribed insofar as access to the international market is concerned. Moreover, small states, because of their low standards of industrialisation and small domestic industrial markets, tend to have little room for specialisation of key products. This sets serious constraints on their ability to compete for trade in world markets. Moreover, for small states, trade within the immediate environment can be quite beneficial and less onerous in terms of transportation costs. However, problems such as currency fluctuations in the developing world, low productivity, declining terms of trade and a less diversified economy, are potent ingredients that discourage small states from aspiring to global trade.

Developing economies are predominantly characterized by agrarian subsistence, which means that the problem of heavy reliance on external trade is further amplified. This, coupled with trade imbalances, limits the potential of small states to further exploit external trade. The vulnerability of small and large developing states is accentuated by fluctuations in commodity prices and demand within the global market. Dependence is not limited to external trade but also to food supplies.⁴⁸ According to the Commonwealth Consultative Group small states tend to concentrate heavily on external markets to the detriment of domestic food production.⁴⁹

The problem is exacerbated since a number of small states tend to depend on agricultural earnings as the main purveyor of domestic receipts, which may be subjected to the vagaries of the weather. However, in the general literature, such features are not exclusive to small states but developing states in general, small or large. The bulk of these states have to contend with similar difficulties, coping with astronomical fuel bills, tackling problems resulting from balance of payments difficulties, and the like. As Clapham aptly observes:

The operations of the contemporary world economy affect all participants within it. Some are undeniably more independent than others, but very few are isolated from

⁴⁸ Commonwealth Consultative Group, Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society (London Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985) p 18.

⁴⁹ Loc. cit.

effects of such international phenomena as fluctuating commodity prices or technological change.⁵⁰

Moreover, the fact that most small states are dependent on a single crop as the main cash generating revenue for is another area that is often unduly exaggerated.⁵¹ Economic diversification is not an exclusive preoccupation for small developing states but a common phenomenon in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. Scholars such as Hughes believe that the whole aspect of a single commodity is less a consequence of size and more a colonial legacy.⁵² Handel, however, contends that although weak states, especially one-dimensional states (states relying on a monocrop pattern of agriculture as the backbone of their economic prosperity), tend to rely heavily on wealthier states, dismisses this reliance as a sign of weakness: '...empirical evidence indicates that most weak states are economically more viable and less vulnerable than common sense economic theories had prophesied'.⁵³

Economic vulnerability is further intensified by the inability of small states to respond to natural hazards, such as cyclones, and drought. Some small states are situated in a geographical location that does not necessarily favour economic growth. Island economies in the Caribbean are affected by cyclones. Small states like The Gambia, situated in the drought-prone region of the Sahel are subjected to the vagaries of the weather. This is particularly disadvantageous since such hazards may reduce considerably, the total amount of exports of these states. In an economic context where economic diversification is often problematic, and where options tend to be few, such unreliable changes in either weather conditions or harvest returns could have a crippling effect.

However, in spite of the prevalence of economic indicators in the literature of small states as a yardstick to size, some scholars have opted for political viability in contrast to economic vulnerability and/or viability. The concept of political viability carries security underpinnings. In other words states which are unable to safeguard their territorial

⁵⁰ C. Clapham, *Third World Politics- An Introduction*, (London, Croom Helm, 1985), p 9

⁵¹ Knox, op. cit., pp 38-39.

⁵² Hughes, in C. Clarke and T. Payne (ed.), *Politics, Security and Development on Small States* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1987) p 142.

⁵³ Handel, op. cit., p 259

boundaries from belligerent neighbours or other forms of external coercion without resorting to the assistance of external patron/s are perceived as small.

The Gambian context ties in with many of the factors that have been discussed above. Given the smallness of domestic market and the economy, The Gambia has relied very heavily on foreign aid and export trade. However, these features have triggered a permanent condition of virtually total dependency on the one hand, while enabling The Gambia to benefit from considerable capital in-flow. In addition the nature of the political regime in place before the July 1994 coup, and the democratic system installed in The Gambia since independence in 1965, were viable instruments that won the sympathy of Western donors. In this respect the smallness of the domestic market affected The Gambia to a reasonable extent since it was able to use size constraints to demonstrate to the international community its urgent need for economic assistance. Moreover the small size of development projects involved meant that donors find development projects affordable unlike vast and expensive complex development structures undertaken in larger developing states.

The Gambia is able to finance most of its developmental projects through aid received from different donors. This strategy of “multilateral dependency” to use Hughes⁵⁴ term is rather effective as it gives The Gambia enough room for manoeuvre and is therefore not at the mercy of any aid donor. From a security perspective, the Gambia government ingeniously dealt with the constraints caused by size. The Gambia was able to solidify its weak security structures through Senegalese assistance whilst avoiding any form of integration that conceded greater autonomy to Senegal.

Quite often technical assistance in various fields involves a handful of Gambians, a more feasible and affordable option than the training of scores of administrative and non-administrative staff. As one senior official said: “It would be much cheaper to educate a million people than to educate five or six million inhabitants”.⁵⁵ The problem of human resources is often cited as a definite handicap in the literature of small states, yet human resources are in themselves futile if it is not exploitable in terms of the labour force, collective strength or other uses.

⁵⁴ Hughes, in Cohen, p 80.

⁵⁵ Personal interview with Sara Janha, former Secretary General, London., 13 October 1997.

Irrespective of these ambiguities, it must be said that the question of small states is rather complex and goes beyond the much-debated aspect of viability and /or vulnerability. Contemporary literature tends to focus on the problem and alternatives are seemingly few or inapplicable depending on the severity of the economic situation. In addition the arbitrariness in measurements regarding both economic and political smallness calls for more refined indicators of smallness in prospective research.

Because size is not a useful analytical factor, and far too elusive a concept, one should use the term “weak” for more accuracy and also to take account of the fact that small states form too broad a category for the purpose of analysis. The viability of any state may depend on a combination of related and unrelated factors, such as natural resources, regional location, resourcefulness of the people, a sense of nationhood that binds the populace and institutional capacity. In today’s world, African states have demonstrated the ability to exist from a *de jure* perspective, whilst failing to fulfil the conditions for *de facto* statehood. Sierra Leone and Liberia are cases in point. Hence, the question of viability of the state has become ambiguous, since African leaders tend to perpetuate themselves in office in order to validate their viability as leaders.

The overriding issue is not so much size irrespective of its limitations, as the ability of the leadership to extricate the requisite funds from abroad or at home to buttress national development and obtain popular support. The size factor is as old as Aristotle and will continue to be debated upon in relative or absolute terms. No single unanimous view has been formed as to whether size generates a qualitative difference or not. Moreover what most scholars tend to ignore is that small states invariably pursue the same ideals as large states, the former’s ability to do so may be limited because of different reasons. Yet in essence all states follow a general policy of co-operation and peaceful existence between neighbouring states. As Fisher aptly contends:

Small states, in short, are great powers writ small. They behave as much like great powers as they can...Any distinctiveness in small state behaviour arises not from any qualitative difference between small states and others but from the limitations their smallness places upon their capacity to implement significant decisions in foreign policy.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Cited by R.Purnell, The Society of States: An Introduction to International Politics (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973) pp 98-9.

The Geographic Factor.

Every state is unique. Uniqueness can stem from geographical location, shape or size. The Gambia is all the more unique because it displays some form of distinctiveness in all three aforementioned attributes. The geographical location of a state, its shape and size are invariably inherited attributes and explain the element of determinism attached to such geographical and physical features. Consequently, political geographers have a tendency to believe that the geographical qualities of a state determine its spatial influence, its behavioural attitude and the like.

To be able to analyse the external relations of any state presupposes a full understanding of its geography, as the latter is an important factor in the conduct of states. In the course of history, locational geography has played a key role in the behaviour of states. The geographical position of Poland (located in Mackinder's heartland of Europe,⁵⁷ with a coastline on the Baltic Sea) has made it vulnerable to several invasions by rival European Powers in their quest for hegemony. Similarly the geographical position of the English Channel has been a deterrent insofar as it discouraged Britain from interfering in the affairs of mainland Europe and vice versa. Likewise, Panama, would lose its strategic and geographical significance if the Panama Canal and the impenetrable Darien Gap did not serve as physical barriers between Central and South America.

The shape of The Gambia is indicative of many European squabbles in the nineteenth century. The Gambia is a coastal state, like Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and many others, but its narrow serpentine shape is unique. Figure 1 shows The Gambia's unusual shape. Such a shape will inevitably circumscribe The Gambia's options regarding easy access to other markets, and will on the other hand heighten dependency. In addition, the shape and geographical location of The Gambia seem to make regional groupings a top priority and would appear to give a sense of urgency to political and economic integration with Senegal. The Gambia then, is perceived by many observers as a geographical oddity, given the relative homogeneity of the Senegambia region. On the basis of strong ethnic affinities between the two peoples, it would seem logical for the Gambia and Senegal to become a single entity.

⁵⁷ For details of Mackinder's 'Heartland Theory', P. J. Taylor, Political Geography: World-economy, Nation-state and locality (London, Longman, 1993) pp 53-6.

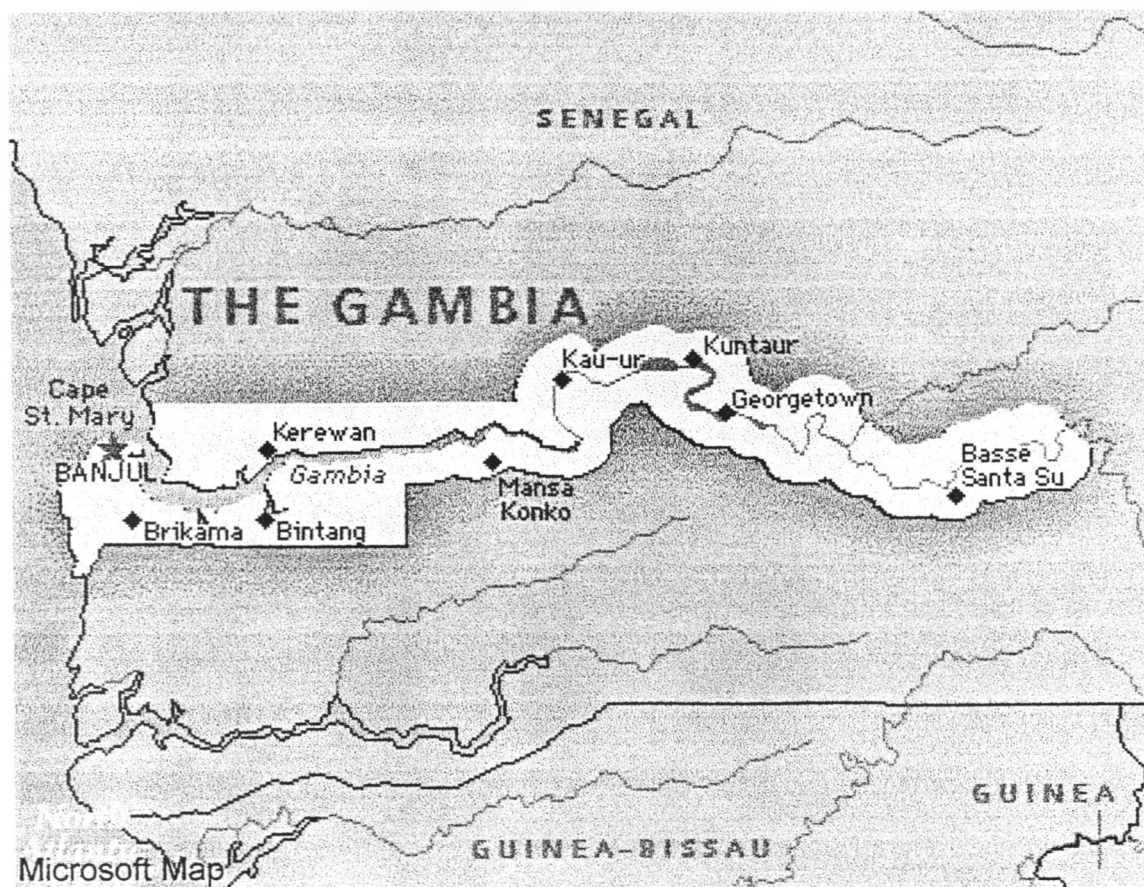


Figure 1. Map extract showing the serpentine shape of The Gambia and its unusual location almost totally surrounded by the neighbouring republic of Senegal (from Microsoft Encarta 1997).

The geographical position of The Gambia and its small size has made scholars question its viability. If politically and economically, Senegambia as an entity seems far-fetched, Senegambia in its socio-cultural form, has long been a reality. The name Senegambia presents no novelty since it is derived from the names of the Rivers Senegal and Gambia and it generally refers to the peoples of the area. Yet geographical contiguity and ethnic affinities between the peoples of the two countries, have encouraged scholars to reach the conclusion that the two countries should never have existed as separate entities.⁵⁸ However, if relations between the two countries tend to ebb and flow, both states have come to realise that whatever their differences, they are “condemned to live together”.⁵⁹ Indeed, most Gambians have Senegalese relatives and vice versa. This

⁵⁸ J. Price, *Political Institutions of West Africa* (London, Hutchinson Educational Ltd, 1967) p 173, See also C Welch. *op. cit.*, p 250.

⁵⁹ W. Skurnik. *The Foreign Policy of Senegal* (Evanston, USA, Northwestern University Press, 1972) p 145

cultural affinity amplifies the feeling of amity within the Senegambian environment, irrespective of political or economic squabbles between the leaders of both countries.

Even with the existence of tangible and substantial differences between the different administrative systems in Senegal and The Gambia, geographical proximity has dictated the nature of their relationship. Landlocked countries have in the past either sought alternative measures to assure their national survival or “complied” with the “strong neighbour”. Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, despite ideological differences, worked closely with the apartheid regime in South Africa since the bulk of their imports and exports had to transit through neighbouring South Africa.⁶⁰ Mali, in spite of its somewhat strained relationship with Senegal after the abortive Mali federation, saw the need to use the latter’s railway, roads and ports for the bulk of its trade.⁶¹ The same could be said for Niger and Nigeria as the former depends on the latter for most of its trade with the outside world.⁶²

Senegal is undoubtedly The Gambia’s most important external partner. Politicians are invariably wary of the fact that any major upheaval in The Gambia will have a spill over effect in Senegal or vice versa. The Senegalese intervention in the aftermath of the July 1981 coup in The Gambia, led by Marxist dissidents, was partly indicative of the fear that such radical ideas should not gain ground in The Gambia as they could sweep swiftly across the Senegalese borders. Relations between the two countries are bound to remain conflictual due to geographical proximity. As President Jawara observed after the 1981 coup that resulted in his request for Senegalese assistance to restore his presidency, upheaval in either country will ineluctably affect the stability in the other country.⁶³ President Diouf seemingly agrees with this assertion when he states: “You just have to look at a map to be aware that both countries are very entangled”.⁶⁴

Moreover, The Gambia’s geographical location is perceived to be disadvantageous to Senegal since it separates Senegal from one of its key provinces, Casamance. This geographical irritant has always been a major source of frustration to Senegalese officials,

⁶⁰ Aluko (1977), op. cit., pp 12-3.

⁶¹ Loc. cit.

⁶² Loc. cit.

⁶³ Jawara in an interview after the July 1981 coup ‘We have learnt a useful lesson’, West Africa September 1981, p 17

⁶⁴ President Diouf in an interview ‘We have learnt a useful lesson’, African Update, African Report Nov-Dec 1981, p 25.

particularly in the light of separatist tendencies in Casamance. This is because dissidents in Casamance could use The Gambia either for subversive purposes or as a refuge from Senegalese soldiers. In addition The Gambia is unable to fully exploit the resources of its river basin and the port of Banjul because of political boundaries.

Geographical proximity, has in part, encouraged and perpetuated smuggling. Smuggling has been described as the economic life-blood of The Gambia and is widely perceived in Senegalese circles to be a costly business for their economy. Low import duties in The Gambia have generated a lot of smuggling to neighbouring Senegal where customs duties and cost of living are higher. Nevertheless, as previously stated, cultural ties between the peoples of Senegambia remain strong.

The Cultural Factor.

The cultural variable is the least salient in the study of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). This area of FPA has been rather neglected in terms of academic research. In African diplomacy, cultural concepts are discussed in relation to governmental élites and their various stances, be they progressive, radical, conservative, or socialist. However, most African states are new and cannot be compared to traditional states in Western Europe, which, over the years, have managed to mould a certain national character. Western societies are highly stratified, and tend to exhibit a high degree of cultural homogeneity. Given the patent cultural diversity in most African states, it is not easy to discern which traits are pervasive in a particular line of policy. As Lystad argues, the whole aspect of whether culture underpins foreign policy in African diplomacy is limited:

When a nation's population is culturally heterogeneous to a degree not characteristic of older and more homogeneous-though socially stratified-cultures, when a society is emerging rather than fully emerged and fairly well integrated, when political and social systems have not yet proved themselves durable and able to adapt to rapid transformation, the possibility of meaningfully relating cultural determinants to foreign policy is greatly reduced.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ R. Lystad, 'Cultural and psychological factors' in Mackay, p 92.

In the light of foreign policy formulation in The Gambia, it is perhaps premature at this stage to determine what social and cultural values if any were most salient in decision and foreign policy choices. What can be said, is that Gambian society is fairly homogeneous in its ethnic make-up. However, scholars such as Touray believe that given its small size, The Gambia exhibits great cultural diversity.⁶⁶ The Mandinkas are the dominant ethnic group according to a recent survey in which findings revealed 34.1 per cent of the population are Mandinkas, 16.2 per cent Fulas, 12.6 per cent Wolof, and 9.2 per cent Jolas with other minority group like the Akus, Bambara, Serahuli, Serere and Manjago accounting for the remaining 27.9 per cent of the population.⁶⁷

According to Hughes, Gambian society in the nineteenth century exhibited a degree of social fluidity and fragmentation.⁶⁸ The Gambia River valley has seen different migrations over the centuries. The Mandinkas, advancing from the south-east divided into splinter groups constituting of fifteen separate chiefdoms. Although the Mandinkas can be found in different areas of the Senegambia region, in the main they tend to have settled in the Gambia River valley where they live alongside Tukulors and Fulas. They can also be found in Upper and Middle Casamance, on the boundary of Guinea-Bissau, in Guinea and in Senegal.

The Wolofs form an important cultural group even though quantitatively, they are far from being the majority. Wolof culture has towered above the rest and this explains why Wolof is perceived as the *lingua franca* in the Senegambia region.⁶⁹ This “sociological predominance” is echoed by Gamble:

Wolof culture has very little that is not shared in some degree by neighbouring peoples. Islam has brought the same set of beliefs, similar dress, etiquette etc. to Mandinka, Fulbe, Serehuli and Wolof alike. In their naming ceremonies, marriages, circumcision, etc. there are extremely close parallels in Mandinka and Fulbe customs.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Touray, op. cit, p 86.

⁶⁷ Britannia Book of the Year 1997 (Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica 1996), p 609.

⁶⁸ Hughes, in Cohen, p 61

⁶⁹ Senghor, unpublished Ph.D thesis, op. cit., p 10.

⁷⁰ David Gamble, The Wolof of Senegambia (London: International Affairs Institute, 1967), p 14.

The settlement pattern of the Wolofs, like the Jolas, Mandinkas, Serers, and Fulas, cuts across political boundaries, yet they are found only in The Gambia and Senegal. They have a tendency to settle in the northwest but can be found in the central Ferlo, southern and eastern areas of the Saloum River, in Casamance and The Gambia. According to Senghor, one should make a distinction between Wolofs residing in the capital city of Banjul, originally from Gorée in Senegal and those in Badibu, Saloum and its vicinity.⁷¹

Hughes states that the seven Fula clans were dispersed in a much wider area than what is today known as The Gambia.⁷² They are a migrant group, mainly cattle-keeping people. They can be found in various areas of West Africa, from Senegal to Cameroon, and in the areas of Kantora, Fuladu and Wuli in The Gambia. The Tukolor are very similar to the Fulas both in outlook and in culture, they are mainly concentrated in the flood plains of the Senegal River.

The Akus, descended from the Creoles in Sierra Leone, are predominantly Christian, educated and highly acculturated in an almost Victorian fashion. They have been the main élite group in the civil service. However, with the increase in prominence of different social groups such as the Wolofs and the Mandinkas, they are no longer a majority in government institutions. Other ethnic groups like the Serere, the second largest ethnic group in Senegal, mainly based in the western region of Sine Saloum, and Thies, together with the Manjagos and Bambaras, remain minorities in the ethnic composition of The Gambia. The Jolas, however, can be found in Casamance as well as in The Gambia. Most of them have migrated from Casamance to The Gambia in search of better working conditions. In The Gambia, they are mainly found in the Fonyi area.

Although it is difficult to assess how cultural values have helped shape policies, the Islamic culture is an important element in West African politics. The Gambia is a secular state with strong affinities between different cultural and religious groups, yet Islam remains the predominant religion accounting for approximately 85% of the population. Islam has and still serves as a unifying bond in Senegambian culture. However, whether the Islamic card was used in foreign policy choices for purely opportunistic reasons, as a way of guaranteeing national welfare, or as a genuine factor in the making of foreign

⁷¹ Senghor, *op. cit.*, p 11.

⁷² Hughes (1975), *op. cit.*, pp 61-2.

policy in The Gambia will be reviewed in chapter 8. Nonetheless, The Gambia's membership of different organisations such as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) gives the country an Islamic outlook and could partly explain The Gambia's foreign choices in relation to Arab states in the Middle East. Yet, in internal politics, religion is not always a significant ingredient as one of the key leaders of an important political organisation of the post-independence years, the United Party (UP), was a Wolof Catholic.

The Domestic Political Factor.

Political parties in Africa are invariably aimed at the masses whose main interests are more domestically oriented. Their role in shaping foreign policy choices and decisions is inconsequential, at least in the Gambian scenario. However, whatever the role of political parties in foreign policy decision-making, we cannot simply ignore them as irrelevant. In The Gambia, political parties such as the Peoples' Progressive Party (PPP), founded in 1959, have shown great dynamism and evolved significantly in the course of the years. In the early fifties, the three colonial parties: the United Party (UP), Muslim Congress Party, and the Democratic Party, were quite vocal.⁷³

The Gambia's advocacy of democratic values dates back to the early days of statehood. Unlike most developing states, which sought political cohesion under one party rule, the Gambian political system in the 1960s encouraged opposition groups to express their views in a democratic manner without fear of repression. The PPP established its supremacy and expanded its popularity from rural groups to the urban area. It needed a strong base in the capital area of Bathurst, which was known as the "Colony" and was therefore given more prominence than other regions. In fact the PPP was called the Protectorate People's Party when it was founded in 1959.

The PPP, through the authority of its leader, Sir Dawda Jawara, succeeded where all other parties failed by expanding its popularity to include different ethnic groups. In African societies where ethnicity could be a divisive or a unifying factor, and where political culture is invariably low, it is important that every ethnic and minority group is given a role to play in party political activities. Jawara, himself a Mandinka, was able to bring together the Wolofs and Akus in the capital, as well as the Mandinkas and Jolas in

the rural areas, in his capacity as both Prime Minister and subsequent Gambian Head of State. In this way the division between the urban élites, (mainly Wolofs and Akus) who generally considered themselves as self-appointed spokesmen of all Gambians, and rural representatives was diluted.

Although the PPP was politically inexperienced at its inception, it was able to make up for this through sheer numbers, thus claiming the status of a mass party. The PPP's political evolution has been described as similar to "consociational democracy".⁷⁴ Consociational democracy refers to "government by élite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy".⁷⁵ The leader of the Party, Sir Dawda, determined to create national cohesion, contributed by encouraging unity within the different ethnic groups of the PPP. Thus instead of a gradual fragmentation of the Party, the whole aspect of ethnicity was politicised to such an extent that each ethnic group was conceded a certain degree of importance, each commanding authority within groups and sub-groups. The PPP's objective was not solely to transcend ethnic squabbles, but also to gain from the experience and education of a handful of the élite group in Banjul.

The PPP was able to break the tendency whereby the educated and experienced party members adhered to the UP. This action created an opportunity for other ethnic groups to take responsible positions within the PPP and lessened the fear of a Mandinka dominated party. Henceforth the PPP enjoyed a privileged position, assured of the allegiance and support of the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie".⁷⁶

The other main parties were the United Party led by P.S.Njie, a Wolof lawyer, and the Muslim Congress Party, with I.M Garba-Jahumpha as leader. However, the UP was unable to win popular support among the ethnic groups in the provincial areas. In addition, when party leader P.S Njie gave up his position subsequent to the 1972 general elections defeat, many UP supporters defected to join the PPP through a phenomenon that was soon to become widespread: "carpet crossing". The influence and popularity of the PPP was such that it went on to win consecutive elections over the years.

⁷³ Hughes, in Cohen, p 62.

⁷⁴ A. Lijphart, 'Consociational democracy' *World Politics* 21, 9, 1969.

⁷⁵ Hughes, in Cohen, p 63.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p 64.

A new political phase began in 1975, when former Vice-President, Sheriff Dibba, dismissed in connection with a scandal dubbed “the butut affair” that involved his brother, created a breakaway party: the National Convention Party (NCP). Dibba was able to gain popularity among his fellow disgruntled Badibu kinsmen who had grown to resent the ethnic diversity pervasive within the PPP. The NCP posed a serious threat to the PPP, and the government could not afford to remain complacent. Thus rural development projects were given a new impetus.⁷⁷ Although the NCP managed to secure quite a proportion of votes over the years, it was perceived by many Gambians as a communal party, a means for Dibba’s own political advancement, and was unable to make substantial gains into the PPP heartland.⁷⁸

The National Liberation Party (NLP) entered the political scene in 1975, led by a Banjul lawyer, Pap Cheyassin Secka. However, in pursuing an independent agenda, the NLP could not find adequate support among the masses. With the July 1981 abortive coup, Cheyassin was charged with treason, and the party subsequently died a natural death. The Marxist oriented People’s Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS) was founded in the mid-1980s under the leadership of Halifa Sallah, Sam Sarr and Sidia Jatta. However, after failing to procure significant support in the 1987 and 1992 elections, PDOIS mainly confined itself to organising public meetings which, together with its official newspaper, FOROYAA (Freedom), spared no effort at exposing perceived transgressions and the sumptuous lifestyles of the PPP.⁷⁹ In 1986, the Gambia People’s Party (GPP) was founded. The GPP was yet another offshoot of the PPP, formed by individuals such as Semega Janneh, Lamin Saho and Assan Musa Camara who were themselves defectors from the PPP.

A more serious threat to the PPP was the Movement for Justice in Africa-Gambia (MOJA-G), which became active in 1980. Marxist and radical in ideology, MOJA-G sought to gain popularity among disillusioned youths. According to Hughes, the Gambian leftists were influenced by the Liberian MOJA, which gained popularity subsequent to the overthrow of President Tolbert, and the seizure of power by Ghanaian radicals in 1979 under Jerry Rawlings.⁸⁰ Yet the emergence of a radical group of organisations was

⁷⁷ Ibid, p 66

⁷⁸ Hughes, ‘The Gambia’, in Clarke and Payne, p 150

⁷⁹ E. Sall and H. Sallah, ‘The military and the crisis of governance: the Gambian case’, Codesria, (Dakar), Eighth General Assembly, 26. June to 2 July 1995.

⁸⁰ Hughes, in Cohen, p 68.

already in operation since the mid 1970s. Neo-Marxist in rhetoric, these groups criticised both domestic and foreign policies of the PPP, particularly Jawara pro-Western proclivities and his gradualist policies with Senegal.

However, MOJA-G was banned in October 1980 following an internal crisis that led to the murder of Emmanuel Mahoney, deputy commander of the Field Force. Senegalese troops were called in on a so-called training exercise but it was clear that the government authorities were not treating the incident lightly and were seemingly ready to curb a potential coup or disruption. However, the 30th July 1981 saw the opening of the bloodiest chapter in The Gambia's history. A twelve man revolutionary junta organised a coup under the leadership of Kukoi Samba Sanyang, of previously meagre political profile. The Supreme Council of the Revolution as they called themselves, took control of strategic areas, such as State House, Radio Gambia, Banjul Airport, the Police Barracks and the Armoury.

The constitution was abolished and looting and social chaos in Banjul and the Kombo area continued unabated. The rebellion was finally crushed by Senegalese soldiers, acting under the Friendship Treaty signed by The Gambia and Senegal in 1967 that allowed the latter to assist The Gambia through defence protocols. Thereby Sir Dawda Jawara, who was attending the wedding of Lady Diana Spencer and Prince Charles in London was able to regain his presidential power and bring the country back to normality by virtue of Senegalese intervention.

The termination of the Senegambia confederation in late 1989, the product of Senegalese support in 1981, exposed the PPP to renewed military threats. On the 22nd July 1994, elements of the military under the leadership of Lieutenant Yaya Jammeh staged a military coup, thus ending The Gambia's long record of constitutional rule. The Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) then consolidated its hold on power. After an eventful transitional period of two years of military rule, The Gambia returned to civilian rule in October 1996 with ex-coup leader, now Colonel Jammeh as the Head of State of The Gambia's second republic.

The Economic Factor

A sound economy is generally perceived to be a valuable asset in the changing times of international relations. Marxists and economic determinists share the belief that the economic security of any state underpins its foreign policy decisions and actions.⁸¹ The economic variable is an important one in Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) as scholars believe that the level of economic development will determine the foreign policy behaviour of a particular state.⁸² Likewise, Rummel believes that economic development gives a state greater leverage to conduct its foreign economic policy or foreign policy in general.⁸³ Kamarck echoes the potency of the economic variable:

The economic forces at work and the economic structures of a country are important factors in both its domestic policies and its foreign policy. Very simply, to survive you must eat. The way in which an individual or nation has to act to get food and the other desired commodities is bound to affect nearly everything it does.⁸⁴

African states are economically under-developed to varying degrees. Indeed it will probably be many more decades before the bulk of African states achieve sound economic health. In the interim, a majority of African states will continue, through their foreign economic policies, to look to the industrial nations of the West, oil-rich countries in the Middle East, and the Asian or south-east Asian “Tiger” economies to provide aid and to retain some sort of stability within the world economic system.

The Gambia has one of the poorest economies in the world with a Gross National Product (GNP) of just \$360 per capita in 1997.⁸⁵ A recent statistical survey of The Gambia is included in Appendix 2. Industrialisation is very limited and is unlikely to make any substantial contribution to GDP. Also, due to the smallness of the local market, there is little room for specialisation in key products. Like many developing states, The Gambia is a monocrop economy, highly dependent on groundnuts for export revenue.

⁸¹ J McGowan & Howard B. Shapiro, ‘Economic variables’ in The Comparative Study of Foreign Policy, A study of Scientific Findings, op. cit., p 107, A.M. Karmack ‘Economic determinant’ in Mckay, p 55.

⁸² Patrick McGowan et al, op. cit., pp 107-115.

⁸³ Ibid, p 108.

⁸⁴ . Kamarck in Mackay, op. cit., p 55.

⁸⁵ . ‘The Gambia’, in Africa South of the Sahara 1997 26th Edition p 437.

Depending on the vagaries of the climate and the international market price, groundnuts represented between 19 and 41 per cent of The Gambia's export revenue between 1989 and 1991.⁸⁶ Of The Gambia's population, over 70 per cent is employed in the agrarian sector,⁸⁷ yet agriculture represented only 21 per cent of GDP IN 1994-95.⁸⁸ Other crops such as rice, maize, millet and sorghum are also cultivated in The Gambia, but are done so on a small scale, enough to meet the demands of local subsistence. The Gambia's economy, until the early 1970s and the onset of international package tourism is, like that of neighbouring Senegal, an agrarian one.

Tourism has become an important foreign exchange earner, yet employing just 10 per cent of the population. However, this trade has shown itself to be very susceptible to the unsettling effects of political upheaval.⁸⁹ The abortive coup attempt of 1981 and the successful 1994 coup both resulted in a downturn in tourist receipts, the latter due in particular to the travel advice issued by the British Foreign Office, warning of potential dangers to visitors to the Gambia as a result of political instability. However, with the ban lifted and confidence restored, the industry is slowly picking up. Irrespective of its viability, tourism on its own cannot finance the general expenditure of The Gambia and in this regard, it remains no more than an adjunct to alleviating economic vulnerability.

As in most African countries, the Gambian economy is still wrestling with problems relating to its balance of payments and trade deficits whilst servicing huge external debts. During the period 1981-84, The Gambia's loan repayments rose by a significant 300 per cent,⁹⁰ and by 1993-94, the interest burden of the external debt accounted for 35.5 per cent of export revenue.⁹¹

Chronic trade deficits coupled with a rise in imports, and downturns in groundnut production and prices, all became so severe by the mid-1980s, that The Gambia could no longer fulfil its obligations to the IMF. This resulted in the implementation of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in co-operation with the IMF and its sister

⁸⁶ Loc. cit.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p 432.

⁸⁸ *Britannia Yearbook 1997* op. cit., p 609.

⁸⁹ 'The Gambia', in *Africa South of the Sahara 1997* op. cit., p 433.

⁹⁰ Hughes, in Clarke and Payne, p 144.

⁹¹ *Britannia Yearbook 1997* op. cit., p 609.

organisation, the World Bank.⁹² The ERP, conceived in order to cut down on public expenditure, promoted the private sector and diversified the economy. It was considered a success in the late 1980s as real GDP rose by 5 per cent per annum in 1986 and 1987 consecutively.⁹³ Despite these early fiscal successes, by 1992 the balance of trade deficit had deteriorated to 1.6 billion Dalasis or 60 per cent of total trade.

The Gambia's heavy dependence on foreign assistance goes back in time to when statehood was first gained from Britain in 1965, when due to problems of non-viability, Britain had to provide a grant-in-aid.⁹⁴ This was necessary in order to keep up with budget expenditure for the next two years. Nearly two thirds of the first Five-Year plan between 1975 and 1980 was sponsored through external grants and loans. In the period 1985-86 it was estimated that the second Five-Year-Year plan would be financed largely through external aid.⁹⁵ However, unlike some African states, The Gambia is not endowed with sufficient natural resources, and depends heavily on external aid and loans to meet the perennial problems of balance of payments and also to finance key development projects. It is noteworthy that over 80 per cent of The Gambia's total expenditure is financed through foreign aid.⁹⁶ This dependency was manifested by the withdrawal of aid and new loan facilities after the 1994 coup d'état, by important donor countries such as the EU, the USA and Japan.

The Gambian economy is based on a free trade philosophy, with a liberal import policy. This means that goods can be imported by general licence, although in exceptional cases a special licence may be needed. Tariffs are non-discriminatory and import duties are low compared to neighbouring Senegal. The re-export trade, accounting for around one-third of GDP in The Gambia, has seen a sharp decline in external receipts since 1993, following the border trade restrictions imposed by the Senegalese government.

The answer to The Gambia's acute economic difficulties is to encourage economic diversification. However, such alternatives are even more difficult in small-scale economies where options tend to be limited. Naturally, governments continue to pay lip

⁹² For more information on the subject of the ERP and the related Structural Adjustment Loan programme in The Gambia, see David Cooke, *Structural adjustment in small states :the case of The Gambia, 1985-1994*, op.cit.,.

⁹³ Touray, op. cit, pp 77-8.

⁹⁴ Hughes, in Clarke Payne, p 142

⁹⁵ Ibid, p 144.

⁹⁶ Cooke, op. cit., p 10.

service to the whole concept of economic diversification but real improvement is either cosmetic or non-existent. Fishing could be an alternative to agriculture, but difficulties appear to be insurmountable compared to potential gains. First, The Gambia would need to modernise its fishing fleet, the cost being prohibitive. Second, fishing can be a reasonably lucrative business depending on The Gambia's ability to police its coastal waters and keep potential poachers at bay. Fishing is believed to represent about 8 per cent of exports.⁹⁷ Endemic weakness and chronic insolvency have made decision-makers resort to a high dependence on foreign aid to redress the economic situation in The Gambia.

CONCLUSION

The whole concept of foreign policy for African states in the wake of independence seemed 'secondary' in comparison to the task of state-building. It therefore seemed a more pressing duty to build viable and cohesive internal structures.

The Gambia is no exception as experience in foreign affairs, was limited especially in a small state where human resources were a constant. The historical legacy has thus created a bond between The Gambia and the United Kingdom and sets a basis for future co-operation. This explains several British grants to assist The Gambia in its post-independence struggle for viability.

Developing states are confronted with internal problems that determine their choice of policy. In the case of The Gambia, internal difficulties were exacerbated by problems relating to its small size. However, The Gambia's viability is not now systematically questioned, as was the case in the early days of statehood. Although size poses great economic constraints, its advantages or disadvantages are relative not absolute. The Gambia's small size is perceived as a handicap, especially in the light of its relations with Senegal. Geographical location has made Senegal the most important external actor, whatever The Gambia's concentric circles. Cultural affinities between the two peoples are so compelling that in the interest of stability in the region, both countries need to achieve some form of *modus vivendi*.

⁹⁷ 'The Gambia' in Africa South of the Sahara 1997 op. cit., p 433.

The aforementioned cultural affinities between the peoples of the Senegambian region have also mitigated the hostility and antagonism that might otherwise have been displayed in the conduct of foreign relations between the two main protagonists. The greatest determinant in The Gambia's domestic arena, is the deficiency in the requisite economic indicators that would enhance a country's ability to shape its own destiny. The Gambia has exhibited a heavy dependence on external economic assistance. While this has not completely reduced The Gambia to political or economic subservience to external donors, it has deflected internal efforts to find independent solutions to domestic priorities and has thus heightened The Gambia's economic dependency.

CHAPTER 3: Character of Foreign Policy Making in The Gambia.

The behavioural concept of foreign policy has received little attention in the past, although attempts are now being taken by scholars to rectify this anomaly.¹ The tendency for scholars to view international relations either in terms of co-operation or discord is restrictive. The idea that a nation's external activities revolve around its ability or inability to make friends or foes is quite simply a partial view of how international relations should be regulated. Undoubtedly, the determinants of foreign policy are a key component in the understanding of how nations act. However, the characterisation of foreign policy is even more important if we are to understand how and why states react to each other.

Moreover, understanding foreign policy behaviour is made difficult because in the process of sieving through the decisions and actions of policy makers, the scholar is left to interpret these actions. In the developing world, discussing the concept of character is problematic, since new states have relatively little experience in international relations compared to older established ones. Thus there are very few precedents for African governments to turn to.

In addition, discerning whether nations states act in the light of their professed goals, or whether in reaction to their environment, immediate or remote, is complex. The Gambia's priorities may not necessarily revolve around some elusive notion of power, but rather on what constitutes its national survival. Thus, it is necessary to look at the character of foreign policy from a small state perspective. Also, because a nation's behaviour may be guided by its prescribed objectives, it is important to observe whether these objectives are achieved. Nonetheless, quite often in the real world of policy making, professed objectives are not necessarily consonant with real actions.

The argument here is that the character of foreign policy in The Gambia is partially influenced by domestic political features of the regime, i.e. internal cohesion, good neighbourliness, moderation and a proclivity to human and individual rights. In this vein, it is important to explore briefly the perceptions of decision-making and how

¹ East et al, op. cit., pp 25-47. K.J Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J Prentice-Hall, 1976). G.T. Allison and M.H Halperin, 'Bureaucratic politics: a paradigm and some policy implications', in R. Tanter and R.H. Ullman, (eds.) Theory and Policy in International Relations (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1972), East, 'Explaining foreign policy behaviour using national attributes', paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Sept 25 1975.

these impinge on the foreign policy choices and decisions of the state. Such perceptions are multiple and vary from one actor to another. Analysis of the different actors in the history of The Gambia's external relations could help to explain why foreign policy behaviour differs from one concentric circle to another. However, it is almost impossible to look at these actors even in a schematic manner, without taking into consideration the national interest. The concept of the national interest is generally difficult to define since a lot of what it is perceived to be, depends on the educated élite on whom foreign policy decisions are incumbent.

What constitutes the character of a nation? Is it enough to characterise a nation's foreign policy according to its goals? According to Hermann, the behaviour of a nation should be distinguished from the reasons that determine its choices and actions.

What is a conceptual definition of behaviour in the context of governmental foreign policy? It is the discrete purposeful action that results from the political level decision of an individual or group of individuals. Political level decision makers are those whose authority is required to commit or withhold those resources of the nation that are available to those who govern. Thus, behaviour is viewed as the observable artefact of a political level decision. It is not the decision, but a product of the decision....²

The character of a nation's foreign policy carries overtones strikingly similar to those exhibited by an individual. Regardless of the fact that states are abstract entities, they cease to be so when individual traits and characteristics of decision-makers are encapsulated in that of the state. For instance, on the one hand, a state's foreign policy may vary from being permissive, passive, reactive, low-keyed, and moderate to being active, aggressive, confident, assertive and radical on the other.³ Hoffman goes even further and argues that states are more intransigent in their objectives and the manner in which they wish to achieve these aims and objectives. An individual may hold certain ethical values; however, with states or nation-states, the ultimate test is the national interest and ethical issues are secondary especially where the national interest is concerned.⁴

² C. Hermann, 'Foreign policy behaviour: that which is to be explained' in East et.al, p 34.

³ J. Rosenau, 'Pre-theories and theories of foreign policy' in R.B Farrel, *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics* (Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1966) p 32.

⁴ S. Hoffman, *Contemporary Theory in International Relations* (New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960) p 21.

The single most pervasive image of The Gambia as perceived by decision-makers is that The Gambia, due to its small size and endemic weakness, has a profound legacy of vulnerability. The doubts articulated by international sceptics about the viability of The Gambia were an issue that decision-makers in post-independence years took seriously. Foreign policy in the wake of independence was perceived as a tool that would help The Gambia accede to economic development. The term "foreign policy", in the minds of decision-makers then, was synonymous with economic gratification. The lofty principles of self-determination, non-interference in the internal affairs of another state, the pursuit of peace, justice and human rights, were also held sacred.

However, foreign policy meant different things depending on the actors. In some areas foreign policy has been tentative, even ad hoc, based on the somewhat lax concept of a "wait and see" policy, especially when what is at stake is not potentially risky for The Gambia. Assertiveness grew with experience and invariably depended on the issue to hand. For instance, The Gambia campaigned actively in support of the OAU African Human Rights Charter in the early 1980s, because decision-makers felt that this was an area that could become the cornerstone of The Gambia's foreign policy. It was important for The Gambia to win new friends on the path towards greater economic development in the West African sub-region. Nonetheless, the country was keen to play the role of the good "neighbour", advocating functional co-operation as a most effective way of attaining African unity.

However, it must be emphasised, defining the character of foreign policy is not easy in new states. The Gambia's foreign policy, like that of other new states, is still in the making. There are no set policies on certain issues, simply because the life of the Gambian state has been too short and its establishment in contemporary diplomacy incomplete. Policy formulation either on the domestic or international scene is an on-going process and there is a considerable amount of procrastination due to lack of political or diplomatic clout. The Gambia has initiated key policies, especially regarding the African Human Rights Charter under the OAU, yet on other occasions The Gambia had simply joined the band-wagon and advocated policies in the pursuit of attaining world peace and international stability, especially on the African continent. In spite of a rather deterministic approach on how small states should behave, it is important to distinguish theory from practice, especially in the Gambian scenario.

The character of foreign policy from a small state perspective

As stated in the introductory chapters, the intention of this thesis is not to see The Gambia through the narrow lenses of the small state. Single cause variables irrespective of their validity, measure up inadequately to the numerous complex components that constitute a nation's foreign policy. It is noteworthy that the bulk of the literature on small states is imprisoned in the small/large or weak/strong dichotomy. However, one can argue that it is difficult to escape from the small state perspective since The Gambia is a microcosm of the small state and on that level needs to be examined and evaluated initially as a small state.

Unlike neighbouring countries such as Guinea, The Gambia's foreign policy has not been driven by ideology. In other words, the kind of ideological fervour manifested in Guinea through its leader, Sekou Toure was absent in the Gambian experience.⁵ The Gambia's foreign policy choices have been governed by its determination to use peace as a strong premise for policy guidelines. The stability of the internal regime, the peacefulness of society and its inherent cohesion are internal features that The Gambia, through its leader, Sir Dawda, sought to transpose to the international scene.⁶

The paucity of skilled workers in the diplomatic service or decision-making group is usually an intrinsic feature of small states. Thus, Gambian decision-makers always adopted the pragmatic approach as an absolute imperative. Foreign embassies were few in numbers. Given the fact that many small states such as The Gambia have a limited pool of human and material resources, this means that such resources are not squandered on needless diplomatic representation. In fact, with just the necessary representation in strategic places, public spending could be greatly reduced and this could in turn be spent on vital areas like health, education, and the provision of basic infrastructure. As Papadakis and Starr point out, size constraints could be translated into strength instead of weakness:

... a small state may concentrate its diplomatic efforts on key international 'pressure points' and be all the more successful for its trouble. If one is a small state, this is in fact a rational policy response - instead of over-extending valuable resources at a number of missions around the globe, concentrating the staff and their energies in the capitals of the most consequence can be more

⁵ L. Adomolekun, 'The foreign policy of Guinea' in O. Aluko (1977), p. 111.



productive. A reputation of diplomatic effectiveness can be a valuable bargaining strength, and selective placement of embassies and personnel may help overcome the information and communications constraints of size.⁷

One may express doubts as to the effectiveness of over representation. Diplomatic missions especially in some African countries tend to serve protocol duties more so than the actual formulation, co-ordination or implementation of foreign policy decisions and actions. Gomez in his thesis on The Gambia's external relations mentioned that parliamentarians, during the first ten years of independence, usually expressed their irritation when estimates of The Gambia's overseas expenditure estimates were read.⁸ This is partly because they conceived foreign missions as "stations of luxury" and felt that with limited resources, the Gambian government should concentrate on priority areas such as health and education.

The quality of the Foreign Service and its influence in decision-making was dependent on the quality of its diplomats and representatives, their knowledge in foreign affairs, personality, and clout. While some missions were influential in the decision-making structure, others have simply seen it as an opportunity to self-advancement.⁹ The fact that embassies were limited to key capitals, for instance Dakar and London in the aftermath of independence, only underlines the historical and geographical ties that link The Gambia to these two countries. The former Head of state, Sir Dawda Jawara, mentioned in an interview, the need to "cut one's coat according to one's cloth" especially during post-independent years.¹⁰ According to Jawara, he was guided by national interest and pragmatism. During a state visit of the former Guinean leader, Sekou Toure, Jawara stated:

May I therefore take this opportunity to urge my colleagues to keep whatever structural organisation that we wish to create within the limits dictated by considerations of efficiency and sound financial sense. Let not any executive secretariat which may be created build itself into a vast complex bureaucratic empire. Let it begin modestly and make use of facilities already existing within

⁶ B.B Dabo et al., *The Voice of the People* (Banjul, Baroueli Publications, 1992) p. 211.

⁷ M. Papadakis and H. Starr, 'Opportunity, willingness and the small states: the relationship between environment and foreign policy' in C.F. Herman et al, *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy* (New York, Harpercolins Academic, 1991)., p 426.

⁸ Gomez, op. cit., pp 23-8.

⁹ Zartman, op. cit., p 70, Claude Philips, *The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy* (Evanston, III: Northwestern U.P. 1964), p 32.

¹⁰ Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawara, former Gambian Head of State, 7 February 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex

our area....¹¹

The temptation for governments to fall into the prestige trap by attempting to spread their tentacles everywhere in terms of diplomatic representation is a common one with developing states. Skurnik contends that in the aftermath of independence, Senegal set about opening embassies around the globe.¹² The opening of an embassy was considered to be a symbol of pride, a means of guaranteeing a new state entry into the world of international politics. It was like announcing the birth of a nation and the attainment of sovereignty to the international community.¹³ Senegalese officials within the Foreign Ministry admitted that with the novelty of independence, some embassies were opened without reflecting on the necessary considerations that such an enterprise involves.¹⁴

The consequences of over-representation can be quite disastrous for some governments, leading to the draining of valuable national resources, resulting in the all too familiar scenario of governments phasing down embassies or diplomatic staff having to remain unpaid for months. Thus pragmatism turned out to be a cautious approach that Gambian decision-makers adopted. Multiple accreditation was a cost-effective way of solving some of the problems relating to diplomatic representation. It took the Gambian government almost five years to open a High Commission in Sierra Leone, irrespective of geographic proximity and the cultural and historical affinities between the two countries.¹⁵

Characteristic of foreign policy in small states is the tendency to take decisions in a rather impromptu fashion. This is partly because the structures of small states are generally small and the knowledge base is weak.¹⁶ East contends that small states are usually unable to muster the requisite finances to monitor events in the international arena. The paucity of data, and a government bureaucracy prone to ineffectiveness may reduce the nation's "capacity to act".¹⁷ The lack of a knowledge base, in turn could mean that a particular state may not be able to perceive its national interests in time, or

¹¹ 'P.M call for realism', *The Gambia Bulletin* 30 April 1968.

¹² W.A.E Skurnik, *The Foreign Policy Of Senegal* (Northwestern University Press: Evanston, 1972), pp 79-90.

¹³ Loc. cit.

¹⁴ Loc. cit.

¹⁵ 'Speech From The Throne', *The Gambia Echo* XXXV, 26 June 1969, p 5.

¹⁶ East, (1978), op. cit p 140.

¹⁷ Loc. cit.

if it does, the lack of skilled personnel may further exacerbate the situation.¹⁸ However, although East's analysis is not entirely unfounded, it is too simplistic a generalisation, as small states form a rather disparate group.

Nonetheless, in The Gambia, according to a former employee of the Ministry of External Affairs, there was considerable procrastination especially when policies were not clear-cut. He maintained that it was not exceptional to go to meetings unaware of whose side they were going to vote on. This lack of preparation was particularly patent during the Western Sahara crisis. He avers that as technocrats they were expected to prepare briefs but their views could differ from that of the government. However, he maintained that when the government's view was not forthcoming, they (officials from the Ministry of External Affairs), would "dodge" the issue, by deferring decision-making until the last minute.¹⁹

The question of small structures is reflective of The Gambia's foreign policy machinery. Even though the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has undergone a considerable change both quantitatively and qualitatively, it is still small in comparison to other Foreign Ministries in Africa. Omar Njie, current Foreign Minister, former deputy permanent secretary and an official at the Ministry of External Affairs for several years, stated that although the ministry has competent and qualified staff, nonetheless there are limitations created by small size. Due to the limited number of qualified personnel, they tend to end up acting as "Jacks of all trades". In other words the government had to adopt a policy of selection, focusing on institutions where The Gambia stood to gain.²⁰

Another feature of policy formulation in The Gambia is its highly centralised administration where the conduct of foreign policy is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, usually from the ruling élite. This pattern is a familiar one in the case of new states where opposition political parties or other branches of civil society play a minimal role if any. Leadership plays an important part in small societies; hence foreign policies in these societies, particularly The Gambia, are highly personalised. Papadakis and Starr affirm:

¹⁸ Loc. cit.

¹⁹ Personal interview with Galandou Goree Njie, former official at the Ministry of External Affairs, 13 August 1996, Banjul.

With respect to foreign policy decision making in small states, ... we perceive this process as one in which individuals rather than groups dominate, and in which the individual decision-making is personalised and perhaps authoritarian....²¹

However, the leadership role is not exercised in the usual erratic fashion that is so pervasive in the general literature on African international relations. The leadership variable will be examined in its broader terms in the ensuing chapters.

In addition a lack of economic resources can mean low-key foreign policy. There was a certain degree of inertia in The Gambia's foreign policy especially during the early post-independence years. This could be attributed to numerous factors. For instance the fact that there were a limited number of skilled civil servants in the Gambia, with little experience in the art of diplomacy. In addition, the lack of autonomy of the MEA, which was a unit under the President's Office, hindered its scope for concrete action. The primacy of domestic politics and the task of state building could also have been contributing factors. The lack of economic leverage meant The Gambia had little elbowroom to pursue an assertive foreign policy.

In the case of The Gambia, pressing internal needs meant that the country was constrained in its potential to conduct an active foreign policy. It was common practice for some members of the educated elite in The Gambia to blame Britain for the plight of The Gambia, or its seemingly grim future.²² Decision-makers depended heavily on British aid, because the latter was seen as The Gambia's most natural 'patron', and decision-makers felt that due to the country's colonial legacy and the British role in its heritage, the British would be compelled (at least by default if not through a sense of moral obligation) to keep the economy out of the doldrums. In the light of these impediments on the domestic front it is understandable that foreign policy seemed rather remote in the context of growing internal demands. The political stratification during post-independent years will be dealt with, in depth, in the course of our study. However, in the light of the country's weak domestic economic structures, the need to fortify it with the requisite external resources, was given utmost priority.²³

²⁰ Personal interview with Omar Njie, actual foreign Minister, 15 July 1996, Banjul.

²¹ Papadakis and Starr, in Herman (1991), p 427.

²² Dabo et al, op. cit., p 5.

²³ A. Hughes, 'From green uprising to national reconciliation: the PPP in The Gambia 1959-73', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 9, 1, (1975) pp 61-74.

While some leaders may be quite daunted by economic problems and therefore see them as an impediment to active foreign policy, others may use foreign policy expeditiously to enhance their position at home, or simply to shift the focus from internal difficulties.²⁴ The fact that the British were prepared to assume The Gambia's economic obligations meant that leaders could concentrate on state building. The whole concept of diversifying aid from external donors was rather premature in the minds of Gambian decision-makers. Moreover, the leadership was grateful for British *largesse*, and did not think it relevant to pursue other avenues. It was quite common to see Gambian decision-makers express their gratitude to Britain in the House of Representatives. Sir Dawda affirms:

We are mindful of the fact that the most meaningful contributions to our development efforts so far, have come from Britain... We are deeply appreciative of this assistance and we particularly welcome the announcement of further capital aid contributions to cover the one-year extension to our current development programme.²⁵

However, after the novelty of self-rule had worn off, the prospect of The Gambia becoming a perennial liability began to manifest itself in the eyes of the British government. Needless to say that there emerged a growing scepticism on the part of Britain, and there was talk in some Gambian circles of British magnanimity drawing to an end.²⁶

The reactive nature of foreign policy is a salient feature in the formulation of policies in most new states.²⁷ It is true that small states might not be able to make their voices heard in international forums, yet they do not necessarily have to comply with decisions taken by developed nations. Reactive foreign policy does not always equate with acquiescence, it can take the form of policy of defiance. There are different phases in the history of African international relations when small states have defied Western industrial nations. Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal despite the claims that the British

²⁴ C. Clapham, Africa and the International System (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp 44-74.

²⁵ Gomez, op. cit., p 306.

²⁶ According to Andrew Camara, former Minister of External Relations, the British government was the main provider of funds. The British government had agreed to help The Gambia in balancing recurrent budget deficits, giving The Gambia 1million Dalasis towards the deficit of the recurrent budget. It turned out that the economy did so well that instead of the anticipated deficit, there was a surplus. The British having already disbursed the funds, wanted them back in the light of the unexpected turn in the economy.

²⁷ Clapham (1996), op. cit., pp 62-7.

and French put forward. Nyerere protested against Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence and this resulted in British suspension of aid to Tanzania. Likewise The Gambia's decision to sever ties with Libya after the latter was accused of interference, could be perceived as reactive. However, its action was meant to send a clear signal to the Libyan authorities that The Gambia would not accept any form of subversion within or without its territorial boundaries, irrespective of Libya's substantial aid packages to The Gambia.

In the final analysis, what determines the leader's action or lack of action will depend on the ideological proclivity of the leader, the premium, high or low that he places on the issue at hand, or the immediacy of the national interest. For instance, The Gambia decided to break off relations with Libya in 1980 when it suspected the Libyans of subversive activities in The Gambia. It also openly condemned Libya's actions in destabilising the West African region. Yet until then, The Gambia had gained considerably from Libyan *largesse* especially in the mid-seventies, when relations were stepped up between the two states.²⁸

With the Rhodesian crisis, the Gambian government defied the rest of the states within the Commonwealth that wished to cut off links with Britain because of the latter's role in the conflict. The Gambian maintained that Britain was the key link in the Rhodesian conflict and argued that such a link should be maintained not severed, if a peaceful settlement was to be achieved.²⁹ In the early 1980s, irrespective of its size and weak status in the hierarchy of states, The Gambia was one of the driving forces behind the inception of a Human Rights Charter as an integral aspect of OAU policy. In 1990, as part of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeeping force, The Gambia sent troops to Liberia. Assertiveness was also displayed in regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), OAU and the Permanent Inter-State Authority in the Fight Against Drought in the Sahel (CILSS). This aspect of Gambian foreign policy will be carefully examined in ensuing chapters.

What can be said however, is that the ability of small states to influence decisions in the international arena is quite limited due to obvious constraints of power, size, and attributes. From a regional perspectives some small states could influence decisions in a

²⁸ *Africa Contemporary Record* (1980-1981), XIII, p B479. Dabo et al, op. cit., p 96.

²⁹ Personal interview with Andrew Camara, former Vice President and Minister of External Affairs, 15 August 1996, Banjul

significant manner.³⁰ The objectives and goals a state may set for itself could shed some light on the understanding of the character of foreign policy. Although objectives are not necessarily adhered to, especially in a crisis situation, they can be a premise in determining the high or low priorities of the state and this in turn will determine how far a state may go in the conduct of foreign policy.

Foreign policy objectives & implementation

The objectives of The Gambia's foreign policy have been geared towards international friendship and peaceful co-existence with all peace-loving states. Foreign policy objectives thus reflect domestic concerns. National attributes of peace and stability are transposed to an international level. Assan Musa Camara, former Minister of External Affairs echoes this point. The Gambia's foreign policy choices are primarily driven by economic factors. In this light maintaining close ties with Britain, especially in the early sixties, was an absolute necessity. Security matters preoccupied Gambian decision makers notwithstanding the oft-proclaimed view that outside Senegal, The Gambia had no serious potential enemies.³¹

Yet one must distinguish between internal security and external security. External security, i.e. the need to reinforce the territorial boundaries of The Gambia, and reduce the prospects of Senegalese annexation was the prime factor that motivated Gambian decision makers to conclude a defence agreement with Senegal in the aftermath of The Gambia's independence. The idea that Senegal would not breach an agreement it had initially signed seemed to be one of the many considerations of decision-makers. Internal security, i.e. the safeguarding of the regime against coups d'état became a major preoccupation in 1980 following the death of Eku Mahoney, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Gambian Field Force, right up to the 1981 abortive coup. Foreign policy decisions have been taken by the regime to buttress security entities and allay its insecurities.

However, one of the the main guidelines of The Gambia's foreign policy was to create and foster an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence particularly with immediate neighbours either through the limited alliance of ECOWAS and the OAU or the wider

³⁰ Papadakis and Starr in Rosenau (ed.). (1986), op. cit., p 425.

³¹ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 15 August 1996, Banjul. The majority of Gambian decision-makers interviewed in the course of this research endorsed Assan Musa Camara's views.

setting of the non-aligned movement.³² In the same vein, Omar Njie confirms the primacy of international friendship as a vital component of The Gambia's foreign policy priorities. According to Njie, Gambian decision-makers saw the OAU, particularly during the wave of independence, as an instrument promoting cohesion, togetherness and greater understanding among African states.³³

When one examines the patterns of behaviour in Gambian foreign policy-making, a discernible trend consisting of linking national features to international relations emerges. Social and political cohesion have each in turn influenced foreign policy behaviour. It is not unusual for leaders to use national identity as a standard to conduct foreign policy goals. This tendency to link national character as an extension of foreign policy objectives is emphasised by Jawara:

Mr Speaker, the increased level of our participation and involvement in world politics in general and African politics in particular which I have briefly outlined, is a reflection of the dynamic evolution of our foreign policy based on realism, non-alignment, the attainment of African unity, friendship with all countries of the world and peace at all times for the entirety of mankind. It is also a reflection of our national character and internal situation characterised by tolerance, democracy and stability....³⁴

[emphasis added, F.D.].

Moreover, understanding cultural underpinnings behind a nation's action can throw a great deal of light on its foreign policy behaviour. As Skurnik contends:

The cultural dimension of Senegal's foreign policy is more important than are others, in the sense that it conditions much of Senghor's thinking about inter-African and wider, international affairs; provides a framework without which many of his ideas and actions are not fully comprehensible.³⁵

The issue of national character has also been neglected by academics.³⁶ Lystad argues that national character could hardly be applicable to African governments since

³² Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 15 August 1996, Banjul.

³³ Personal interview with Omar Njie, 15 July 1996, Banjul.

³⁴ Sir Dawda Jawara, Presidential Speech at the State Opening of Parliament, 19 August 1980, extracted from Foreign Policy Guidelines, Selected Speeches compiled and published by the Ministry of External Affairs, Banjul, p 31.

³⁵ . Skurnik, op. cit., p 188.

they lack the political maturity to sustain any national trait.

Few African nations have endured long enough to develop 'relatively enduring personality characteristics' and their populations are still too heterogeneous to permit generalisations about a national society.³⁷

Nonetheless, due to a relative homogenous society, a high degree of social cohesion and a generally peaceable disposition, one can talk of a discernible Gambian national character. Leaders who enjoy a comfortable domestic stability can use this to secure their foreign policy goals and convey a message of national unity to the international community.³⁸ It is undeniable that Gambian decision-makers were eager to demonstrate to international observers the value The Gambia attributes to peace both in domestic and foreign policy. Hughes confirms that the propensity to stability, peace and tolerance have been valued principles in Gambian internal politics.³⁹ Jawara reiterates:

We are a small nation, that likes to think that the orderly nature of our people can contribute something to the peace and stability of this continent... With The Gambia's characteristic tolerance, understanding and friendliness, we intend to align ourselves on the side of the world's peaceful forces.⁴⁰

The concepts of peace and good neighbourliness have always been considered sacred values in The Gambia's external relations. This is probably due to Jawara's personality. His moderate and conciliatory attitude made him seek mediation as a key to achieving African unity.

As a peace loving nation we believe in peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness based on the on the respect of the territorial integrity of all states. We also believe that intra-African conflicts should be resolved through the established machinery of mediation, conciliation and arbitration in accordance with the OAU Charter....⁴¹

³⁶ Lystad, in McKay, p 104-5.

³⁷ Ibid, p 105.

³⁸ Clapham (1996), op. cit., p 55.

³⁹ Hughes (1975), op. cit., p 59.

⁴⁰ Prime Minister Jawara. 'Ten Years of Nationhood', The Gambia News Bulletin 13 February 1975, p 2.

⁴¹ Sir Dawda Jawara, Speech on the Occasion of an Official Dinner Given in Honour of Mr. S. Ramphal, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, 2 February 1979.

Jawara reiterated the need for peace in conflict resolution in most of his speeches.⁴² Problem resolution through peaceful means between African states is regarded as a primary option by the OAU. As a result, African governments in general would strive towards conciliation, at least as a gesture of diplomatic protocol.⁴³

Territorial integrity, is also a basic foreign policy objective in The Gambia. This serves as a corollary to another sacred principle of Gambian decision-makers, i.e. the right to self-determination. Due to the reordering of the boundaries of African communities as a result of the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, African leaders have come to realise that any redefinition of boundaries would greatly affect the social, political and cultural make-up of the continent. Territorial revisionism has always been considered as Africa's *bête noire* and the inclusion of the concept of territorial integrity in the OAU charter is indicative of its importance to African leaders.⁴⁴

It is to be expected, given the small size of The Gambia and its geographical location, that such notions as territorial integrity are regarded as sacred law since the violation of such principles would mean the demise of states like The Gambia. Advocacy of such international and legal norms characterises most small state policy. Both East and Rapaport argue that small states are more inclined to co-operate fully with these norms in the interests of national survival.⁴⁵ However, it would be erroneous to suggest the need to advocate principles like peaceful co-operation is solely geared to the national interest. Freymond articulates similar views: "The contribution of the small states to peace is not, however, restricted simply to an egotistical concentration or defending their national interests, and protecting internal peace and security".⁴⁶

On the basis of territorial integrity, Gambian decision-makers decided to suspend the cultural co-operation agreement with the Soviet Union when the latter invaded Afghanistan.

In our relations with the wider community of nations, The Gambia's policy of peaceful co-operation has always been guided by the principles of non-alignment and respect for the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of states. The

⁴² Sir Dawda Jawara, presidential speech, delivered at the State Opening of Parliament, 16 August, 1978. Sessional Paper 3 of 1978, Printed by the Government Printer, Banjul, p 16.

⁴³ Zartman, (1966), op. cit., pp 92-3.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p 108

⁴⁵ Papadakis and Starr, in Hermann, p 428.

⁴⁶ Freymond 'How the small countries can contribute to peace' in Schou et al, (eds.) Small states in

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan therefore prompted our immediate and unequivocal condemnation. Our uncompromising stand on this issue was further demonstrated by the unilateral suspension of our cultural co-operation agreement with the Soviet Union.⁴⁷

The above statement could be taken with a certain degree of scepticism. The Gambian Minister of External Affairs at the time, L.K. Jabang, in a speech to the Islamic conference, stated that the strain in the relations between The Gambia and the Soviet Union was due to the latter's invasion of a "fellow Muslim country and a fellow member of the Islamic Conference Organisation".⁴⁸ However, it is quite possible that both reasons were valid. In the same vein, with regard to the Biafra War, The Gambia stood by the principle of territorial integrity and refused to back the breakaway state of Biafra in 1967.⁴⁹

External interference was feared in the same way as military coups. Moreover, military coups are frequently justified, as part of a carefully orchestrated external plan. Gambian decision-makers were convinced that Libya had sponsored the 1981 military insurrection.⁵⁰ It is true that the latter manifested a determination to destabilise Black Africa, particularly pro-Western states.⁵¹ Indeed, Jawara never failed to emphasise that The Gambia, in spite of its principle for international friendship, would not take kindly to any interference in its internal affairs.

...That we are united under the banner of Islam requires the mutuality of respect, assistance and understanding and excludes subversion, sabotage, and interference in the internal affairs of our countries. While we in The Gambia stretch the hand of friendship and co-operation to all nations of the world, ... we will not tolerate any diabolic design to exploit our openness, democracy and stability and to bring about confusion and anti-Islamic tendencies among a people whose religious fortitude has throughout history, defeated external

International Relations (Stockholm, Almqvist and Wiskell, 1971), p 182.

⁴⁷ Presidential address at the State Opening of Parliament, Tuesday 19th August, 1980, *Foreign Policy Guidelines* op. cit., p 31.

⁴⁸ *Foreign Policy Guidelines* op. cit., pp 33-35.

⁴⁹ Assan Musa Camara, former Foreign Minister, leader of the opposition Gambia's People Party, stated that because The Gambia had accepted the OAU Charter, and therefore agreed to the principle of inviolability of boundaries: "If we allow secession then we encourage the disappearance of boundaries. We could not have done that". Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 15 August 1996, Banjul.

⁵⁰ Personal interview with Jawara, 7 February 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

⁵¹ R. Otaeyk, *La Politique Africaine de la Libye* (Paris, Editions Karthala, 1986) pp 74-6

aggression.⁵²

In the same vein, Nkrumah's relations with his French-speaking neighbours were fairly contentious, especially since the latter suspected him of encouraging subversive elements on Ghanaian soil.⁵³

Nonetheless, it should be emphasised that most African states, like The Gambia, opted for non-alignment, and consequently regarded the principle as primary to their foreign policy objectives. The Gambia's membership of the non-aligned movement meant that it had enough leverage to explore the potential economic gains, which the two ideological blocks and their respective proxies had to offer. Thus The Gambia in its policy of non-alignment, maintained a 'two-Chinas' policy and played one China off against the other until it became timely to chose one over the other.

From this example it could be said that The Gambia's definition of non-alignment was not solely confined to affiliation to the Communist or the Capitalist dogmas; it was primarily the freedom to choose one's political or economic affiliations depending on one's independent sovereign judgement. Non-alignment, as perceived by Gambian decision-makers, carries peaceful overtures. Jawara argued:

Our commitment to peace also dictates our total attachment to the policy of non-alignment. History in its inexorable logic has witnessed the emergence of this doctrine to which we as Gambians and as Africans collectively subscribe. Our concept of non-alignment is positive; it is far from being a state of indifference or neutrality. What we mean by positive non-alignment is that whatever positions we take or views we hold on any international issue result from our own sovereign judgement in the interest solely of peace and progress.⁵⁴

However, in spite of The Gambia's professed definition of non-alignment as a step towards peace, it should be mentioned that non-alignment was pursued in the light of the national interest. Economic gratification was one of the underlying reasons behind the whole concept of the non-aligned movement. Politically, the bulk of new

⁵² Sir Dawda Jawara, 'Statement to the Third Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference' held in Taif, Saudi Arabia, 25-28 January 1981 in *Foreign Policy Guidelines* op. cit., p 39.

⁵³ W. S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology and the New State* (Princeton New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1969), pp 221-2.

⁵⁴ Sir Dawda Jawara, 'Address delivered at the 33rd Session of the U.N General Assembly, 22nd September, 1978', *Foreign Policy Guidelines* op. cit., p 11.

states were non-aligned, yet economic alignment was an integral part of the unpronounced objectives of most new states. Political alignment was exercised to a degree since the Gambian Head of State and educated élite were more oriented towards Western governments.⁵⁵

Writers such as Anglin have validated this view by referring to Nigeria's concept of non-alignment as "political non-alignment and economic alignment".⁵⁶ Due to the need to improve their economies, and the inability to extract the necessary revenue from the domestic resource base, African leaders tend to dance to a different tune where the provision of aid is concerned. Throughout the history and evolution of the non-aligned movement, very few African leaders were willing to risk economic prosperity for the principle of non-alignment. A noted exception to this was Julius Nyerere's recognition of the German Democratic Republic, allowing the latter to open a Consulate in his country, thus resulting in the suspension of aid from Federal Germany.

However, if principles of non-alignment were somewhat inconsistent with professed objectives, The Gambia was unflinching in its support for liberation movements and its advocacy of independence. The Gambia's experience of self-rule was quite peaceful and could not be likened to the traumatic experience of other African states like Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Zimbabwe, Namibia and others. The abhorrence of racist regimes in Southern Africa was a key component of The Gambia's foreign policy. However, due to obvious limitations in the implementation of these policies, most of The Gambia's condemnation, either in the form of pronouncement in international fora, or joint communiqués, was rhetorical. However, it is noteworthy that in the cases of Namibia and Guinea-Bissau, The Gambia helped materially insofar as its modest means would allow.⁵⁷ The Gambia's altruism was not just limited to these two, it was also conferred on South Africa. Through the OAU, The Gambia was able to foster South African children.⁵⁸

Colonialism itself has been strongly and passionately criticised by African leaders irrespective of their ideology. The residual inequalities of imperialism are resonantly audible in most speeches that are made by African leaders. Leaders like

⁵⁵ Omar Sey, former Foreign Minister, in an interview stated that in the final analysis, especially given The Gambia's situation it cannot afford to alienate the West. Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara. Gomez, op. cit., pp 317-8.

⁵⁶ U.J Ogwu, *Nigeria Foreign Policy: Alternatives Futures* (Lagos, Nigerian Institute for International Affairs) p 104.

⁵⁷ Speech by President Jawara at the State Opening of Parliament on Tuesday, 28 May 1974, p 20.

Jawara, though not fanatically nationalist, echoed in his pronouncements, his unwavering determination to work in concert with other African leaders in their efforts to rid the continent of the last vestiges of colonialism. Zartman aptly acknowledges:

In Africa, this appeal is sharpened by memories of the injustices inflicted on the native population during the period of colonial rule. The assertions of dignity that reverberates in the speeches of African leaders thus express a popular feeling inherent in nationalism, defending in high moral terms the fragility of their newly won independence, and reflect the sensitivity of any weak state to its general insecurity.⁵⁹

However, in the mid-1970s the right to self-determination and human rights became driving forces in Gambian politics. The concept of human rights and its full implications in connection with The Gambia's foreign policy stance will be examined in depth in the following chapters. However, self-determination was always rigorously pursued, even in the light of international pressure. The former Foreign Minister in an interview, intimated that in the case of Western Sahara, The Gambia supported the self-determination of the Saharawi people, in spite of pressure from the government of Morocco to do otherwise.⁶⁰

It is my ardent hope that all the parties to the conflict will respect the OAU decision so that the people of Western Sahara can exercise their inalienable right of sovereignty in order that peace is guaranteed in our North Western Sub-region.⁶¹

The pursuit of human and individual rights was also strongly aligned to The Gambia's national attributes and the Gambian leader's belief in the sanctity of individual rights. Jawara echoed Nkrumah's views that African people, having experienced slavery, exploitation, and denigration need not be put through the ordeal of deprivation of human rights, especially when the perpetrators are none other than their own African leaders. Jawara relentlessly reiterated his commitment to human rights in different international fora, from the Commonwealth and the UN General Assembly to

⁵⁸ Personal interview with Galandou Goree Njie, 29 July 1996, Banjul,

⁵⁹ Zartman (1966), op. cit., p 48.

⁶⁰ Interview with Omar Sey, 14 August 1996 Banjul, Sey stated that Morocco exerted pressure on The Gambia through Senegal and Saudi Arabia. Jawara, according to Sey, was on the horns of a dilemma, but in the final analysis, he maintained the principle of self-determination.

⁶¹ Sir Dawda, State Opening of Parliament, 17 August 1979, Sessional Paper No 2 of 1979 p 31.,

the OAU, as well as in regional bodies like CILSS, ECOWAS and even the Islamic Conference Organisation:

It is not uncommon for states to overemphasise their commitment to certain principles in an effort to improve their image or for prestigious reasons. Critics such as Sallah⁶² and Jawo⁶³ have claimed that the human rights card was simply a foreign policy ploy that could enable The Gambia to improve its ailing economy through external aid. The tendency of external donor agencies to link aid to democracy and a reasonable human rights record became a central theme especially in the late 1980s. However, it is suggested here that even if The Gambia gained from its human rights stance, its conviction in this regard was genuine and real.

The respect of territorial integrity, non alignment, self-determination of all people and abhorrence to colonial and minority-rule were all actively pursued by Gambian decision-makers. It was felt that the pursuit of these objectives was not an innovation, simply an extension of The Gambia's domestic policy. This confirms the theory that cultural and national attributes could impinge on foreign policy goals. However, the long list of foreign policy objectives makes it difficult for The Gambia to clearly discern which one of these principles to pursue effectively. The commitment to human rights was taken up by The Gambia as a challenge in the face of growing international scepticism that an African Human Rights Charter would ever see the light of day. As Clapham states:

Some effort at reform was therefore needed in order to enable the OAU to regain a measure of moral authority, not only outside the continent but even among some of its own members. One of these efforts, the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, was proposed by President Jawara of The Gambia in an attempt both to rebut external criticisms of Africa's human rights record, and to lay down at least some minimum standards which African states might be expected to meet....⁶⁴

Nonetheless, the nature of a nation's foreign policy cannot be studied in isolation of the international context. The foreign policy behaviour of a particular state may be affected or enhanced by its political environment. Given The Gambia's geographical

Touray, op. cit., p 305-17.

⁶² Personal interview with Halifa Sallah, politician and journalist, 8 August 1996, Serrekunda.

⁶³ Personal interview with D.A.Jawo, journalist (Daily Observer) 7 August 1996, Bakau.

specificity, almost an enclave in the heart of Senegal, its foreign policy behaviour has been greatly affected by external players such as Senegal, Britain and other states in the West African arena.

External actors and their influence in foreign policy formulation

According to Clapham, the foreign policy pursued by African states depends on the extent to which the 'idea of the state'⁶⁵ is shared, firstly among a state's own population and secondly with its neighbours and African states as a whole, and finally with the dominant states of the international system.⁶⁶

The Gambia's foreign policy reflects a great deal of assertiveness in its foreign relations with Senegal. Yet it has exhibited different characteristics depending on the external actors involved, and the degree of importance The Gambia attributes to each actor. In general, The Gambia's foreign policy has been pursued on the grounds of realism and national interest, cautious, low keyed on occasion, depending on the importance of events and The Gambia's assessment of these events in terms of how much it stands to gain or lose.

However, vis-à-vis Senegal, The Gambia, in spite of rhetoric, pursued a minimalist policy in its determination to safeguard its sovereignty and the distinctiveness of the Gambian people. The Gambia was keen to play the role of the good neighbour in the West African Region, particularly with Senegal. The concept of African unity was often evoked to justify integration with Senegal, as it was clear that foreign policy links between the two countries were inescapable. In other words the compulsion did not emanate from the sheer pressure of African unity but rather from overwhelming imperatives such as history and geographical continuity. Jawara acknowledged: The House will, I am sure understand, that The Gambia, hemmed in by Senegal on all three landward sides, cannot sensibly pursue a foreign policy divorced from or opposite to that of Senegal.⁶⁷

Nonetheless, in key governmental circles in The Gambia there was a marked distrust of Senegal. Efforts were made to orient the relations of the two countries

⁶⁴ Clapham (1996), op. cit., p 116.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p 45.

⁶⁶ Loc. cit.

towards mutual understanding and co-operation to such an extent that the larger state would dispel any thoughts of coercing the other. As Calvert avers:

In theory states are sovereign entities, distinct from one another, each entitled to its own integrity and to non interference in its internal affairs. Not only do they seek to influence each other's behaviour, they also seek permanently to change it by inducing structural changes in governments they perceive as hostile in order to make them more friendly and by supporting governments they perceive to be friendly in a way that incurs a sense of mutual obligation....⁶⁸

Thus the security of The Gambia from a territorial standpoint becomes less of a nagging problem. This is due to the fact that the 1967 security agreement concluded between The Gambia and Senegal compels Senegal to keep its part of the arrangement. Naturally, the main emphasis of The Gambia's external policies was in relation to its immediate neighbour. Although The Gambia lacked the resource base to guarantee itself the necessary security anchor that would deter Senegal from any coercive behaviour, it sought through pre-emptive diplomacy to achieve co-operation with Senegal.

The extent of success achieved through this co-operation was arguably limited, but the two countries, irrespective of border incidents and other contentious issues, managed to favour diplomacy rather than coercion. Barston acknowledges that "the cost of viability [for the small state] is often political quiescence and compromise."⁶⁹ It could be argued that The Gambia proved a tough match for Senegal, refusing to be coerced into any uncomfortable situation. However, some key decision-makers argue that there has also been a great deal of compromise to appease Senegal and avoid alienation.⁷⁰

The former Minister of External Affairs, Omar Sey averred that, although the Gambian stance on human rights and self-determination is resolute, decision-makers had to change their policies, especially in the light of the Casamance separatist issue in Senegal. The separatist issue in Casamance, according to the Minister, is a clear case of

⁶⁷ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 9 January 1965.

⁶⁸ Calvert, *op. cit.*, p 35.

⁶⁹ Papadakis and Starr, *op. cit.*, p 427; Barston, *op. cit.*, p 19.

⁷⁰ Sheriff Dibba, leader of the opposition and former minister, in an interview stated that The Gambia had always had a deliberate policy of not antagonising Senegal, "it would be suicidal", he added. Personal interview with Sheriff Dibba, leader of the Opposition National Convention Party, Banjul, 29th

self-determination. Given the Gambian stance on the principle of self-determination, it is therefore logical for The Gambia to support the separatist cause. However, because the security of The Gambia is intricately intertwined with that of Senegal, the Gambian government had to decline support and look at the Casamance issue from a political perspective.⁷¹ Self-determination was further complicated by the prevalence of Jolas, the dominant ethnic group in Casamance, with obvious ramifications on The Gambia itself. Pertinently, in the case of the Nigerian civil war, when The Gambia advocated the use of international arbitration to resolve the conflict, it was interpreted by the Nigerians as a case of interference. The Gambia was metaphorically termed as “the ant interfering in the affairs of the elephant”.⁷²

Relations within Africa have been pursued on the basis of African unity. Gambian decision-makers favoured a gradualist, functionalist approach based on positive co-operation among African states in order to enhance their economic development and, in the same vein, promote better understanding of their affinities as well as their differences.

Foreign policy behaviour towards Britain was principally geared towards economic expediency. It was a popular perception to see co-operation with Britain as an instrument towards greater economic reliance especially in the early days of independence. However, as British altruism declined in ensuing years, Gambian decision-makers embarked on a diplomatic offensive and literally curried favour from different sources, particularly Asian states. Relations with the British were primarily based on a dependency cycle. As is quite often the case in a relationship of unequal partners, the lesser partner adopts a more accommodating role.

The “special relationship” according to Camara, was more special to The Gambia than it was to Britain in the light of economic gains that The Gambia made from Britain.⁷³ However, it was not unusual for decision-makers to expect more from Britain in terms of economic benefits. Attitudes towards the British vacillated from appreciation to condemnation, as vociferous parliamentarians like Lamin Mboge articulated their criticism. Mboge complained that British aid to The Gambia was

July 1996.

⁷¹ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 30 July 1996, Fajara

⁷² Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 15 August 1996, Banjul. Camara intimated that the then Nigerian Foreign Minister Adibo, made this comment at the UN General Assembly. This was because they saw the whole secessionist movement as a purely internal affair that did not necessitate outside interference.

insufficient and other African countries were getting a lot more.⁷⁴

However, even though relations with Britain were linked to national and economic expediency, The Gambia maintained a certain degree of assertiveness, especially as it grew more confident in its foreign policy choices. Nonetheless, the perception of the élite and their concept of what constitutes the national interest is pivotal to the understanding of the foreign policy behaviour of states.

Decision-makers and their perception of the concept of “national interest”

According to Alfred de Grazia, the significance of the national interest is dependent on the meaning the decision-maker attaches to it.⁷⁵ States generally consider the ‘national interest’ in terms of what it takes to satisfy popular expectations. The main preoccupation revolves around the economy. State building is a step towards this goal. Foreign policy is usually justified in the national interest. According to Zartman, three elements constitute the national interest: “the physical state (territory and people), its way of life, and its standard of living”.⁷⁶ The welfare of the state generally carries with it an all-consuming obsession for decision-makers. The behaviour of a state, assertive or unassertive, will depend on what decision-makers perceive as the national interest and how crucial the decision in question will affect the security and economic needs of the state.⁷⁷

Perceptions of foreign policy in the minds of decision-makers depend on the personality of the decision-makers, their knowledge of international relations, the periods in which they serve and the issues they have to contend with. Foreign policy aspirations will be based not only on the national interest but also on the perception of the decision-makers in respect to their ability to achieve key targets. Clapham rightly contends:

... the foreign policy of any state reflects the way in which its government defines its own mission, and the extent to which the mission is shared by the population

⁷³ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 15 August 1996. Banjul

⁷⁴ See *The Gambia News Bulletin* 9 January 1965, p 2. Mboge was then MP for the province of Illiassa in The Gambia.

⁷⁵ Alfred de Grazia, cited by W.S.Thompson, *Ghana's foreign Policy 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology and the New State* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1965), p 44.

⁷⁶ Zartman, in McKay op. cit., p 30.

as a whole. Such a mission, or 'ideas of the state', encompasses not only its explicit institutions and goals, but also the often unarticulated collection of assumptions, identities and traditions which shape its behaviour...⁷⁸

The game of national interest then is played according to the rules of *realpolitik*. The egotism of the individual is subsumed into the state. The state is left to make decisions in the interest of the people. The Gambia, insofar as its foreign economic policy is concerned, seeks to some degree to provide for the economic well-being of its populace. Gambian foreign policy was swift in courting friends who could augment national development. Relations with communist China and Taiwan, and with North and South Korea, were perceived to be necessary for The Gambia's economic prosperity. In addition, relations within the Islamic Conference Organisation were pursued primarily with the expectations of economic advantages as a result of allying with Muslim countries.

The character of a nation's foreign policy tends to depend on decision-makers and how they perceive the state whose interest they are defending. Although, it would appear simplistic to perceive foreign policy as a mere reflection of individuals with all their imperfections, it is however fair to say that behavioural science has come a long way in explaining the character of foreign policy.⁷⁹ The character of Gambian foreign policy has experienced different phases since the early days of independence in 1965. There has been a discernible evolution in the general perception of what the goals of foreign policy should be in the minds of decision-makers. Confidence in foreign policy could be the result of a number of factors. At independence, The Gambia had to find its feet. This process of finding "its feet" accounts for the relative inertia the state exhibited in terms of foreign policy choices and decisions. State building was an important prerequisite to meeting popular expectations.

Meanwhile resistance to any form of imperialistic attempt by Senegal to coerce The Gambia into some form of amalgamation was feared and thus shunned. However, internal political stability and relative economic success were all contributing factors to The Gambia's confidence in the mid-1970s and its desire to strengthen its external links and enhance its image. The diplomatic offensive coupled with Jawara's personal diplomacy launched in the mid-1970s, especially within the African continent, was a

⁷⁷ Ibid, p 28.

⁷⁸ Clapham, (1996), op. cit., p 45.

⁷⁹ A. Wolfers, unpublished paper, 'Theory of international politics: its merits and advancement', p 4.

turning point in The Gambia's foreign policy history. This form of bilateral diplomacy is less expensive for The Gambia and more valued as personal diplomacy among African Heads of State falls in line with Jawara's definition of a an effective approach to foreign policy.⁸⁰

The policy of the good neighbour was one that The Gambia was ready to pursue despite the limitations imposed. It befitted The Gambian government's belief that integration with Senegal would be too confined and that it would be necessary to bring in other neighbouring countries to make integration more meaningful. Intense diplomatic relations with other countries might send a signal to Senegal. Senegalese decision-makers would then realise that The Gambia, as a sovereign state, wished to pursue an independent foreign policy and thus did not want to be an appendage of the larger state. Hermann avers:

Many authors (e.g. Andrew, 1970; Barston, 1973; De Raeymaeker et al 1974; Rothstein 1977) argue that the foreign policies of small states are preoccupied with protecting their territorial integrity and independence, and that the major substantive thrust is on sovereignty, equality and justice.⁸¹

While relations with Western countries are almost certainly based on economic priorities, relations with African states are premised on the need to explore a more humanistic element. Coupled with this, is a deep sense of a shared legacy resulting from the traumas of colonialism. As Nkrumah pointed out:

The West has set the pattern of our hopes ... We have to modernise. Either we shall do so with the interest and support of the West or we shall be compelled to turn elsewhere. This is not a warning or a threat, but a straight statement of political reality. And I also affirm for myself and I believe for most of my fellow leaders in Africa, that we want close co-operation with our friends. We know you. History has brought us together. We still have the opportunity to build up a future on the basis of free and equal co-operation. This is our aim. This is our hope.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Policy Guidelines* op. cit., p 3.

⁸¹ Hermann et al, op. cit., p 428.

⁸² Thompson, op.cit., p 15.

The necessity to create a strong African bond is always professed as a cherished principle. Invariably, there is a tendency to play down ethnic and language differences as peripheral, colonial divisions and that African unity should transcend such secondary issues.

CONCLUSION

The personalised and benign form of neo-patrimonialism reflected in The Gambia's leadership from 1965-1994 is very important in the understanding of the foreign policy choices of this tiny West African state. The personality of the leader has been transposed to an international level to give a distinctive style of foreign policy. This distinctiveness can be seen in The Gambia's choice of policy options, which has been a reflection of moderation, a policy geared towards peace, conciliation and pragmatism. The precarious nature of personalised policies have been subject to much scholarly scrutiny as the excesses of Idi Amin, Gadaffi, Sukarno and Nasser have been exposed. However, the influence of the leader in small states such as The Gambia is undeniable. It takes greater magnitude in the light of structural deficiencies, which accounts for the leader's overbearing role.

In The Gambia, personal rule has had a positive impact on foreign policy. The principles of good neighbourliness, democracy, peace and stability, symbolised by The Gambia on the international arena have won friends rather than enemies for The Gambia. Thus, The Gambia's external policies both at home and abroad had little scope to threaten either players or observers. The character of its foreign policy was heavily premised on internal features and the demands of the regime. Characterisation of foreign policy was shaped by the immediacy of domestic concerns and the weaknesses resulting from such difficulties. Thus while foreign policy was pursued with a certain degree of idealism, the overwhelming limitations of a small state, imposed a greater scope for pragmatism.

The gulf between capability and intent is wide and incapacitating. In addition, structural deficiencies and other constraints are so compelling in small dependent states that it would take more than a handful of sound foreign policy choices to address such endemic weaknesses. The issue of characterisation is to a great degree dependent on choices in the internal arena, the limitations they impose on the state, and the leadership's ability to exploit certain advantages in order to buttress the domestic stronghold and gain external credibility.

CHAPTER 4: Foreign Policy and the Character of Civil Society in The Gambia

Towards a Conceptualisation of Civil Society

The whole notion of civil society has received scant attention from scholars until recently.¹ It is somewhat premature to predict whether the concept of civil society in Africa is just a passing fad, in vogue with the prevalent political climate in the continent, or whether its resurgence is real and thus likely to enjoy certain longevity.² By pursuing its quest for a role and a space in spite of domestic limitations, civil society is constantly undergoing re-evaluations, perpetually slipping into political oblivion and reappearing to reassert itself.³

Given the fluid political situation and preponderance of democratization in Africa, the discourse on civil society has been revived.⁴ A cross-section of African state civic organisations have assumed a somewhat unprecedented vibrancy, demanding more participatory politics, challenging governments to be more accountable and condemning corruption.⁵ Moreover, given the primacy of structural adjustment in sub-Saharan Africa and its effects on the local population, there has been a constant re-appraisal of an active, vibrant and participatory civil society.⁶

In The Gambia, at the height of the military regime that lasted from July 1994 to October 1996, civil society emerged from its previous lethargy, and became wakeful and above all watchful. Civil society, having being accommodated in a benign political climate devoid of the grosser forms of repression, suddenly had to face a government that was evidently ready to curtail its actions and make it more submissive and more

¹ R. Fatton., *Predatory Rule, State and Civil Society in Africa* (London, Lynne Rienner Publishers : 1992), P. Chabal, *Power in Africa* (London, Macmillan Press, 1992) pp 68-97, Jean Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: the Politics of the Belly* (London, Longman, 1993); 'Civil Society in Africa', in Patrick Chabal (ed.) *Political Domination in Africa, Reflections on the Limits of Power* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp 109-125, J. W. Harbeson et al (eds.), *Civil Society and the State in Africa* (London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994). See Ian Gary, 'Confrontation, Co-operation or Co-optation: NGOs and the Ghanaian State during Structural Adjustment', *Review of African Political Economy* June 1996, 68. 23, pp 149-168. Regarding empirical findings on Gambian civil society, J. A. Wiseman, 'Military rule in The Gambia: an interim assessment' *Third World Quarterly* 17, 5, 1996, pp 917-940.

² D. Glaser, 'South Africa and the limits of civil society', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23, 1, March 1997, p 7.

³ Chabal (1992), op. cit., p 93.

⁴ E. Hutchful, 'The civil society debate in Africa' in *International Journal*. 51, 1, 1995-96, p 54.

⁵ Gary, op. cit., p 156.

malleable. Yet the extent to which civil society in a short time-span metamorphosed into a relatively active, vocal voice is a rare precedent in Gambian politics.⁷

Nonetheless, it is difficult to evaluate the contribution of civil society, especially since there has been a certain level of inconsistency in civic organisations. This is partly due to episodic protests of civic organisations, their moribund tendencies or their inability to resist all forms of co-optation into the government machinery.⁸ In this light it is unfair to conceptualise civil society in Africa from a Western perspective. This is primarily because civil society in the African context has evolved in a completely different mould from the Western model. Moreover, civic organisations in Africa easily fall prey to governments' ploys of co-optation, especially since governments tend to control the different elements of distribution and accumulation. The distinction between private and public sectors appears somewhat blurred since the government, either through democratic or autocratic process, seeks proprietorial rights over these areas. Africa's civic organisations reflect the difficulties within the socio-political and economic space in which they operate. Civic organisations have few resources to finance their aspirations or rather those of the people they are representing.

What this chapter attempts to do is to show the limits of civil society in a small introverted state, The Gambia, and evaluate its role both in domestic and foreign policy. The chapter also reviews the role played by different civic groups in the areas of domestic and foreign policy. First, one should attempt to define "civil society" and analyse its dynamics in the wider framework of the African context. Second the study seeks to situate Gambian civil society within the civil society discourse. Thus it will examine the nature and characteristics of civil society in The Gambia. The main aim is to evaluate the basis of a strong or weak civil society and thus set the context for its contribution or lack of contribution to decision-making.

Third, since this study deals primarily with The Gambia's foreign relations, it is important to examine the different branches of civil society and evaluate their contributions in the area of decision making. The role of pressure groups such as the business community, the press, religious community and trade unions will be explored to determine their role in domestic and foreign policy. Questions on ethnicity-related problems will be posed, i.e., is there a basis for a Wolofisation versus Mandinkaness

⁶ Loc. cit

⁷ For more information on civil society under the military, Wiseman,(1996) op. cit., p 928.

⁸ Bayart, in Chabal, p 116.

squabble within the Gambian administration and has the ethnic factor affected or enhanced The Gambia's external relations with Senegal?

Although the main focus here is on foreign policy, the role of these different groups of civic organisations within the context of domestic policies on the one hand determines their influence on foreign policy matters, and on the other establishes their credibility vis-à-vis the ruling élite. This thesis goes a step further than previous studies on The Gambia's external relations in that it attempts to explore the possibility of a civil society dimension in policy-making. Thus unlike other studies on the subject, it does not *à priori* analyse foreign policy decision-making as a model of bureaucratic and élitist dominance.⁹

Studies on foreign policy formulation have concentrated on The Gambia's external relations, and little attention has been devoted to the structures and key players in the general prosecution of foreign policy. In fact the role played by civil society, insignificant or relevant is omitted in Touray's findings. Touray gives an in-depth analysis of The Gambia's external relations. However, in spite of obvious strengths in Touray's reconstruction of The Gambia's external relations, his arguments are restricted to defying conventional wisdom, which relegates small states to secondary status, and qualifies their foreign policy choices as being essentially of an administrative nature. While he uses the Gambian example to demonstrate his point, i.e. that states small or large aspire to basically the same ideals and aspirations, his analysis does not take into account the dynamics of small states, including the relevance of formal and informal networks in decision-making.¹⁰ Although Touray looks at The Gambia's foreign economic policy, and examines the role of the Bretton Woods institutions (BWIs), he fails to evaluate the consequences of structural adjustment programmes, especially their socio-economic ramifications vis-à-vis the general populace and certain pressure groups.

Gomez's thesis on The Gambia's external relations, although quite comprehensive, discounts civil society as insignificant in the ultimate complexion of foreign policy decisions and choices. His study of pressure groups remains superficial and only a perfunctory examination is given to the press whose role, in spite of evident limitations, was important, particularly in its ability to influence public opinion on

⁹ Gomez, Ph.D thesis, op. cit., W. Momen, Ph.D thesis op. cit., and O. Touray, unpublished Ph.D thesis, op. cit.

¹⁰ Touray, op. cit.

Senegambian matters.¹¹ Because of these obvious gaps in previous studies, this study sets a new precedent by evaluating the role of civil society, real or putative, in The Gambia's external relations.

Civil society, what civil society ?

Civil society is an important force in every country in that it acts in the manner of checks and balances.¹² If allowed to exercise its role properly and fully, it could guarantee that governments do not step out of their legal, political, economic and social parameters. Whether the state or its leader assumes a central position is irrelevant at this stage. This is because in a democracy, irrespective of the pre-eminence of the leader, there should be some degree of accountability. The concept of civil society is borrowed from Western politics. What we need to look at, is an indigenized civil society in the African context, a civil society that does not discount co-optation and one that takes into account co-operation, however minimal between the state and civic groups. What then do we mean by civil society?

As in every relatively new concept, coming up with a suitable definition is a Herculean task. First the concept of civil society is a loose one. Chabal affirms that civil society in Africa, at this stage, remains a conceptually loose term and thus accounts for the difficulty in its operationalisation.¹³ Second, civil society is a composite element; it is made up of several components and cannot be described as an indivisible homogenous group. Bayart contends that civil society is not necessarily the result of a "single identifiable structure".¹⁴ Third, civil society is not an empirical notion; it is quintessentially theoretical.¹⁵ Quite often civil society is perceived as competing with the state for hegemonic power instead of complementing it. Chabal's definition of civil society is limited to its conflictual relations with the state. He defines it as the following: "society in its relation with the state... in so far as it is in confrontation with the state".¹⁶ Nonetheless, Chabal adds that relations between the state and civil society although conflictual, are also dynamic and complex.¹⁷ Bratton agrees that the state and civil

¹¹ Gomez, op. cit., p 273

¹² Chabal (1986), op. cit., p 15.

¹³ Chabal, (1992), op. cit., p 85.

¹⁴ Bayart, in Chabal, p 112. Chabal (1992), op.cit., p 84.

¹⁵ Chabal (1992), pp 82-97.

¹⁶ Ibid, p 83.

¹⁷ Loc. cit.

society are inseparable.¹⁸ Fatton acknowledges the contentious relationship between the state and civil society.¹⁹ Nonetheless, Fatton extends his definition and states: “Civil society is the private sphere of material, cultural, and political activities resisting the incursions of the state”.²⁰

In the analysis of the state and civil society, it is almost unavoidable to draw up a conflictual trajectory between the two entities. Chabal states that this is partly because the post-colonial state, in its quest for both political and economic hegemony, seeks to exercise its full rights in exclusion of or in competition with other entities attempting to challenge its legitimacy. Chamberlain’s definition seems to espouse a more accurate picture, as civil society is not uniquely conceived in an adversarial role with the state:

Civil society may be understood as community bonded and empowered by its collective determination to resist on the one hand, excessive constraints of society, on the other, excessive government regulation by the state. Although civil society is a relatively autonomous entity, distinct from both the state and society, it nevertheless partakes of both, and faces and constantly interacts with both.²¹

Civil society in the domestic context of The Gambia

Civil society in the pre-independence era manifested signs of activity and much militancy was exhibited both by trade unions and the press. However, passivity soon became the order of the day as the different groups fragmented, interests diversified and individuals became corrupted or assimilated into the state. Civil society entered a long phase of profound slumber and revived partially and somewhat timidly with the advent of the July 1994 take-over. Before we probe into the relationship between the state and civil society, it is important to make certain key observations. Civil society, irrespective of certain momentous years, under the influence of charismatic leaders like Edward Small, and M.E Jallow was demonstrably weak and passive and somewhat reflective of civil societies in some other African states.

¹⁸ Bratton, in Harbeson et al, p 56.

¹⁹ Fatton (1992), p 6

²⁰ Ibid, pp 4-5.

²¹ Heath B. Chamberlain, ‘On the Search of Civil Society in China’ *Modern China* 19 (April 1993), pp 207-8

Insofar as The Gambia is concerned, there is both a political and social space that allows the operation of civil society. The fact that The Gambia was a multi-party democratic state since it attained independence, means that there was a *de facto* political space for civil society, unlike the closed authoritarian African regimes of the 1960s. The Gambian government allowed the existence and continuity of civil society. For instance the relative fading away of trade unions in The Gambia towards the late 1970s was not entirely the making of the government but of the unions themselves. As Hutchful remarks, the role of the state is often overstated, as threats to the existence and continuity of civil society do not necessarily emanate from the state.²²

The provision of a political space for civic vertical linkages contributed to active labour unions in The Gambia especially in the period before and after independence. However, these groups were sporadic movements, highly politicised of popular protest, than labour movements *per se*. Their actions were unsustainable for a whole host of reasons, as will be explored subsequently. Thus irrespective of a political forum, the full potential of civic movements in The Gambia remained to a large extent unspent. This was due to the absence of strong opposition groups, limited political awareness in both urban and rural areas, non-existence of intellectual fora where civic ideas tend to burgeon, weakness of the existing civic groups and a reluctance among the ruling élite to embark on civic educational programmes.

Gambian civic groups and their contribution to domestic and foreign policies

- *Trade Unions*

The Gambian trade unions reflected problems from the very basic and trivial to the more material, i.e. from paucity of resources, to internal divisions, leadership, and personal ambitions. However, irrespective of these constraints, trade unions asserted their authority, particularly in domestic politics, remaining a latent but dominant force within the political spectrum.²³ Perhaps the most important of The Gambia's labour movements was the Gambia's Workers Union (GWU). This institution was impressively durable given the history of African labour unions, shifting between phases of buoyancy and effervescence on the one hand to stagnation and dormancy on the other. Allen echoes this point as he explains why successive trade unions in The Gambia in the late

²² Hutchful, *op. cit.*, p 65.

²³ Senghor, Ph.D thesis, *op. cit.*, p 166-7.

1920s early 1930s, never quite attained the strength and popularity of the former Bathurst Trade Union.²⁴

In African politics, the realms of politics and labour unions have been somewhat blurred especially in the 1960s which witnessed first generation leaders such as Sekou Touray and Siaka Stevens using the labour movement platform as a springboard to advance their respective political careers. In The Gambia, the same scenario can be observed with labour activists such as Edward Small, Garba Jahumpa, and M.E. Jallow subsequently adopting political portfolios. Union leaders cognisant of the fluidity of Gambian politics in the 1960s, exploited the opportunity to charge the government with inefficiency in its failure to educate the masses and enable the latter to become aware of their civic rights and duties.²⁵

Studies on trade unionism cannot exclude the input of one of the Gambian trade union activists. One cannot overemphasise the importance of leadership in small states, and the influence of the GWU is to a large extent due to Jallow's leadership, charisma and determination to turn the union into an efficacious social and political instrument. However, Jallow's enthusiasm and appetite in union matters, subsequent to his 1965 political initiation grew larger to the extent that in 1966, he stood for parliament.²⁶ Successive attempts to gravitate to the higher political echelons however, failed one after the other.

Nonetheless, in domestic politics unions continued to make their presence felt, albeit episodically. In 1975, The Gambia, suffered a national strike called under the leadership of the GWU. However, Hughes and Perfect contend that its success was more a result of grassroots impetus than purely leadership triumph.²⁷ The fact that the strike was prolonged for five days, subsequently leading to government's favourable response to demands for a wage increase is testimony of the success of the strike. Nonetheless, government's relative leniency towards trade unionism in The Gambia rapidly toughened up and led to the banning of the GWU.²⁸ In 1979, The Gambia witnessed the birth of another union under the approval of the government and the

²⁴ 'African trade unionism in microcosm: the Gambia labour movement, 1939-67', in C. Allen and R.W. Johnson (eds.) *African Perspectives* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970), p 406, A. Hughes and Perfect, 'Trade unionism in The Gambia', *African Affairs* 88, 353, p 566.

²⁵ Senghor, Ph.D thesis, op. cit., p168

²⁶ Hughes and Perfect, op. cit., p 562.

²⁷ Ibid, p 564.

encouragement of discontented dockworkers under the leadership of the GWU. The Gambia Dock Workers' Union (GDWU) came into being in 1979.

In spite of government's tougher stance subsequent to the 1975 strike, action by GWU activists did not face oppression, as was the case in some Africa states.²⁹ The 1975 strike concurred against a background of a major political crisis, the dismissal of Sheriff Dibba, a senior government Minister.³⁰ Advocates of the ruling party the PPP, saw the strike as a conspiracy by Dibba and some union members.³¹ The decision to impose a fine on unionists in cases where they defied the laws laid down by government, as well as a specific trade union measure, could also be interpreted as an attempt to put the lid on the activities of civic organisations.³²

Government perceived its decision to subdue union activities as appropriate in the light of the July 1981 insurgency, and government's resolve to avoid future unrest. The Gambian government's intransigence was buttressed by allegations that the leader of the Marxist-led coup, Kukoi Samba Sanyang was involved with the Gambia Labour Union. It was alleged that Sanyang obtained a scholarship from the aforementioned union to study in Eastern Europe.³³ However, the GWU's operations were again to fade into oblivion when the government decided not to grant it a certificate of registration. Nonetheless, Jallow's trade union career was reincarnated in 1985 with the support of the *Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal* (CNTS), a Senegalese trade union.

Jallow became the Secretary General of what was now known as the Gambia's Workers' Confederation, and resumed his political career after the 1987 elections, with PPP blessings, and became a nominated MP in 1987.³⁴ The government of the PPP is thus not blameless of co-optation. Hughes and Perfect state that the appointment of Araba Bah to replace Jallow as a parliamentarian following the latter's death was to appease union members likely to be affected by the reforms and cutbacks of the ERP.³⁵

²⁸ According to Hughes and Perfect, the Gambian government, in the aftermath of the 1975 strike, decided to impose conditions under which strike action could take place. For more details see Hughes and Perfect, op. cit., pp 564-72.

²⁹ W. Ananaba, *The Trade Union Movement in Africa* (London, C. Hurst & Co., 1979) p 70.

³⁰ Dibba's dismissal was triggered by the "Butut" scandal that involved his brother.

³¹ Hughes and Perfect, op. cit., pp 564-65.

³² Ibid, pp 570-71.

³³ According to Hughes and Perfect, both the GLU and the GWU condemned the failed putsch of 1981, see Hughes and Perfect, op. cit., p 567.

³⁴ Ibid, p 569.

³⁵ Loc. cit

Thus whatever the threshold of tolerance practised, government still exhibits the overwhelming need to remain in control. The accommodation of labour movements was allowed so long as it did not conflict with the interests of the state. The predatory nature of African governments in general and the tendency to appropriate civil society especially if the latter does not demonstrate any sign of submissiveness tends to dominate.

When at the age of 58, Jallow passed away after a brief political career as an MP, the leadership of the GWC was handed over to Pa Modou Faal, a Wolof who was previously leader of the Gambia Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union. To this day the GWC has continued to operate and its presence was invigorated as were many civic organisations in the aftermath of the July 1994 military take-over.

The GWC, an umbrella organisation co-ordinating all trade union activities in The Gambia came into being on 3rd October 1985. Pa Modou Faal became its Secretary General in 1987. With a total of nine trade unions affiliated to it, the GWC covers a wide range of workers in different sectors, commerce, banks, agriculture, industry, hotels and restaurants, factories, airlines, parastatals, fishing, the health sector, and also transport and communications. The GWC has a claimed numerical strength of 30,000 members.³⁶ Due to a prohibition on civil servants joining trade unions, the GWC is deprived of a large number of potential workers. Government remains the largest employer accounting for 30 per cent of the Gambian work force.³⁷

Structurally, the GWC has four main organs: the Congress, the National Executive Committee, the Finance Committee and the Secretariat. The Congress remains the highest body and meets quadriannually. Its functions include reviewing the work of the union, its accounts and subsequently approving or rejecting any financial statements submitted by the Unions. It has the power to amend the Constitution in line with unfolding realities.

It is difficult to discern or rather quantify the role of trade unions in the area of foreign policy. The difficulty stems from overbearing domestic priorities but also because trade unions did not purposely set out to address foreign policy issues or make foreign policy statements. By virtue of their meagre resources, Gambian trade unions had to resort to labour movements around the world and pronouncements on foreign

³⁶ Correspondence, Pa Modou Faal, 28 August 1997.

policy were influenced by this initial financial obligation. This, coupled with Jallow's knowledge on world issues would have contributed to union involvement in certain foreign policy matters.

According to Faal the nature of trade unionism as a world-wide movement meant *a priori*, links with fraternal bodies and organisations sharing common ideals. The GWC affiliated to the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), the World Confederation of Labour (WCL), the Organisation of Trade Unions of West Africa (OTUWA), the Commonwealth Trade Union Council (CTUC), the Washington-based Afro-American Labour Centre and the Canadian Labour Congress, to cite a few.³⁸ The weakness of the financial base of the GWC undeniably affected the autonomy of trade unions to formulate independent policies on foreign policy matters on the international scene

Due to its weak financial base the GWC could only function effectively through assistance received through the European Union or the CIDA of Canada, where financial assistance is channelled through the aforementioned London based CTUC. Relations with the CNTS are simply based on the fraternity and solidarity ideal shared by most labour movements.³⁹ During Jallow's era, the CNTS and their Gambian counterparts held joint seminars and workshops under the tutelage and sponsorship of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).⁴⁰

The fact that the GWC received funding from pan-Africanist groups such as OATWUU, (Organisation of African Trade Union Unity), to fund seminars and educational workshops, could account for its stance on issues regarding African international relations. However, given the concept of African solidarity it is quite evident that the GWU or indeed the GWC would align itself with similar movements in the name of African unity. Faal argued that the GWC does not subscribe to any ideological dogmas and therefore its links with labour movements in West Africa are not shaped by the ideological proclivities of one group or another but rather the desire to co-operate with all labour movements.⁴¹ However, he maintained that the GWU and GWC condemned all forms of exploitation of "man by man" and have equally condemned all the manifestations of such exploitation, e.g. apartheid, imperialist aggression and

³⁷ Correspondence, Pa Modou Faal, 28 August 1997.

³⁸ Loc. cit.

³⁹ Loc. cit.

⁴⁰ Loc. cit.

⁴¹ Loc. cit.

exploitation.⁴² Regarding Senegal, the views of the GWC were not strikingly dissimilar to those endorsed by the then PPP government. Faal contends that Senegambian politics are viewed from a populist perspective and therefore perceived to be beneficial because the masses would subsequently reap the benefits. He argued:

We acknowledge the fact that our existing boundaries are artificially imposed. Therefore, any move towards unity based on mutual trust and respect thereby helping the people of Senegambia to derive maximum benefit is welcomed by the GWC.⁴³

These views articulated by the late M.E. Jallow to the government, partly explains the reason behind the latter's decision to offer Jallow a parliamentary seat in 1987. His death three days before he was to assume his new function meant that his role on the politics of Senegambian co-operation remains unexplored. However, it is clear that the government's refusal to choose a successor to Jallow's position, adding that it was incumbent on Jallow to choose his successor, meant that the benefits of co-optation were not entirely lost on the Gambian government.

In relation to the IMF and structural adjustment programmes, Faal admits that the union response was almost nil. He attributes this lack of reaction to three factors:

1. The private sector, which employs a large section of the workers, was not affected.
2. Civil servants who had to bear the brunt of redundancies were not part of a union because of restrictive government policies regarding union membership.
3. Redundant workers were entitled to redundancy packages. Opportunities were made available by government. They not only benefited from payment packages they were also offered training in order to acquire skills that could be used in the private sector

Nonetheless, the full impact of SAP can only properly be appreciated through a thorough investigative empirical study both in the urban and rural areas.

The fate of the GWC reflects the difficulties faced by labour movements in small states where the issues tend to revolve around personalities and financial constraints coupled with an overbearing familism. With the disappearance of Jallow the movement seem to have taken a blow. Thus in conclusion, it is clear that the Gambian trade unions

⁴² Correspondence, Pa Modou Faal 28 August 1997.

were able to carry out their activities in a liberal political climate distinctive of the Gambian political system in the pre-and post-independence years. Their problems and constraints were not entirely the making of the ruling regime, the latter skilfully sought to exploit their divisions and lack of resources to co-opt certain members.

These constraints are reflective of labour movements operating on meagre resources in a small state where governmental priorities are not geared toward civic education and the like. The absence of a strong educated base (save a handful) did not severely hamper the ability of the unions to act as a watchdog in domestic politics and make ad hoc pronouncements on foreign policy issues. Paucity of resources created a weak financial base, and triggered the need to seek assistance from movements within the sub-region and further afield.

The primacy of domestic priorities meant that limited attention was given to foreign policy. Pronouncements on foreign policy matters were made out of civic solidarity rather than an attempt to mark ideological distinction. On Senegambian matters, unions adopted a populist approach, which seemed to have been in unison with government's rhetoric of oneness. Although the boundaries between labour matters and political matters had been blurred due to personal or sectional interests, the efficacy of trade unions in The Gambia has been dependent to a large extent on the leadership, in particular the leadership's aspirations, ambitions, and personal frailties.

- *The Gambian Press*

It is important to briefly examine the nature of the Gambian Press before evaluating its impact on foreign relations. The Gambian Press since the colonial era has asserted its authority vis-à-vis the government in a distinctive fashion. Independent both in terms of proprietorship and choice of news coverage, the Gambian press demonstrated this twin characteristics in its style and news content.⁴⁴ Papers like the Vanguard instigated by businessmen such as E. Samba and accountants such as K.W.Foon condemned all forms of colonial subjugation. A weekly paper, The Vanguard was reputed for its bitter tirades against the colonial establishment as it sought to disclose cases of racial discrimination, thus culminating in the dismissal of a number of colonial officials.⁴⁵ The

⁴³ Loc. cit.

⁴⁴ On the character of the Gambian Press, see Senghor, unpublished Ph.D thesis, op. cit., p 5

⁴⁵ . Senghor, Ph.D thesis, op. cit., p144.

liberal nature of the political landscape both during colonial and post-colonial years partly accounts for the openness of the press and its ability to act as a counter-force. Moreover, the majority of the newspapers were privately owned and therefore their ability to maintain some degree of financial autonomy gave them more elbowroom to adopt a critical view on government policies.

These newspapers covered political issues especially at the height of constitutional reforms and in the days prior to Gambian independence. Their coverage was extended to sub-regional events such as the Mali Federation and its implications for Gambian politics. Militant in its language, rid of the usual propagandist speech towards colonial regimes, The Gambia Outlook, for instance, criticised the idea of the Malta Scheme, a proposal supported by the leader of the then Gambia Muslim Congress, Garba Jahumpa. The proposed scheme would have allowed The Gambia to become integrated with Britain. This approach already proposed by the Maltese government with regards to the status and future of Malta was perceived to be an alternative to alleviate the problems of size and underdevelopment that The Gambia was faced with in the early 1960s.

The Maltese are all Europeans like the British people. Integration was suggested as a solution to Malta's strangled economic plight. What did Britain say? An unforgettable, irrevocable No! This has a lesson for us. If Britain is not prepared to shepherd Malta and her fellow whites, will she condescend to harbour us, BACKWARD AFRICANS in AFRICA, indefinitely?⁴⁶

Though not belonging to any ideological school, the papers portrayed different orientations depending on the editors. Their support of political parties when given was cautious. In terms of diversity of sources and facts, their coverage though rich and diverse, was not always factual and sometimes tilted towards scandal-mongering rather than the facts. Newspapers provided a rich coverage on Senegambian matters and on The Gambia's relations with its former colonial overlord, Britain. Analysis often accentuated individual or popular fear, preoccupation and scepticism.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ 'Mali is our neighbour', The Gambia Outlook 21 December 1959, cited by Senghor, Ph.D thesis, op. cit., p 221.

⁴⁷ Jeggan Senghor attests to the richness and diversity in news coverage, . Senghor, Ph.D thesis, op. cit., p 5, see also 'It is all tentative' The Gambia Echo 12 November 1962, 'Allay our fears' The Gambia Echo 5 November 1962 and 'Custom union – long term smuggling –the facts' in The Gambia Echo March 17 1969.

Pressmen such as Deyda Hydara and Swaebou Conateh believe that the Gambian Press has a distinctive feature. According to Hydara, the Press personifies different aspects of the people. With regard to the government, it plays a watchdog role vis-à-vis government policies.⁴⁸ Both Hydara and Conateh admit that the Gambian Press could be nationalistic especially in press coverage regarding Senegambian relations, yet Conateh adds that the press is not narrowly nationalistic.⁴⁹

As with most democracies in Africa, the conditions in which they operated were far from ideal. What impaired the ability of the press to inform the general reading public, was the difficulty of running a paper on a shoestring budget. This factor more than anything else compromised press input to function in a free environment. In other words journalists were caught in a trap where they were unable to keep up with all the requisite expenses necessary to properly launch and sustain the activities of a newspaper. The difficulties faced by the Press in The Gambia were not entirely the makings of the government. Gambian journalists were able to criticise government policies without fear of intimidation or repression.⁵⁰ In that respect their situation was far less confrontational and repressive than their counterparts in Sierra Leone, Ghana or Liberia. For lack of better printing facilities, some journalists had to resort to obsolete and laborious mechanisms to print or type their news findings.⁵¹ Maja-Pearce writes: "In fact the greatest threat to the independence of the press in The Gambia is not government but the simple economics of newspaper publishing in a country with such restricted resources".⁵²

Operating in a small, poorly endowed state, the Gambian Press suffers from limited resources and consequently lacks the necessary tools to evaluate the veracity of government policies.⁵³ Regarding external relations, Gambian journalists could hardly cover international summits and thus had willingly or unwillingly to accept the government's version of events. In addition, size and its inherent constraints further amplify the perennial problem of skills shortage. In The Gambia, the majority of

⁴⁸ Personal interview with Deyda Hydara, (editor The Point) Bakau, 5 August 1996.

⁴⁹ Personal interview with Swaebou Conateh, (editor, The Gambia News and Report) 2 August 1996, Serrekunda.

⁵⁰ A. Maja-Pearce 'The Press in West Africa, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ghana', Index on Censorship 19, 6, June/July 1990, p 74.

⁵¹ Wiseman (1996), op. cit., p 924.

⁵² Maja-Pearce, op. cit., p 50.

⁵³ In a joint interview with two journalists of the first Gambian daily newspaper The Daily Observer, Ebrima Ceesay and D.A. Jawo, (personal interview 7 August 1996, Bakau.), it was stated that due to financial constraints, they could not afford to send observers to ECOWAS meetings and other international fora. This meant that they had to rely on the government version of events.

journalists are not trained but self-taught men who learnt the art of their trade through experience, although the lack of professionalism had a debilitating effect on the accuracy of some core issues, especially technical and economic matters.

Inadequate training in journalism meant that the press in general could not coherently articulate matters necessitating a more technical or documented analysis such as the socio-economic implications of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) vis-à-vis the general populace. In The Gambia, it took the advent of FOROYAA in 1987, a politically motivated newspaper articulating the views of the radical left-wing Peoples Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS), to effectively criticise government policies. Nevertheless, independent journalists such as Sanna Manneh (The Torch) and Dixon Colley (The Nation), gave a critical analysis of government policies particularly those pertaining to Senegambia. Manneh launched virulent attacks on the state, denouncing leadership inefficiency as well as bringing into disrepute government ministers guilty of corruption.⁵⁴ Dixon Colley on the other hand, symbolised the efforts of an individual who independently tried to run a paper on a shoestring budget whilst keeping abreast of events both within the domestic and international sphere. As Wiseman opines:

In the past many of the independent newspaper resulted from the labour of a small number of Gambian journalists working hard, in some cases single-handedly, to bring out their newspapers on a fairly regular basis. Many of these newspapers were of a poor technical quality, often no more than a few cyclostyled pages stapled together by hand, but they made an important contribution to free political debate in the country.⁵⁵

With respect to foreign affairs it is in Senegambian relations that the Gambian Press has been and still is, most vocal. The reasons for this become self-evident when the cartography of The Gambia and Senegal is studied. Borders closures usually imposed by the Senegalese side not only affect diplomacy between the two governments, they also affect the flow of goods, trade and ultimately the lives of the people of both countries. With this in mind, it is understandable that the Gambian populace would have their eyes riveted on events linking The Gambia to Senegal. According to Senghor, the Press contributed to reinforcing prejudices, and they deliberately played on the sensitivities of

⁵⁴ A brief mention of the Manneh/Sabally affair has been made in chapter 8, see pp 291-2.

⁵⁵ Wiseman (1996), op. cit., p 924.

the populace, magnifying their fears and preoccupations and warning of the subsequent danger if Senegal and The Gambia were to merge as one.⁵⁶

With regard to relations with Senegal, the Press articulated the views and the fears that ordinary Gambian people had relating to Senegambia. The Press warned the government not to embark on any enterprise without initially weighing up all the pros and cons. The Press also played a key role in reinforcing negative images of Senegal. Senghor argues that some journalists, particularly R. Allen in The Gambian Onward, confirmed and articulated the views of ordinary people.⁵⁷

Public opinion has always been on the alert vis-à-vis The Gambia's relations with Senegal. Since the 1960s the Gambian populace has been relatively nationalistic and has held strongly to what it perceives as its distinctive character. Public opinion became acute as the party political game became intense and each party tried to downplay or magnify The Gambia's potentially subservient role if the two states were to merge. One of the contributing factors towards the failure of the Senegambian confederation was the antagonism that was displayed by civil society to what was perceived as an encroachment on its sovereignty as a people and as a state. There were several incidents in which Gambians exhibited their disagreement to the continuity of the confederation.⁵⁸

In 1984 events at the Independence Stadium were a case in point where civil society sought to force the government to re-appraise its policies towards Senegal. Senegalese High Commissioner, Mbaye Mbengue, ordered the Senegalese army stationed in The Gambia to be on the alert during a football match between The Gambia and Senegal.⁵⁹ This was a high profile match and there were fears that it could provoke anti-Senegalese sentiments among young Gambian supporters. The football match provoked a well of repressed frustration in Gambians over what was seen as an overbearing Senegalese presence. The Gambian Head of State reported the matter to the Senegalese authorities, since it was felt that outside the Senegalese Head of State (President of the confederation), Jawara, confederal Vice-President, should have given

⁵⁶ Personal interview with Dr Jeggan Senghor, , Senegambian scholar, 21 Aug. 1996, Dakar

⁵⁷ Jeggan Senghor, unpublished Ph.D thesis, op. cit., p 5, p 154.

⁵⁸ According to former Minister of External Affairs Omar Sey, civil society during the confederation felt the presence of Senegalese soldiers. (Senegalese troops were stationed in The Gambia as part of the protocol agreements of the Senegambia Confederation) was too conspicuous. When they withdrew from The Gambia on President's Diouf's orders, Sey states : "Our own people (soldiers) escorted Jawara to State House. Crowds from all over came cheering. Jawara breathed a sigh of relief" Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

orders to the confederal army. Mbaye Mbengue was declared *persona non-grata* by Jawara and subsequently recalled by the Senegalese government.

The widely accepted view was that Senegalese were aiming towards a policy of Gambian subordination rather than co-operation. Indeed, the confederation appeared to serve as a catalyst to intensifying latent Gambian nationalism. The fear of an anti-Senegambian campaign in Gambian circles was a worrisome prospect for Senegalese authorities, and events that led to the creation of a Senegambian newspaper could perhaps be understood in the light of Senegalese trepidation. The Senegambia Sun then, was established as an anglophone version of the Senegalese paper Le Soleil and was intended to give a positive perspective of events between the two countries.⁶⁰

Cultural exchanges between the youth of both Senegal and The Gambia were encouraged as a way of enhancing integration between the two states, but these were lacking in continuity. Senghor believed that the views articulated by Gambian journalists then affected the thinking of policy-makers.⁶¹ He states that fear of Senegalese domination was not only prevalent in Gambian editorials, it became almost obsessive. The press according to Senghor, in so far as they reinforced prejudices, played a very dysfunctional role. They paid little attention to Senegambian integration as such, and saw only the negative implications that such an enterprise was likely to trigger.⁶²

The importance of the Press in Senegambian relations albeit limited, is nonetheless significant. According to Conateh, the 1969 demonstration in Banjul, staged by radical youth during President Senghor's state visit, signified an upsurge in anti-Senegalese sentiments; (thus leading to President Senghor's precipitate departure) was the result of press articles.⁶³ In the same year, the Senegalese Finance Minister, Jean Collin had accused The Gambia of being guilty of "economic aggression" through

⁵⁹ Hughes (1992), op. cit., pp 209-10

⁶⁰ According to Baboucarr Gaye, journalist and former editor of the Senegambian Sun the Director General of the Senegalese daily Le Soleil approached him in 1982, on the subject of establishing a new paper. The Senegalese side wanted to call it Le Soleil-Gambian edition. He accepted the offer on condition that he would be given free editorial control thus giving the paper a distinct identity. He averred that the paper was to make people understand sensitive issues, to provide the vital information that people needed. Personal interview with Mr Baboucarr Gaye, Bakau, 13 Aug. 1996.

⁶¹ Personal interview with Jeggan Senghor, 21 August 1996, Dakar.

⁶² Personal interview with Jeggan Senghor, 21 August 1996, Dakar.

⁶³ Personal interview with Swaebou Conateh, 2 August 1996, Serrekunda.

smuggling activities.⁶⁴ This provoked anger among Gambian youth and the Gambian populace in general, who saw the Collin accusation as biased and prejudiced.

In the same way, border incidents between the two states could provoke inflammatory reactions in The Gambia depending on press coverage. Such was the case during the 1974 border incident in Jokadu and Niumi⁶⁵ when Jawara, along with the Senegalese High Commissioner, Saher Gaye, went to the villages concerned, where the latter apologised on behalf of his government. Although Conateh contends that Gambian journalists were not narrowly nationalistic, he acknowledges that press coverage could provoke a tide of hostility not easily contained.⁶⁶ Press condemnation of Senegambian matters was not generalised according to Conateh. While others journalists did not openly condemn the confederation,⁶⁷ they also did not necessarily 'warm to the arrangements'.⁶⁸

Foroyaa

Dysfunctional or functional, the emergence of FOROYAA, (Mandinka word for freedom) the political mouthpiece of the opposition PDOIS served to increase the awareness of people on Senegambian matters. The protocols of the Senegambian confederation were translated from French to English in FOROYAA, and were followed by a thorough analysis, revealing all the loopholes of the treaty.

FOROYAA remained vociferous in its criticism, which was not limited to Senegambian relations.⁶⁹ The Gambian government's decision to send troops to Liberia as part of the ECOMOG peacekeeping force was another issue that was greeted with strong criticism from FOROYAA. Their editorials and constant criticism could have contributed (*inter alia*) to the emboldening of Gambian soldiers, in what was described

⁶⁴ Personal interview with Swaebou Conateh, 2 August 1996, Serrekunda.

⁶⁵ For more information see The Gambia News Bulletin, 'Border incidents involving Senegalese forest guards and Gambian farmers', 3 Aug. 1974, p 1.

⁶⁶ Personal interview with Swaebou Conateh, 2 August 1996, Serrekunda.

⁶⁷ Journalists like Dixon-Colley did not mince their words on issues concerning the confederation. Most other journalists worked for government-owned papers and therefore had to subscribe to the government's version. Personal interview with Swaebou Conateh, Serrekunda, 2 August 1996, Serrekunda.

⁶⁸ Personal interview with Swaebou Conateh, Serrekunda 2 August 1996, Serrekunda.

⁶⁹ FOROYAA 15 Feb. 1988. Former Minister of External Affairs, Omar Sey, was asked in a personal interview (Sept. 9 1996, Fajara), whether the government would take criticism articulated by FOROYAA seriously, on which he responded negatively. He stated that they were very rude and very arrogant and their questions were aggressively put to such an extent that they lost all constructivity.

as akin to political and social mayhem. Ensuing events proved that their criticism did not fall on deaf ears. Hydera affirmed that the Gambian Press was generally opposed to Gambian intervention in Liberia as part of the ECOMOG peace keeping mission, because it was a popularly accepted view that The Gambia did not have the financial means to join the West African forces in Liberia.⁷⁰

The demonstration by Gambian soldiers who had served in Liberia in protest at late payments, was seen as a sign of dissatisfaction among soldiers who had so far maintained the principles of army discipline.⁷¹ One article argues:

... President Jawara has decided to take action in sending troops without making an address to the Gambian nation to test national feelings. He has not even consulted with the members of the House of Representatives. He has the absolute power to decide and he has done so. The Gambian people would therefore hold him accountable for every Gambian maimed or killed in Liberia.

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Likewise during the 1989 Senegalese/Mauritanian conflict, FOROYAA according to Sallah, played an effective role in diffusing tension and advocating support for Mauritians who were fleeing Senegal because of fear of reprisals from the Senegalese. Sallah maintained that FOROYAA urged Gambian youth not to manifest any anti-Mauritanian feelings by looting their shops and businesses (in The Gambia, Mauritanian Moors control most retail trade, especially in the urban areas).⁷³ It was feared that some radical youths would use anti-Mauritanian feeling propagated in Dakar, to trigger similar feelings in The Gambia, especially since the Moors are widely perceived to be exploitative.

With the introduction of the IMF and World Bank policies of Structural Adjustment, as part of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), a revival of civil society took place. The fact that in The Gambia there was no public backlash in the

⁷⁰ Personal interview with Deyda Hydera, Bakau, 5 August 1996, Bakau.

⁷¹ A demonstration organised by The Gambia's ECOMOG veterans, involving sixty men, took place in Banjul. The men were protesting against non-payment of allowances in relation to the ECOMOG peacekeeping force in Liberia. It is widely believed that other grievances such as the demand to have Army Commander, Colonel Ndow Njie sacked, was part of the problem. For more details see Africa Confidential, 26 July 1991, 32, 15.

⁷² The People's Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism, Press Release, 'PDOIS's Position on ECOWAS, final communiqué on the Liberian Crisis', 11 Aug. 1990, p 2.

⁷³ Interview with Sallah, 4 August 1996, Serrekunda.. For more information on the subject see FOROYAA 30 June 1989.

light of the draconian measures taken as part of the IMF's conditionalities, is partly due to the leadership factor and partly due to a government-organised sensitisation campaign that ran in tandem with the reforms.⁷⁴ In addition results were forthcoming, since government was totally committed to reforms and no half measures were taken.⁷⁵

FOROYAA in its self-proclaimed mission of educating the people and increasing awareness, tried to influence public opinion. Indeed all the budget speeches and the policy framework of the budget were analysed. Sallah affirms: "The Press was not anti-IMF, we were just out to show the bases that lead to these policies. Our criticisms were directed at the national government which failed the people, it was not directed at the World Bank".⁷⁶

The adversarial context in which such criticism was formulated must not be ignored. FOROYAA, sought to analyse the conflict in the light of The Gambia's involvement in its entirety. However, the fact that FOROYAA was above all the political organ of the opposition party PDOIS goes a long way in accounting for its oft-critical stance on government policies both at home and abroad. True, while their ideas were in the main valid, their philosophy, idealism and militancy could only be espoused by a few, given the limited readership.

The Daily Observer

The Daily Observer was the first Gambian daily.. Coverage was essentially focused on national issues, government policies, rumours and scandals with occasionally sensationalist news items on social events and public figures taxed with misappropriation of funds or other wrong doings. In a society dogged by mass illiteracy where the reading public is small, the Daily Observer aimed to cater for a wider section of The Gambia's reading population. Invariably, it carried a brief page on world news from other sources, i.e. correspondents such as Reuters. Lifting news from other sources has always been an option adopted by Gambian journalists in the absence of requisite funds to conduct thorough research by sending correspondents to the four

⁷⁴ S. Radelet 'Reform without revolt: the political economy of economic reform in The Gambia', World Development 20, 8, 1992, pp 1087-1099. D. Cooke & A. Hughes 'The politics of economic recovery: The Gambia's experience of Structural Adjustment, 1985-94', The Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics 35, 1, 1997, pp 93-117.

⁷⁵ Mamour Jagne and Abdou Njie, former governors of the Central Bank and key figures in the Ministry of Finance, both referred to the Gambian government's decision to fully comply with IMF policies. Personal interview with Mamour Jagne, 11 August 1996, Fajara. Personal interview with Abdou Njie, 12 August 1996, Fajara.

corners of the globe. The Daily Observer seldom carried news items on foreign policy with regard to The Gambia's external relations. Appointments of external diplomats, High Commissioners and Ambassadors were generally placed on the last pages of the newspaper. Ceesay and Dawo, key players behind the production and circulation of the paper, attest that when issues on foreign policy were given front page coverage, readers tended to query what they perceived as the irrelevance of such news items to the detriment of genuine national issues.⁷⁷

However, encouraging Gambian specialists to share their knowledge on different issues from religion to the IMF and World Bank policies indicates a genuine desire of the editor to diversify the news coverage. In this way he seeks to encourage an in-depth knowledge on human rights issues and The Gambia's relations with financial institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank. As an independent paper, the observer tends to hold independent views based on the journal and the editor's political proclivities, endorsing government policies or criticising them, usually ending with a note of reason and/or compromise.

The Point

The Point, gave a more balanced news coverage with events from domestic, social and political issues to The Gambia's foreign relations. Articles on The Gambia's foreign relations varied from The Gambia's contentious relations with Senegal to coverage on diplomatic relations. Despite the fact that much news coverage was devoted to national issues, The Point nonetheless attempted to cover both international news and foreign affairs in connection with The Gambia. These items of news were given front-page coverage. Such was the case regarding the Senegalese elections in 1993 and the rapprochement between The Gambia and Israel after a long period of diplomatic strain between the two countries. Events leading to the Liberian civil war and Jawara's allegations of a conspiracy between rebel leader Kukoi Samba Sanyang and Charles Taylor in collusion with Libyan authorities to destabilise the West African sub-region were also given front-page coverage.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Personal interview with Halifa Sallah, 8 August 1996, Serrekunda.

⁷⁷ Personal interviews Ebrima Ceesay and D.A Jawo, Bakau, 7 August 1996, Bakau.

⁷⁸ 'Sir Dawda: "Libya seeks to destabilise sub-region through Charles Taylor and Kukoi Samba Sanyang', The Point 6 April 1992.

The Gambian press is dependent on government sources regarding the country's foreign relations. Reliance on government versions of events and the absence of resources to test the accuracy of news emanating from government sources, could perhaps account for the lack of thorough analysis regarding The Gambia's intervention as part of the ECOMOG peace keeping forces in Liberia. Nonetheless, although the Point attempted to cover foreign news and news items regarding The Gambia's external relations (such as Gambian/EEC relations, ECOWAS, ECOMOG and the Gambian/Senegalese/Mauritanian imbroglio), a large part of its news on The Gambia's foreign policy remained descriptive.⁷⁹ There was hardly any in-depth analysis on what The Gambia's role should have been in the Liberian crisis, or the Senegalese/Mauritanian conflict in terms of broad policy guidelines.

However, with issues of close proximity regarding Senegal, the press became aroused and steered away from a descriptive mode, adopting a more analytical stance. Regarding the influx of Casamançais refugees to The Gambia in the light of the separatist conflict between independent factions and Senegalese government, the Point stated:

The Casamance problem, if not checked, will be spilling over to The Gambia whether we like it or not...a thorough screening of the refugees should be carried out as well as proper surveillance of our boundary with Casamance. In these times of chaos and anarchy, Gambians should not take chances. In fact the need to maintain our way of life at all costs, should be the concern of each and everyone.⁸⁰

Thus it would be fair to assert that the Gambian Press has demonstrated a degree of vibrancy even in pre-independence years and has been a barometer to gauge the public mood, coupled with its ability to criticise government's policies where criticism was due. However, press coverage is constantly affected by an overbearing familism⁸¹ intrinsically prevalent in a small introverted society such as The Gambia. This coupled with paucity of resources and expertise has created a dependence on government sources especially in foreign relations. Nonetheless the vibrancy of the press is not a constant in Gambian politics; it tends to resurface depending on the immediacy of the events and their impact on the Gambian people. Thus it would seem that the vitality of the press in The Gambia especially in foreign policy needs to be

⁷⁹ 'Omar Sey on foreign policy' The Point 19 October 1992.

⁸⁰ 'The Casamance issue' The Point 17 August 1992, p 2.

fuelled by two overriding factors: the potential impact of events on the lives of Gambians, and the immediacy or proximity of the events. Quite naturally, events regarding The Gambia's interactions with its West African neighbours, particularly Senegal, would carry more weight than events relating to the territoriality integrity of the Afghan people. The nature of the open political system in The Gambia made allowance for freedom of speech. However, although the press showed a certain degree of vibrancy especially regarding Senegambian relations, their ability to contribute actively to civil society was constrained by lack of resources, and expertise.

- *NGOs*

The role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) is constantly under appraisal and reappraisal as scholarly scrutiny is directed at evaluating their contribution as part of an emergent civil society in Africa. It is difficult to state whether NGOs played any significant role in The Gambia's external relations. Their contribution is generally restricted to self-help projects at grassroots levels aimed at the alleviation of poverty. Moreover NGOs tend to take an independent position, since any interference in the internal affairs of the state would be resented by the ruling élite. Thus their contribution however estimable would be frowned upon if it threatens the government's own political and social hegemony.⁸²

In The Gambia, several NGOs and American Peace Corps groups have played an active role towards rural development. Peace Corps missions have been present in The Gambia for almost three decades.⁸³ These groups have made discernible contribution in different sectors such as agriculture and education.⁸⁴ In the agricultural sector, measures have been taken to alleviate the effects of desertification and deforestation. In the mid-1990s, the number of NGOs has tripled to over one hundred.⁸⁵ The Gambia has enjoyed assistance from major world charities, i.e. Oxfam, Freedom from Hunger Campaign and Action Aid.⁸⁶ In the light of their technical assistance and

⁸¹ The word familism is used to describe the doctrine and practice of a community living together as one family.

⁸² Bratton, 'The politics of government/NGO relations in Africa' p 585 cited by Fatton, op. cit., p 136-7.

⁸³ Laura Lorenz Hess 'Souvenirs de Gambia', *Topic* 1993 Edition, p 40.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Wiseman (1997) op. cit., p 434.

⁸⁶ Hughes, in Clarke and Payne, p 154. For further reference on the subject, see Hughes 'Grass-roots, self-reliance and broad based local participation in support of employment promotion and basic needs objectives in The Gambia' Geneva, International Labour Organisation.

numerous self-help projects in The Gambia, NGOs have complemented government projects in rural areas rather than hindered them. However, there is need for prospective researchers to look into this aspect more thoroughly in order to understand the full implications of the presence of NGOs in The Gambia.

- *Youth Groups*

Youths in The Gambia, since independence, have reflected a frustrated and lone voice. Like trade unions, youth movements have been fairly moribund in The Gambia. Manifesting a strong leftist proclivity, they are widely perceived by some African governments as radical, prone to destabilising government policies.

Although youth movements in Africa were generally left leaning, often advocating a pan-Africanist union, the idea of The Gambia merging with Senegal had little appeal to Gambian youth. With the prospect of the two states merging after The Gambia's attainment of independence, it seemed folly for the youth to trade the freedom that they had until then aspired to in The Gambia, for some elusive concept of unity. The radical ideology exhibited by Gambian youth was seemingly incompatible with Senghor's special relationship with France. Senghor was perceived as too pro-French, primarily serving French interests.⁸⁷

The 1969 riot was staged by youths who not only resented the possibility of The Gambia becoming an appendage to Senegal, but also felt that the PPP was too compromising and thus did not fully defend The Gambia's interests against those of the Senegalese authorities. Government's decision to ban students and youth movements inhibited youth groups. It also served to drive such groups underground by increasing the number of clandestine movements. By the early 1970s, student and urban youth groups had become inspired by the political concepts of Marx and Fanon.⁸⁸ This period witnessed a radicalisation in youth groups as they adopted names such as Black panthers and Black Scorpions. According to Hughes, confrontation between youth groups and the state was rare and disturbances were suppressed by loyal police forces.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Hughes (1974), op. cit., p 16.

⁸⁸ Hughes(1983), op. cit., p 67.

⁸⁹ Loc. cit.

Gomez acknowledges that The Gambian government's pro-Western position meant that little encouragement was given to countries like the Soviet Union during the Cold War.⁹⁰ However, when the Soviet government started sponsoring Gambian students to study in the former USSR through Youth Movement Exchanges and the Muslim brotherhood associations, the government critically opposed this method of sponsorship, demanding that scholarships should be channelled through the Ministry of Education.⁹¹ Youth exchanges between the Soviet Union and The Gambia were subsequently banned.⁹²

This action translated a desire by government to control activities between The Gambia and other countries, and manifested its intention to keep external relations, however minimal, within the government's purview. It also indicated government's resolve to negate the potential advocacy of Communist ideas through youth groups. Yet while youth groups in other African countries were subjected to more drastic forms of censorship and repression, in The Gambia, government simply resorted to banning the most radical of these groups. Nonetheless, youth groups lost their verve and like other branches of Gambian civil society, are only now re-emerging after the July 1994 coup, much diluted in tone and conduct.

Within the formation of MOJA-G, young intellectuals and students played a key role. MOGA-G was able to establish itself internationally through links with similar movements in South Africa, Eritrea, and Liberia.⁹³ However, given the underground nature of these activities, it is difficult to discern with exactitude the role of students in these organisations. Their radicalism was amplified by their visits to countries such as Ghana, Libya and the Soviet Union, where they interacted with pan-Africanist groups and other left wing movements.⁹⁴

Thus under the compulsion of government restrictions those youths and radical movements functioning in The Gambia were given more accepted nomenclatures, i.e. the Gambia Women's Council and the Gambia Anti-Apartheid Movement, even if their activities in the eyes of the authorities remained somewhat suspect.⁹⁵ What can be stated is that the authorities did not meet the aspirations and ambitions of youth and the

⁹⁰ Gomez, *op.cit.*, pp 317-319.

⁹¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁹² *Loc. cit.*

⁹³ Personal interview, name withheld upon request.

⁹⁴ Personal interview, name withheld upon request

⁹⁵ Personal interview, name withheld upon request.

alienation of Gambian youth encouraged alternative links with clandestine forces seeking to bring down the government. However, the impact of youth groups on The Gambia's pro-West foreign policy stance has been rather insignificant.

- *Religious Groups*

Quite often in African international relations one must recognise formal as well as informal actors within the domestic arena. Religious groups in the absence of formal recognition within the political and social structure, played at best an informal role, at worst made a minimal contribution to domestic or foreign policy. Insofar as religious groups in The Gambia are concerned, their influence on foreign policy has been seemingly minimal. It must be emphasised that this study seeks exclusively to analyse the role of Islamic groups on foreign policy. Given the political climate in which the study was conducted, it was not feasible to interview leaders of the Christian denomination. The latter is by no means insignificant however, granted the secularity of The Gambia. However, given the sheer numerical strength of Moslems in the overall Gambian population, accounting for over 85%, it is logical to assume that Islamic influence on government policies would have a stronger impact than a numerically weaker group.

Muslims in The Gambia belong to the Islamic "Ummat". Imam Jallow states that various factions head the Islamic Ummat, whose leaders do not have a direct influence on government policies.⁹⁶ These faction groups are usually formed on ethnic lines but according to Jallow, ethnicity "does not manifest its ugly head among the followers". The followers of one marabout tend to adopt his sect, i.e. Tijaniyya, Moudriya or Quadriyya. Structurally, the Supreme Islamic Council was created to unite the various Islamic sects in The Gambia. However, the Council has failed to assert its authority on religious matters because of the manner of its creation. It was also perceived with a certain degree of suspicion by various sects who feared that the Council would rob them of their following.

Yet although The Gambia is a predominantly Muslim Society, Islam is not as politicised as in Senegalese society.⁹⁷ In spite of geographical proximity, Muslim leaders

⁹⁶ Correspondence Imam Jallow, Imam of Bakau, 29 August 1997.

⁹⁷ Gellar, *Senegal, An African Nation Between Islam and the West* (Westview Press, 1995), also Leonardo A. Villalon, *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal* (Cambridge University Press, 1995)

in the Gambia do not have the power of their Senegalese counterparts. Religious leaders and Muslim brotherhoods have played an active role in Senegalese internal and external politics.⁹⁸ Unlike Senegal where Marabouts enjoy a great deal of financial autonomy, in The Gambia the financial autonomy of Marabouts is dependent on the largesse of their “*talibes*” or disciples concentrated within the government machinery. In Senegal however, such religious groups control a degree of financial wealth outside the influence of the state. In The Gambia, the tendency for Marabouts to be co-opted by the ruling class is quite high since their very survival would be at stake in the absence of powerful government figures. The absence of such holy cities as the Senegalese based Tivaoune could also account for the seemingly passive role of Marabouts in The Gambia.

Religious groups have however enjoyed a certain importance in domestic politics since independence as political parties sought the support of those religious groups who commanded a strong following.⁹⁹ Yet their strong hold on domestic politics in The Gambia is not as visible as it is in Senegal. According to Jallow, marabouts tend to downplay their support and allegiance for rival candidates. However, Gambians have always underestimated religious divisions and asserted their ethnic affinities in the light of potential religious squabbles. This partly explains why the Gambia Muslim Congress party failed to make much headway. Jallow contends that although religious groups seemingly played passive roles in the Gambian political arena, in actual fact they contributed effectively to domestic politics especially in the 1950s when adult suffrage was limited to the Banjul/Kombo areas and the two contending parties were factionalised on religious issues. Their formal role was not apparent apart from the nomenclature of the parties. Nonetheless, the Gambian government has enjoyed a good relationship with the various marabouts. This privileged relationship could to a certain degree account for the PPP’s electoral successes over a period of three decades.¹⁰⁰

The contribution of Muslim leaders in matters of Gambian foreign policy then, has remained minimal, even where some demonstration of Islamic solidarity may have been in order. For example the religious community in The Gambia remained silent at the height of the Arab/Israeli conflict, and the successive wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973, in what was widely perceived by the world’s Muslim community as the perennial persecution of the Palestinian people. Their silence was equally resounding during the Iran/Iraq war from 1980-88 and finally the Gulf War in 1991. This was probably due to

⁹⁸ P. J. Schraeder, ‘Senegal’s foreign policy: challenges of democratisation and marginalisation’ (1997) *op.cit.*, p 490.

⁹⁹ Correspondence Imam Jallow, 29 August 1997.

the fear of the religious community of alienating itself from government especially since The Gambia received Israeli aid in terms of technical assistance in the late 1960s.

Moreover, Jawara discouraged the politicisation of Islam in The Gambia to prevent one group of civil society from wielding excessive authority over another and by the same token maintain some degree of state control. However, it would seem that the feelings of religious leaders towards some government policies were discounted. According to former Minister of External Affairs, Omar Sey, the Gambian Imams lobbied against the presence of the "Ahmadiyyas" in The Gambia. Their argument was that the Ahmadiyyas were not orthodox Muslims. However, their fears were discounted, according to Sey, in the light of the benefits that the general public was deriving from Ahmadiyya hospitals and schools. Sey acknowledges that civil society is not the primary consideration in foreign policy formulation, but that government takes into account the general masses in its formulation of policies.¹⁰¹

Relations with the Arab world emerged rather slowly in the evolutionary history of The Gambia's foreign policy. Embassies in Saudi Arabia and Libya were eventually opened and these embassies subsequently extended their accreditation to other Arab countries. Jawara's role as a mediator and a promoter of peaceful resolutions in Arab conflicts earned him respect and credibility among various Islamic organisations.¹⁰² With the Islamic credibility of the Gambian leader thus established, a flow of Arab aid ensued.

According to Jallow, religious groups had virtually no influence on government policies regarding the Iran/Iraq war. This was because the origins of the conflict and the conflict itself were not understood by most marabouts. They therefore did not seek to urge the government to support one country or another. However, the majority of marabouts tended to support Iran since Iraq was widely perceived as the aggressor enjoying the support of American imperialism. The role of Jawara as the Chairman of the Islamic Conference Organisation at the height of the conflict was crucial. Jallow argues that it is quite probable that Jawara had consulted Islamic scholars or marabouts on the issue.¹⁰³ While the role of the marabouts in Gambian politics seemed

¹⁰⁰ Correspondence, Imam Jallow, 29 August 1997.

¹⁰¹ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 Sept. 1996, Fajara..

¹⁰² Correspondence, Imam Jallow, August 1997.

¹⁰³ Ibid. Jallow makes a distinction between the scholar and the marabout. The marabout enjoys a large following and can exercise influence on his followers and government officials. The scholar however, has no following but enjoys academic knowledge and exposure that the former lacks.

rather low key and passive, it would be erroneous to dismiss their role as irrelevant. In the absence of formal strong roles, their informal, covert influence could have been conveyed to government officials within the bureaucratic machinery through constant interaction. The marabouts' links with their Senegalese counterparts undoubtedly motivated them to urge the government to enhance relations with Senegal on the basis of geographical proximity, ethnic and religious affinities. It remains however, difficult to ascertain the input of religious groups because their relationships with government remained informal.

Although Gomez makes allusion to secularism in *The Gambia* and downplays religion in its relevance to foreign policy, he does however concur that both *The Gambia* and Senegal are highly Islamised societies.¹⁰⁴ Allegiance is owed first to the leader of the sect and subsequently the Head of state. The heads of these sects are all Senegalese based, Tivaoune-Tijans, Kaolack-Niassen Tijans, Touba-Mourides and Njassou-Oumadirs. The religious dimension is very important in the domestic lives of the ordinary people. The number of Mourides has increased recently in *The Gambia*. This is because the founder of the sect Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba came originally from the Senegalese border village of Prohaon near Mintel Kunda, not far from Farafenni in *The Gambia*.¹⁰⁵

The religious background has been used to explain the lack of public backlash following the economic recovery programme and the redundancies that ensued.¹⁰⁶ Cooke and Hughes believe that Islamic culture in *The Gambia* may have been one of the factors which inhibited opposition from farmers who, more than any other civic group, bore the brunt of the adjustment programmes.¹⁰⁷ This Islamic fatality prevalent in Gambian society is a view that other scholars subscribe to:

The complacency, docility and gullibility of the Gambian people can be partly explained by the following factors: first, their fatalism and over-tolerance stem from their religious belief which makes them attribute anything that happens to them as destiny.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Gomez, op.cit., p 90-4.

¹⁰⁵ The venerable woman Jarra Busu could have been a Gambian Mandinka. Today many Badibunkas and Mandinkas in the Kombo area are Mourides.

¹⁰⁶ Radelet, op. cit., pp 1095-6 and Cooke & Hughes, op. cit., pp 93-117.

¹⁰⁷ Cooke & Hughes, op. cit., p 104.

While religious factors should not be discounted as part of the societal makeup of the Gambian people, it is logical to assume that the religious dimension could impinge on domestic or indeed foreign policy choices. However, it would seem that in the light of the ERP, other factors also contributed to the lack of a public backlash. The inability of the opposition parties to come up with viable alternatives, added to the passive, fatalistic and docile nature of the Gambian people, the absence of strong unions, and lack of political awareness, are all contributing factors to the subservient reaction of Gambian civil society under ERP.

The influence of religious groups has not been visible. Moreover these groups enjoyed certain privileges both from the government and Islamic organisations. Such privileges were usually in the form of local projects and programmes. This presupposed their endorsement of government policies both at home and abroad. Their views were thus tainted by the pecuniary benefits received from Arab funded-projects or indeed government home-based policies as a large proportion of civil servants within the government administration were disciples of the sects mentioned earlier. Thus while the financial autonomy and authority in political and social matters characteristic of religious groups in Senegal are not enjoyed in the Gambian scenario, it would be inaccurate to dismiss the relevance of the religious factor in The Gambia's domestic and foreign policies.

- *The Business Community or Gambian Merchant Class*

Economic factors in domestic or foreign policy are of primary importance in all states. Given the emergence of parallel trade and the informal sector, the role of private sectors in the economies of the states today could hardly be ignored. Indeed in the case of The Gambia, the business community had long enjoyed a privileged relationship, with the British colonial administration. Key businessmen such as Mallinson and Bray of the UAC, and Henry and Robert Madi represented the business community at the legislative council for a long time.¹⁰⁹

With the advent of independence in 1965 relations between the business community and the government went through a dormant phase. The PPP, cognisant of

¹⁰⁸ Codou Mbassy Diene-Njie, Gambia: The Fall of The Old Order , The Senegambia Confederation and Beyond (Dakar, Les Editions Cheikh Anta Diop, 1996) p 50.

the support of the majority of the business community for the rival UP, viewed the private sector with a certain degree of suspicion. However, with an increase in the PPP's majority in parliament, coupled with defections from the UP, the PPP adopted a policy of rapprochement with the business community. The support of influential businessmen in The Gambia, such as the Madis, for the PPP gave the government added incentive and eased the latent tension between the government party and the business community. Madi became an elected member of the legislative Assembly where he represented the business community.

Successive presidents of the Chamber of Commerce were M.B Njie, 1972-1977, Abu Dandeh Njie, 1982-1987 and 1987-1992, and subsequently Housainou Njai, 1992-1994. The presidents of the Chamber of Commerce were representatives of the business community and also chairpersons of the public accounts committee of parliament. According to Njie this committee is responsible for looking into all aspects of government expenditure and co-operated during its deliberations with the Accountant and Auditor General.¹¹⁰

The business community in The Gambia is perceived to be a strong powerful merchant class composed of enterprising businessmen. Others see them as "smuggler merchants", an intrinsic part of the "Banjul Mafia", espousing all the imperatives of the African big men syndrome, staunch advocates of former President's Jawara regime.¹¹¹ The business community also entails petty traders or "*bana bana*" retail traders, Mauritanian wholesale traders and prominent Gambian figures within the private sector.

On foreign policy issues the role of the business community is difficult to measure as both formal and informal networks were used to influence decision-makers. Given geographical proximity between The Gambia and Senegal, it is a foregone conclusion that economics would play a vital role in the integration of the two states. In fact the question of a customs union between The Gambia and Senegal had been under discussion at various phases of Senegambian history as early as the 1960s. Outside of the official bureaucratic and political squabbles on Senegambian integration, trade between the two countries has continued unhindered. Yet the nature and legality of this trade had always amplified the existing difficulties between the two countries. The retail

¹⁰⁹ Correspondence with Housainou Njie, former President of the Chamber of Commerce, 4th Sept. 1997.

¹¹⁰ Loc. cit.

¹¹¹ O. Manjang 'The Senegambia confederation, marriage of confusion' 1 and 2 respectively, in West Africa 3 November 1986, pp 2307-11 and West Africa 10 November 1986, pp 2358-60.

trade became the lifeblood of The Gambia yet was perceived by the Senegalese as having a cancerous effect on their economy. The long-established issue of smuggling between The Gambia and Senegal and vice versa is as old as Adam, yet the deep division resides in the fact that what one state brands as smuggling another calls retail trade.

Members of this merchant class have strong reasons to oppose Senegambian integration. First a large number of them are involved in the thriving re-export trade so that harmonisation of tariffs and monetary union as proposed in the protocols under the Senegambia confederation, would not be to their best advantage. The Gambian government had always adopted a liberal economic policy catering for the free flow of goods with low import duties. With the inception of the Senegambia confederation talks on customs and monetary union were high on the Senegambian agenda, particularly from the Senegalese authorities, who were under pressure from their powerful indigenous merchant class. The latter have always considered their business activities to be in jeopardy because of intense smuggling of cheaper and sometimes inferior quality goods from The Gambia.

Harmonisation would logically mean increasing prices in The Gambia to meet those in Senegal. Such prospects would have been detrimental to the business community who were still coming to terms with severe losses incurred during the July 1981 insurrection.¹¹² According to Sall and Sallah, under the liberalisation policies of the SAPs the re-export trade boomed, thus the likelihood of monetary union with Senegal seemed fairly bleak.¹¹³ The need to maintain strong informal economic links and social cohesion in the absence of formal governmental structure was felt outside the bureaucratic élite. The issue of survival, thus free movement of goods has always assumed an overriding importance. As Njie states:

The private sector wanted government to do everything to ensure that there was free movement of goods and of people between the two countries. They were however not keen on the harmonisation of tariffs on goods...Customs duty, local and central government taxes were much higher in Senegal. Salaries and other fringe benefits were also higher in Senegal.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Sall and Sallah, 'Senegal and the Gambia, the politics of integration' op. cit., p 119

¹¹³ Loc. cit.

¹¹⁴ Correspondence, Housainou Njie. 1 September 1997. Njie was Managing Director of the Gambia Commercial Bank, but it was in his capacity as President of the Chamber of Commerce that he shared his experience with the writer.

The Gambian government has always benefited from the trade in which Gambian businessmen and petty traders engage, exporting goods, tea, sugar, tomato puree, and other essential commodities to neighbouring countries, such as Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mauritania, Sierra Leone and Mali. By virtue of The Gambia's geographical location, the majority of these goods have to transit Senegalese territory. In reality, a great deal of these goods are smuggled into Senegal and sold at cheaper prices.¹¹⁵

According to the World Bank, import duties make up 70 per cent of The Gambia's total tax revenue, of which 50-60 per cent comprises of duties from the re-export trade.¹¹⁶ It is estimated that The Gambia derives an annual benefit of \$40-60 million from this trade of which customs duties account for 69 per cent of The Gambia's budget revenue.¹¹⁷ Thus it is hardly surprising that while the business community was very keen to see the government encourage the free movement of goods, persons and services as part of monetary union protocols, the business sector in Dakar, an equally strong merchant class, wanted to ensure the promptitude of monetary and customs union as a step towards the harmonisation of tariffs between the two states. Thus, it was a classic example of conflicting interests. While one group wished to see the beginning of a gateway, a Gambian entrepôt, another envisaged the end of smuggling, which they believed was asphyxiating their trade and modest manufacturing sector.

The business community urged the government at each stage of the negotiations on free movement of vehicles and goods, to pursue those with vigour.¹¹⁸ The needs of the business sector were not dissimilar from those of the government. According to Njie, all groups concerned in the issue of monetary union, including the Senegalese and Gambian governments, as well as the business community in The Gambia, had confused motives: "They wanted to have their cake and eat it and it was therefore not surprising that the talks made little headway in spite of over eight years of discussions between the two countries".¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Statistical figures regarding goods smuggled into Senegal from The Gambia or vice versa are not forthcoming. This area remains under-researched, moreover most of the studies done by scholars such as Robson, *op. cit.*, have become obsolete insofar as actual or estimated figures of smuggled goods are concerned.

¹¹⁶ World Bank Development Report (1987) cited in Diene-Njie, *op. cit.*, p 88.

¹¹⁷ Diene-Njie, *op. cit.*, p 88-9.

¹¹⁸ Correspondence, Housainou Njie 1 September 1997.

¹¹⁹ Correspondence Housainou Njie, 1 September 1997.

The Gambian government, cognisant of its dependence on revenue from customs duties, could not embark on a scheme which would not only put the business sector at a disadvantage but would entail a whole panoply of compensatory mechanisms to bridge the gap created as a result of monetary and customs union. Such moves would have been tantamount to a political suicide from a regime whose mainstay, according to certain observers, was upheld by the business sector. Moreover the rise in prices of goods in The Gambia that would have been a product of harmonisation policies could have signalled the alienation of the government and could have given rise to popular disenchantment.

It would be accurate to affirm that the Gambian merchant class played a key role in the economic and monetary union of the Senegambian confederation. Formal links and informal links were both used to exert pressure on the government to discourage acquiescence to a scheme that would put the private sector in jeopardy. Moreover, the interest of the business community and that of the government were far from diverging and this led to the latter's reticence regarding the advocacy of any policy that would alienate it from its core support groups. The fact that the merchant class in The Gambia was perceived to be staunch advocates of the ruling regime and perpetuated its power was also a dominant reason in the failure of the monetary union talks. The almost ubiquitously centralised nature of foreign policy in African states and the primacy of the bureaucracy is such that one could refute the populist option in decision making. However, the Gambian situation testifies that even if the populist factor is not as obvious as the bureaucratic factor, one should not assume that the former is non-existent as was the case regarding the business community.

Ethnicity and foreign policy in The Gambia, 'Wolofisation' versus 'Mandinkaness'

In spite of a fairly cohesive social fabric in The Gambia, it is a plural society. Ethnicity has played a key role in post-independence states not only in domestic politics but also in foreign policy. Indeed the issue of ethnicity could hardly be divorced from the African geopolitical equation. The Casamance separatist war waged against Senegalese authorities and the Rwandan genocide in the 1990s were all remnants of deep ethnic divisions between one group and another. In The Gambia, ethnicity is usually deemed as irrelevant to the social make-up and to be branded a "tribalist" is just about the worst form of insult that an individual can receive. Instead what is promoted is the idea

of a one-nation Gambia, where familism and social affinity transcends all ethnic, religious and political divisions.

However bureaucratic squabbles “fought” on ethnic lines continue to be a latent but prevalent factor within the Gambian administration. Indeed the PPP rise to popularity in the 1960s was fought on an ethnic platform.¹²⁰ Mandinka intellectuals in Bathurst and the Kombo area supported by elders such as Sanjally Bojang merged associations such as the Kombo and Niumi societies into a bigger forum and subsequently formed the Protectorate People’s Party (PPP). The PPP in its self-proclaimed role of defending the interests of the protectorate also sought to protect and safeguard the interests of the Mandinkas. Given their numerical strength, they perceived themselves as natural heirs within the Gambian administration.¹²¹

According to Weil,¹²² the PPP succeeded in achieving a Mandinka “para-political system” strictly aligning this system to the traditional Mandinka social institutions. By this method, the PPP was able to recruit Mandinka supporters while on the other hand weakening urban opposition. The Mandinka majority concentrated in the rural areas accounted for the victory of the PPP in the 1962 elections. With the electoral success of 1962, the PPP, having previously exploited the ethnic factor, made a complete U-turn by downplaying ethnicity. The main thrust of the party was geared towards the formation of a national party. The party succeeded largely in achieving this goal. However, the administration was dogged by ethnic squabbles, albeit low keyed.

P.S Njie used the Wolof element to attract a strong Wolof following with powerful slogans such as “Saloum Kheet”. Njie had a much bigger ambition, which was to form a single Wolof kingdom. This sole overriding ambition was to transcend religion, class and caste stratification. With this in mind, Njie urged that all Wolofs Muslims and Christians alike should come together based on their heritage and links with Saloum.¹²³ Njie believed in the supremacy of certain ethnic group, and he had great pride in the history and cultural heritage of the Wolof.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Ebrima Sall, ‘La Gambie: un état exigu’, op. cit., p 282.

¹²¹ Ebrima Sall (1991) op. cit., p 32.

¹²² J.Senghor, Ph.D thesis, op. cit., p 163

¹²³ Senghor, Ph.D thesis, op. cit., p 179

¹²⁴ Faye, religious leader and former politician added that P.S Njie regarded his close ethnic affiliations with Ndiaye very seriously. He believed that by virtue of their maternal wolof links with Senegal should be strengthened. See Senghor, Ph.D thesis, p 179.

The ethnic factor reared its ugly head in 1975 when the National Convention Party under the leadership of Dibba, cofounder of the PPP and former Vice-President, resigned over a smuggling scandal that involved his brother. The formation of the NCP was primarily interpreted as the result of growing disillusionment among the Mandinka community who resented their loss of hegemonic influence and numerical strength within the party.¹²⁵ However, the tendency to brand the NCP as a tribalist party should be balanced with the successive electoral victories of the Wolof Gibou Jagne, fought under the NCP banner in the Serrekunda constituency.¹²⁶

Subsequently with the dominance of the Banjul merchant class, popularly known as the “Banjul Mafia”, the ethnic factor re-activated itself, shifting from a political to a socio-politico-economic platform. Social groups such as the “Terri Kafoos” alleged to have nurtured certain sympathies for the NCP emerged. This group included Mandinka intellectuals such as former Vice-President Bakary Bojang, and Bolong Sonko, former Permanent Secretary, and Minister of External Affairs.

Ethnicity was not just a feature of domestic politics, it transcended to the realm of foreign policy too, especially in Senegambian relations. It must be noted that the ethnic factor has been a mainstay in the socio-political and cultural life in Africa long before the arrival of Europeans. However, in Senegalese politics, apart from the separatist war in Casamance, ethnicity has failed to be a primary issue. The hegemony of the Wolof kingdoms to the detriment of other ethnic minorities has continued uninterrupted especially during the days of French rule. Although the Wolofs in Senegal according to a 1988 census formed only 44 per cent of the population, the Wolof language remains the lingua franca with 71 per cent of the total Senegalese population speaking Wolof as a first or second language.¹²⁷

Thus with an understanding of the cancerous nature of ethnic rivalries, Senegalese officials susceptible to the covert but prevalence of ethnic issues in Gambian politics exploited this factor to their own advantage. According to Sy, the former Senegalese Minister of External Affairs, the high composition of Aku (Gambian Creoles) in the civil service particularly in the 1960s made Senegambian integration a non-

¹²⁵ Hughes, in Clarke and Payne, op. cit., p 150.

¹²⁶ Sall (1991), op. cit., p 36.

¹²⁷ Schraeder, op. cit. p 488, for a thorough understanding of Wolof culture, see Abdoulaye Bara Daiop, *La Société Wolof: Tradition et Changement* (Editions Karthala, Paris 1981), Mamadou Diouf, *Le Kajoor au XIXe: Pouvoir Ceddo et conquête coloniale* (Editions Karthala, Paris 1990)

starter.¹²⁸ Mbengue stated that Gambian officials were graded like a head teacher would grade his pupils on the basis of their Senegambian affinities or "Senephobic" tendencies.¹²⁹

From the Gambian perspective, the idea of a Senegambian state dominated by Wolof speakers was a real fear for the Mandinka within the civil service administration. However, within the general framework of the political and bureaucratic élite there existed several groups and sub-groups. First there were the Wolofs who traced their ethnic ties to Sine Saloum. This group has strong ties with relatives in Senegal and these ties have been fostered and cemented over the years. With a natural affinity towards a Senegambian concept, many members of this group endorsed the idea of a much closer tie with Senegal. It is interesting to note, either through fate or will, that the majority of players, i.e. people who actively participated in the talks leading to the Senegambia confederation were Wolof. These people include former Speaker and Minister of Works, Sir Alhagi Sulayman Jack, Lamin Saho, former Attorney General and Minister of Justice and Ebou Taal former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs. With the subsequent strain in the confederation, it is also rather extraordinary that these people, architects of the Senegambian idea, incurred political losses as they were all removed from their respective positions. One possible explanation according to some critics, is that they were politically sacrificed.¹³⁰

The other group consists of Wolof civil servants within the administration who though connected with Senegal through the same ethnic affiliations as the aforementioned group, downplayed their ethnic affinities for their own advantage. Members of these groups were charged with being too obsessive of their particularistic and personal interests and sought to avoid alienating themselves from the Head of State whose idea of a Senegambia union had always been based on a functionalist and minimalist approach. Civil servants in this group were viewed as anti-Senegambian due to their fear of being relegated to secondary status in the advent of a greater Senegambia. The former Secretary General, Sara Janha, the former Commander of the Gambian National Army, Momodou Ndow Njie, and the former Inspector General of Police Abdoulie Mboob, are believed to be among this group.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Personal interview with Seydina Oumar Sy, 28 August 1996, Dakar

¹²⁹ Personal interview with Mbaye Mbengue, 27 August 1996, Dakar.

¹³⁰ Name held upon request.

¹³¹ In a personal interview with Janha, he refutes any anti-Senegambian proclivities. Personal interview 13 October 1997, London. He spoke of attempts he made to initiate dialogue with Senegalese colleagues such as Tanor Dieng, but his efforts were unsuccessful.

The third group was the Wolof-speaking urban Banjulians. It is difficult to discern a homogenous Wolof ethnic group, with Wolof speakers sharing a common ancestral heritage. Many of the names Sarr, Jobe, Joof, Taal and Jallow trace their origins to the Serrers and Peuls but have been detribalised to become Wolofs. Therein lies the difficulty of discerning a single cohesive attitude among the Banjulian Wolofs. While most people in the urban areas welcomed the Senegalese intervention in the light of the bloody unprecedented events of 1981, others expressed doubts and even became exasperated by the conspicuous presence of Senegalese soldiers in the capital city of Banjul and the greater Banjul area.

The fourth group was the Mandinkas who were to a large extent apprehensive of the prospect of a Senegambian union, whatever its complexion, federal or confederal. The sheer dilution of The Gambia's sovereignty into an even bigger entity was an overriding source of preoccupation for many Gambians (Mandinkas, Wolofs Fulas, and Akus alike). However, for the majority of the Mandinkas the real threat was to witness a hegemonic Wolof state as the likely product of real integration between the two states.

One observer states that during the confederal years three Heads of Mission in the Senegalese High Commission in The Gambia were Mandinka from the Casamance area.¹³² It would be erroneous to suggest Salieu Cissé given his diplomatic clout (former Senegalese High Commissioner), could be appointed solely on the basis of ethnic considerations. However, one could draw a logical conclusion from his appointment that, apart from his intellectual and diplomatic qualities, his ethnic affinities would perhaps neutralise and alleviate anti-Senegalese feelings among the die-hard Mandinka elements of the Gambian civil service.

The same observer affirmed that some Gambian Mandinkas were targeted by the Senegalese government, thus encouraging the emergence of Bakary Dabo, the then Gambian High Commissioner in Dakar. Dabo's strong command of French gave him a natural alliance within Senegalese circles as he was seen as a bridge to appease Mandinka versus Wolof tension in the civil administration. Hence Mactar Kebbeh, former Senegalese High Commissioner in The Gambia, a Mandinka from the Casamance area, not only rallied around Dabo but openly endorsed the "Terri Kafoo" group.¹³³ Mandinka intellectuals such as Dabo were classified as covertly resentful of Senegambia even though colleagues who have worked with him affirmed that he never

¹³² Name held upon request.

displayed any ethnic animosity. On the other hand certain Mandinkas of the political elite, e.g. Lamin Jabang, fostered strong ties with Senegalese colleagues and were perceived as pro-Senegambian. Jabang's subsequent shift to Minister of the Interior in the wake of the "cold war" between The Gambia and Senegal is no doubt indicative of Jawara's malaise regarding Senegambia, and Jabang's increasingly amicable relations with his Senegalese counterparts.

The fifth group, the Akus having enjoyed a privileged position in the 1960s because of their academic edge over other ethnic groups were in the minority by the 1980s. Their proclivity towards anything anglophone could have made them more sensitive to closer association with neighbouring countries such as Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Ghana. Aku personalities within the government administration such as Francis Mboge, the former Secretary General, were held by critics both within The Gambia and Senegal to be anti-Senegambian.¹³⁴

In so far as other groups were concerned, one key witness noted that during the Presidential tours that took Abdou Diouf and Jawara to the rural areas in a sensitisation campaign on the benefits of the envisaged Senegambia confederation, the Fula majority in Basse called for a federation instead of a confederation. Mbengue, former Senegalese High Commissioner to The Gambia, endorsed this view as he expressed Diouf's surprise at the overwhelming support he received in The Gambia, particularly in rural areas.¹³⁵

Thus it would seem that the ethnic factor, while undervalued from a populist perspective in order to encourage ideas of oneness and win elections, was certainly an important issue in the overall decision-making structure in The Gambia. In spite of the fact that its importance was heavily downplayed by those more likely to suffer from its beleaguering effects, ethnicity in both the pre-and post independence years has been a mainstay in both domestic and foreign policy. As in most new states, where the weaknesses of institutions are so self-evident, the concept of the nation-state tends to oscillate between ethnic pride and ethnic rivalry. For rural folk the whole concept of what constitutes the nation-state is obscured by family values, kinship and lineage links .

¹³³ The interviewee expressed the desire to remain off the record.

¹³⁴ However in all the interviews with the author, Mboge spoke of complementarity between the people of the two states in the light of geographical proximity and the affinities and porosity of the borders. Personal interview with Francis Mboge, 14 July 1996, 9 September 1996,

¹³⁵ Personal interview with Mbaye Mbengue, Dakar 27 August 1996.

People in locations such as Wellingara in Casamance would tend to relate more to their relatives in Basse in The Gambia than their fellow nationals of Dakar, Rufisque, or Saint Louis. Likewise residents of Farafenni have stronger kinship ties with villagers in the vicinity, e.g. Nioro, Senegal, than they have to people in Banjul or Serrekunda. Through such elements as kinship and lineage, strong ties have been cemented over the years. Thus it has been a continuous difficulty for governments to legislate on the need for rural farmers to sell their produce to their respective governments instead of their cousins or uncles in the neighbouring village. Apart from the availability of cash, the borders are increasingly porous and for the majority of rural folk the concept of borders and geographical demarcations is simply foreign.

Nonetheless the ethnic divisions especially within the urban élite, are a decisive factor. In a government that achieved popularity on the basis of ethnic strength, the need to use ethnicity as a rallying force became all too imperative in the evolution of Gambian politics. However, ethnicity has never been absent from Senegambian politics as politicians played the fears of one ethnic group off against the other. It would seem that the Gambian ruling élite, cognisant of the fears of the Mandinka regarding their eventual loss of hegemony within a bigger entity, tried to advocate a less compelling form of association with Senegal.

CONCLUSION

Civic organisations and civic education are generally perceived to be anti-government in some African countries. Civic groups able to influence government policies were those whose interests converged with those of the ruling élite, i.e. the business community. Yet even religious groups in The Gambia did not acquire the strong focal base that is so prevalent for instance in Senegalese society, primarily due to their lack of financial autonomy. Nonetheless, these informal linkages have been influential to varying degrees in Senegambian relations. The passivity of the Gambian people coupled with the influence of an Islamic society in which fatalism is a prevalent trait could possibly explain the absence of a public backlash during the implementation of the SAP. Labour unions and students movements could only influence government policies episodically. These organisations lacked the requisite funds to guarantee their continuous survival or suffered from an absence of strong leadership, political clout, personal divisions or co-optation from the government. Their role in foreign policy was far from a participatory one partly because the general populace that they represented

was more concerned with bread and butter issues rather than diplomacy. In a society with low political culture, coupled with mass illiteracy, complex issues relating to foreign or domestic policy can only be appreciated by a privileged few.

Instead of group consensus and unity of purpose, which should be an important feature in such groupings, what tends to happen is petty squabbling and personality clashes among activist leaders. In a way some of these civic organisations are a mere microcosm of the wider reality, where ideological differences, personality conflicts, demagoguery and opportunistic needs are part of the equation. In addition, because of the very nature of small societies, personality clashes are rapidly polarised and the problem of divided loyalty between kinship, ethnic affiliation and personal loyalties generally inhibits constructive progress.

The educated élite in general did not contribute to invigorating civil society. This is primarily because most of its members became civil servants and thus owed their allegiance to the government, or simply manifested a high degree of apathy towards any form of political discourse. As a result, there arose a counter-productive civil society whose input to government policies was insignificant. The absence of a sophisticated civil society in The Gambia, as is the case in other West African states, Ghana, Senegal and Sierra Leone to cite but a few, has subverted the effectiveness of its participation. In addition, the complete exclusion of the rural masses from the mechanism of decision-making puts the weight on the urban masses to spin the wheels of change and coerce the government into accepting policies that they deem favourable. The problem of mass illiteracy further exacerbates the situation. What is perhaps more easy to discern, is that whilst the government did not seek to wilfully subdue civil society, it also did not seek to encourage education or enhance civic organisations by providing a more workable unit in which they could not only operate, but in which alternative ideas could germinate.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Wiseman (1996), op. cit., p 924.

CHAPTER 5: Foreign Policy Decision-Making in The Gambia- The Bureaucratic Contribution

The decision-making aspect of foreign policy is popular among scholars. American scholars in particular have systematically probed into the issue of decision-making to understand why nations act the way they do and why certain decisions are prioritised over others.¹ Regrettably in previous studies on The Gambia's foreign policy, the subject of decision-making has not revealed many substantive findings vis-à-vis the structural process and the actors involved.²

The subject of decision-making insofar as the developing world is concerned, is generally seen through the narrow lens of the idiosyncratic model. Schraeder downplays the relevance of the autocratic leader who over-zealously regards foreign policy as his personal preserve.³ According to Schraeder, the democratic factor in most developing states simply does not allow for the type of scenario whereby foreign policy stretches as far as the leader's imagination. The leader's input is tremendously important, but other units and actors do account for the final input in foreign policy decisions.

Although the myth of the "big man" must be dispelled, the wave of re-democratization sweeping sub-Saharan Africa, civil society is still too elusive, too feeble to challenge vertical linkages. Thus, far from being caricatured concepts, the leadership factor has not lost its cogency at least in the context of developing states. The African leader continues to assume the all-too-important image of the "big man" even if in essence the groundwork is still incumbent on the bureaucratic unit.

Firstly, the study will attempt to re-visit the general theory on decision-making, with particular relevance to The Gambia as a small, developing African

¹ G. T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1971). M. H. Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institute, 1974), J. Hagan et al., 'How decision-units shape foreign policy behaviour', (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1982), Hermann in East (1978), op. cit., pp 69-102, O. R. Holsti, "Foreign policy decision makers viewed psychologically: 'cognitive process' approaches", in James N. Rosenau (ed.) In Search of Global Patterns (New York: Free Press, 1976), pp 120-144, K. J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis 4th Edition (Englewood Cliff, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1983).

² Touray, op. cit., pp 65-6, Gomez, , op. cit., pp 231-252

State. The absence of a diplomatic culture prevalent in African states in the aftermath of independence, meant that diplomacy in its modern day context had to be conceptualised at its infancy. Thus it is important to understand the structural evolution of decision-making in order to examine whether structural deficiencies had an impact on the overall decision-making framework. Although our study primarily focuses on The Gambia and its experience in decision-making; for a broader analysis it is worthwhile to briefly examine comparative literature on decision-making in other African countries.

Secondly, given the scope of the bureaucratic machinery, in order to evaluate its contribution to foreign policy, this will be examined in three stages. Due to the primacy of the idiosyncratic factor in African diplomacy, stage one will attempt to investigate the influence of the former Gambian Head of state, Sir Dawda Jawara, in both the content and the conduct of The Gambia's external relations. As the Head of State's role in foreign policy formulation is far from a one-man show, it is important to examine the structural make-up of the President's office in terms of the different actors contributing to the conduct of foreign policy. The Secretary-General and advisers within the President's office are worthy of mention.

The Ministry of External Affairs, in terms of structure, content and style will be examined in stage two to determine its impact on foreign policy. In addition, given the importance of the Foreign Service, as the external arm of the Ministry of External Affairs, it becomes necessary to assess this unit in terms of its contribution to the formulation, conduct and implementation of foreign policy decisions.

The Bureaucratic variable, though often dismissed as irrelevant to the nature of decision-making in developing states, can be important insofar as it extends policy-making to other units outside the Ministry of External Affairs. In the third stage, the study will re-appraise the contribution of other ministries within the bureaucratic set-up, to evaluate their influence on the prosecution of foreign policy. The role of the Ministry of External Affairs is invariably magnified as the sole organ responsible for the formulation of foreign policy, to the detriment of other ministries such as that of defence, trade, and finance. The

³ Schraeder, op. cit., pp 485-87.

latter's role in foreign economic policies, particularly with the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) is not only pivotal, but it is often outside the competence of officers in the MEA.

Finally in spite of the bureaucratic dominance, parallel units will be studied, i.e. Cabinet, Parliament and Political Parties, to examine their role in the making of foreign policy. The role of cabinet, in terms of approving both domestic and foreign policy is crucial and as such is worthy of some attention. Due to The Gambia's adoption of parliamentary democracy in the aftermath of independence, it is important to consider Parliament as a potential actor in the decision-making process. This is in spite of the fact that political parties tend to focus on domestic policies, which are perceived to be more pertinent to the needs and aspirations of the general populace.

Evolutionary structures and processes of decision-making: an overview

Decision-making as a theoretical concept is far too wide and complex and thus its conceptualisation is often rendered difficult due to sheer scope. Scholarly findings will be analysed only in the light of their relevance to the global African framework or specifically in relation to The Gambia. State decisions are usually the prerogative of a handful of individuals, invariably the élite and the Head of State in particular. The latter is vested with constitutional, or executive powers, acting on behalf of a wider constituency, i.e. the masses.

The conduct and formulation of foreign policy, particularly in developing states, is often removed from the scrutiny of the populace. Often in the developing world, the general populace is not only uninterested in the formulation of foreign policy, they simply cannot grasp its preponderance, intricacies and ramifications. This, coupled with the almost inherently secretive trait that is often associated with foreign policy decisions and choices, further enshrouds the whole process of decision making.

Nonetheless, in order to properly examine decision-making as a useful foreign policy tool we need to understand the significance of the word 'decision'. Decision implies an act of will and action, the process of translating will into

execution. Hermann defines decision-making principally as “an act of choice”.⁴ The choice arises when the actor has one or more alternatives. The whole debate of determinism versus will is flawed since in the final analysis, the actor can choose between an active or passive stance. Hermann’s definition is precise in that he breaks it down into four stages: (i) “information collection and interpretation, (ii) option formation, (iii) choice making, and (iv) implementation”.⁵ The difficulty of such a structure is that it does not conform with the realities in African and developing countries where paucity of resources leads inevitably to paucity of knowledge base, thus limiting the ability of an individual to collect information and subsequently interpret it.⁶

Although the literature explores the theme of decision-making abundantly, there is a certain degree of myopia in the manner in which the decision-making framework operates in the context of a developing African state. Comparative studies on foreign policy formulation have remained either on the level of broad conceptualisations or have failed to provide more analytical tools in which models could be understood in their distinctive contexts.

Quite often a rather reductionist framework is portrayed which places the leader at the apex of foreign policy decisions. This scenario seeks to confirm that the importance of the leader is valid to a certain degree. Indeed African leaders, due to a combination of structural deficiencies and an inflated view of their respective roles, have since the days of independence considered foreign policy to be solely incumbent on the executive. The realm of foreign policy was to be premised on an unwritten rule whereby the Head of State controlled and administered foreign policy. Schraeder notes this in the case of Senegal.⁷

Likewise, the Nigerian scenario has been found to be not dissimilar.⁸ The absence of an autonomous Foreign Ministry meant that African states were not fully equipped for the demands of statehood at independence. Also, given the primacy of domestic priorities, the establishment of a Foreign Ministry did

⁴ Hermann, in East (1978), p 71.

⁵ Ibid, p 72.

⁶ Loc. cit, Bahgat Korany, ‘Foreign policy decision-making theory and the Third World, payoffs and pitfalls’ in Korany et al How Foreign Policy Decisions are Made in the Third World: A Comparative Analysis (Boulder Colorado, Westview Press, 1987), p 41.

⁷ Schraeder (1997), op. cit., p 496.

⁸ G.O. Olusanya and R.A. Akindele (eds.) Nigeria’s External Relations: The First Twenty Five Years (Ibadan, University Press Limited, 1986) p 26.

not command the priority that was associated with other Ministries.⁹ However, by 1959, a move was made which elevated the status of the department to a semi-autonomous unit.¹⁰ Thus the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Balewa, only established a fully-fledged Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1960.¹¹ In the absence of a Ministry of External Affairs, the Financial Secretary of the Federation assumed responsibilities connected with external trade.¹²

Matters relating to foreign economic policy and external trade were submitted to the economic ministries who lacked the staff and training to conduct such matters. Subsequently, even with the creation of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry lacked functional competence in terms of personnel expertise and manpower resources.¹³ The system had not seconded specialists in international relations as generalist administrators undertook duties relating to external policies.¹⁴

The Gambian scenario reflects the primacy of the Head of State in foreign policy decision-making, especially in the post-independence years. The formulation of foreign policy was the responsibility of a few individuals, the Prime Minister, the Minister of External Affairs, the Secretary-General and his adviser. However, the roles have evolved in the course of the years, as new challenges became apparent.

In addition, due to the democratic factor, intra-élite bargaining power, and other formal and informal linkages, the Head of State could not make policies in complete isolation.¹⁵ The first years of independence from 1965 to 1977, were permeated by structural, financial and other constraints. Foreign policy formulation was administered directly from the President's Office. There was no Ministry of External Affairs as such. Instead, the Secretary-General at the President's Office served as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs. While there was a Minister of External Affairs it was chiefly a Foreign Minister in absentia as he was also resident High Commissioner to The Gambia in Dakar. The Secretary-General assumed the overwhelming burden of foreign

⁹ Ibid, p 72.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

¹¹ Loc. cit.

¹² Loc. cit.

¹³ Ibid, 73-74.

¹⁴ Loc. cit.

policy duties. There was only one Assistant Secretary, who doubled as Protocol Officer and assisted the Minister of External Relations in his duties.¹⁶

Similar to the Nigerian scenario, the posts assumed by the Secretary-General in the Gambian scenario meant that little time was devoted to foreign policy, as his principle preoccupation was the running of the Prime Minister's office.¹⁷ Thus in the absence of a professional team, all matters relating to the OAU, the UN, and the Commonwealth fell under the responsibility of the Minister, the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary. This coupled with the fact that The Gambia did not have embassies in New York/Washington or Addis Ababa to monitor multilateral summitry, rendered difficult the formulation of policies as considerable time was spent on travelling.¹⁸

Thus the foundation for foreign policy in The Gambia was weakened by an absence of structural units, functional incompetence, paucity of human resources, small size and financial constraints. The small number of staff greatly impaired their ability to deal with the demands and exigencies of The Gambia's foreign policies.¹⁹ The then Permanent Secretary, Eric Christensen was not a professional diplomat. His experience consisted of his duties as an attaché in the French Consulate in Banjul during the colonial era and subsequently with the Senegalese Mission at junior /sub-professional level.²⁰ Consequently his experience was restricted although he was fluent in French.²¹ In essence, it was the Assistant Secretary who had to analyse all foreign policy issues.²² Thus, foreign policy was administered on an ad-hoc basis.²³ With the evident lack of professionalism, this meant that policy issues would tend to be dealt with in an impromptu manner, therefore resulting in impromptu responses. The realisation of the importance of foreign policy both in the domestic and international arenas, necessitated new remedial steps to alleviate

¹⁵ Interview with Bolong Sonko, 15 July 1996, Banjul

¹⁶ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997, first Permanent Secretary of the MEA and Head of the Diplomatic Service, 1977-82, Ambassador to Benelux Countries and the EEC, Italy and Permanent Representative of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Rome, 1977-82.

¹⁷ Correspondence, Ousman Othman 27 August 1996. Othman joined the MEA in 1970 as Assistant Secretary, served at the OMVG, the High Commission in Dakar, Permanent Secretary, MEA 1987-89.

¹⁸ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

¹⁹ Correspondence, Ousman Othman, 27 August 1997.

²⁰ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

²¹ Loc. cit

²² Loc. cit.

the weakness inherited from the immediate post independence years.

The idiosyncratic variable or personal diplomacy: Jawara's influence on decision-making.

Zartman espouses the concept that foreign policy in new states is highly centralised, based on the leader's whims. He makes mention of other units of decision-making i.e. the Foreign Ministry, the Foreign Service, Cabinet, the Secretary-General, but he affords these units a minimalist role. The ultimate foreign policy input is primarily dependent on the leader. He adds:

Decision-making in intra-African politics ... is focused on the president and the presidency. The declarations of the president become the national ideology, consecrated into -isms formed on the leader's name - such as Bourguibism, Nkrumahism and ben Bellaism... His anger and his ardour, his whims and his convictions become the mood of his country's policy, and his friendships and acquaintance mark its limits.....²⁴

Personal rule in Africa tends to rhyme with authoritarianism. However, there are cases when by virtue of charisma, leadership and vision the ruler can act on behalf of the nation and thus initiate change on a small or large scale. The idiosyncratic variable presupposes a leader who takes in his stride the exigencies on the domestic scene and the responsibilities of the wider, complex international arena. The idiosyncratic model also called the dramatic actor model, or personalised model, is when foreign policy becomes a projection of the ruler, the ruler becomes the state in the absence of a national cohesive culture and State House replicates the Ministry of External Affairs.²⁵

Idiosyncrasies and perceptions matter, but only insofar as they do not exclude the operational environment, i.e., the context in which the leadership operates. In other words, the political climate, the economic situation at the time and the historical period are all potent ingredients that act in favour of the leadership criteria. The majority of decision-makers and key civil servants interviewed in the course of this study have all stressed the important role

²³ Correspondence, Ousman Othman, 27 August 1997.

²⁴ Zartman (1966) op. cit., p 65.

²⁵ A. A. Gordon and D. L. Gordon, (eds.) Understanding Contemporary Africa (2nd Edition,

played by the Head of State, Sir Dawda Jawara.²⁶

However, at the infancy of The Gambia's diplomatic activities, i.e., between 1965 and 1968, the nature of the bureaucratic machinery was such that Jawara played a significant role in the conduct of foreign policy. Nonetheless by the 1970s the profile of the bureaucratic machinery, particularly, the MEA had improved considerably, thus while the leader assumed a preponderant role in foreign policy, other actors both formal and informal, contributed to foreign policy making.

Irrespective of the volatility of the political climate in the late 1950s, Jawara had by virtue of leadership, managed to steer out of political and social mayhem, exploiting his political clout over less adroit personalities and preparing himself for the daunting task of state-building. Sir Dawda (formerly David) Jawara was born in 1924, 100 miles away from the capital city of Banjul, in the village of Barajali. After successfully graduating in 1945 he joined the Gambia Medical Department, at the Royal Victoria Hospital where he pursued a career as a male nurse. He was subsequently awarded a scholarship to study veterinary science in Achimota College in Ghana, and later at the University of Glasgow in Scotland.²⁷

His interest in politics was kindled as a student in Scotland, where he actively participated in student unions (including the "Forward Group", a Labour Party student advisory committee) and later became the president of the African Student's Union. He returned to The Gambia in 1954 upon completion of his studies and joined the agriculture department. He travelled extensively in rural areas trying to combat cattle disease in an exercise of cattle inoculation and inspection. Jawara prospered quickly as a veterinary doctor.²⁸

His leadership assumed paramount importance partly because the majority of his entourage were either lacking in terms of political knowledge or were not sufficiently experienced in diplomacy. Thus in the absence of men of

Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner, 1996), p. cit., p 131.

²⁶ Personal interviews with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Banjul, Dabo 6 February 1996, London and Omar Njie, 15 July 1996, Banjul, to cite a few.

²⁷ B. Rice, *Enter Gambia: The Birth of an Improbable Nation* (London, Angus & Robertson, 1968) pp 134-6 Dabo et al, op.cit., p 23-5.

²⁸ Rice, op. cit., p 136.

the right calibre, Jawara aided by the few experienced men in his office played a primary role in both domestic and foreign policy. As Jackson and Rosberg affirm:

Independence brought a new and distinctive system of personal rule into being that was fundamentally different from the institutional-bureaucratic system of European colonialism. The new African statesman was a personal ruler more than a constitutional and institutional one; he ruled by his ability and skill (as well as the abilities and skills of those he could convince to be his supporters), by his personal power and legitimacy, and not solely by the title granted to him by the office he occupied and the constitution that defined it.²⁹

Some critics believe that his foreign policy legacy, particularly regarding Senegambian relations, was based on using one actor against the other, seldom in the interest of the nation, and more often for his own political expediency and survival.³⁰ He was criticised for playing the Senegalese against the Nigerians, while assuring a safer security anchor at home to curtail potential coup plotting.³¹ Undoubtedly, Jawara political shrewdness, personality and charisma have been employed to further political aspirations at home as well as enhancing The Gambia's image abroad. Quite often the survival of the leader is linked to the survival of the state as is demonstrated in Appendix 3.

Although his influence on foreign policy choices and decisions has been immense, the bulk of decision-makers affirm that he was not the autocratic and/or erratic ruler who designs foreign policy with an iron fist. Former Minister of External Affairs, Omar Sey, admitted that while in theory it might seem that the Head of State is at the centre of foreign policy, he concluded that being at the centre does not necessary mean that policies are made in a vacuum by the leader.³² Jawara stated that the role of the Head of State in the context of new states is not an insignificant role, however he maintains that he had to rely on the council of his foreign ministers, Secretary-Generals, and advisers from the

²⁹ R. H. Jackson and C. G. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* (California, University of California Press, 1987) p 16.

³⁰ Personal interview with Baboucarr Gaye, 9 August 1996, Bakau.

³¹ A key Gambian figure argued that Jawara used everybody to secure his own political career. He stated that this was not just prevalent in domestic policy but also a foreign policy ploy.

³² Personal interview with Omar Sey, 30 July 1996, Fajara,.

President's Office.³³

According to Francis Mboge, former Secretary-General, the fact that other governmental organs like the Cabinet have an input into foreign policy is an indication that foreign policy is not made on the whim of an individual.³⁴ Former Minister of Finance, Bakary Darbo on the other hand, reiterated Jawara's significant input into foreign policy formulation. He averred that The Gambia's foreign policy could be seen through Jawara's personality. Nonetheless, he asserts that Jawara by nature is sensible and moderate. He concludes:

Jawara's foreign policy has not landed us into difficulty. If he was a Sukarno or a megalomaniac like Amin, I don't think his foreign policy would have met with Cabinet and Parliament approval because it could have been detrimental for the country. Yes Jawara was the major player...he gained a lot of experience over time.³⁵

However, the full extent of Jawara's contribution to The Gambia's foreign policy can only be properly appreciated if one concentrates on specific foreign policy issues, where his contribution remained impressive. Probably the most thorny foreign policy issue that Jawara's government had to contend with on becoming Prime Minister was in relation to The Gambia's subsequent attitude towards Senegal. The leadership factor undoubtedly accounted for The Gambia's resistance towards a wider entity with Senegal. While other factors were crucial in determining The Gambia's position vis-à-vis Senegal, it took strong leadership and an astute politician to stand up to a more intimidating "big brother" and neighbour.

The pivotal role that The Gambia was to play particularly within the OAU in championing the cause of human and individual rights was a direct result of Sir Dawda's conviction. Although the human rights cause was subsequently used to further foreign policy objectives, it already rested on strong foundations. Thus, it would be inaccurate to suggest that The Gambia's stance on human rights was designed with the sole purpose of advancing

³³ Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heaths, Sussex.

³⁴ Personal interview with Francis Mboge, 12 Sept. 1996, Fajara.

³⁵ Personal interview with Bakary Darbo, 15 March 1996, London

opportunistic interests.³⁶

Equally, the pragmatism associated with The Gambia's foreign policy is a reflection of Jawara's personality. Conscious of the meagre resources of The Gambia he was a firm believer in moving gradually and finding one's feet, instead of squandering state resources on geographical representation. In addition, the scarcity of resources simply did not allow the establishment of random embassies around the world.³⁷

Thus it can be argued that the primacy of the Head of State was not only a consequence of the formal powers conceded by the constitution. It was also a result of the structural and human resource deficiencies made evident by the departure of the British in 1965. The distinctiveness of the Gambian situation was that while other African countries benefited from the services of generalist administrators, in The Gambia the latter were few. Moreover, the majority of ministerial posts unlike in other African countries, were held by individuals who had little academic qualifications and were injected into the system on the basis of their advocacy of the ruling party, the PPP.³⁸

In a state characterised by smallness and by a lack of diplomatic and political culture, it is crucial to examine the leadership factor in all its dimensions to fully understand the conduct of foreign policy in The Gambia. Once the role of the leader has been clearly defined, other actors within and without the realm of the bureaucracy may be appraised in their relevant functions. By the late 1970s The Gambia had earned itself a reputation of political stability coupled with sound policies that aimed at greater economic development. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shridath Ramphal "commended The Gambia's impressive record of achievement in its steady economic development and very stable and sound administration".³⁹

Jawara succeeded in selling The Gambia's image as a peaceful, progressive, stable and democratic small state. The image portrayed to the

³⁶ Galandou Goree Njie and Mrs Dembo, director of the African Human Rights Commission echo this view. The latter in an interview argues that there are sufficient reasons for believing that The Gambia's human rights stance was real.

³⁷ Rice, *op. cit.*, p 133.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p 134.

³⁹ The Gambia News Bulletin 3 February 1979.

world was in consonant with policies adopted in the domestic arena. The length of his tenancy as first Gambian Head of State, meant that foreign policy could only be fully understood through an analysis of Jawara, whose personal rule, though rid of authoritarianism had considerable impact on the general conduct of The Gambia's foreign policy formulation.

The President's Office as an advisory unit in foreign policy choices and decisions.

As stated in previous pages, the Prime Minister's Office subsequently re-named President's Office, was the principal unit of foreign policy formulation. The period 1965-77 is an important phase in the general evolution of foreign policy in the Gambia. This is chiefly because of the weak structural legacy inherited from the colonial era which persisted for the first ten years of independence. The Prime Minister's Office suffered from an increasing surge of foreign matters, inadequate staff and deficiencies in functional competence and financial resources.

The Secretary-General was the key adviser to the Head of State particularly in matters relating to domestic issues. The formal duties of the Secretary-General involve the management of the President's Office and co-ordination of policies in co-operation with other departments. A key figure of the executive, the Secretary-General carried a lot of weight, and could assume the role of any Permanent Secretary within the civil service administration. In addition, the Secretary-General was also the Head of the Civil Service.

The role of Secretary-General was magnified since the early days of independence, when by virtue of the cumulated role of Secretary General and Permanent Secretary of the MEA, he became one of the key players in foreign policy formulation. Policy guidelines, presidential speeches, coverage of diplomatic summitry, bilateral and multilateral negotiations, analyses of foreign policy issues and preparation of briefs were all under the direct tutelage of the Secretary-General, who delegated this overwhelming responsibility to his Assistant Secretary.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, Abidjan 23 August 1997.

The magnitude of work involved was more than the Secretary-General could cope with, even though one of his primary roles was to advise the Prime Minister on any matters passing through his office.⁴¹ Consequently, there was a quasi-direct communication channel between the Prime Minister, the MEA, and the Assistant Secretary. Hampered by the debilitating weakness caused by structural and other constraints, the lack of expertise was glaring, with fewer than four top-level professionals, all generalist administrators.⁴² In addition, the leverage necessary in the conduct of foreign policy, to ensure checks and balances were in place, was lacking.

Personalities such as Winton Lane and Eric Christensen former Secretary General, in their capacities as advisors formed a team with the Prime Minister to assist in the formulation of policies in the post-independence era. The bilingual British expatriate Winton Lane, experienced in international affairs, gave invaluable service in the early days of The Gambia's independence. Christensen, another fluent French speaker, having served at the French Consulate and Senegalese Mission, had acquired wide experience, yet his skills in consulate and administrative matters did not qualify him for the sheer scope and functions that his duties necessitated.⁴³

Ironically, while it is natural to expect considerable gaffes in the foreign policy of a new state, in the case of The Gambia, a number of constructive decisions were taken on the foreign policy level.⁴⁴ For instance it was during this period that the Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat, a joint body created to enhance co-operation between The Gambia and Senegal, was established. While formal linkages with Senegal were kept at a functional level, the need for joint co-operation had been concretised by the creation of joint organs such as the Inter-Ministerial Committee and its technical sub-committee conceived in 1961. On the other hand, challenges and conflicts on the international arena were treated with the utmost caution and moderation, as was the case with the Biafran civil war in which The Gambia stood firmly behind Nigeria and

⁴¹ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, Abidjan 23 August 1997.

⁴² Correspondence, Ousman Othman, Banjul, 27 August 1997.

⁴³ Correspondence, Ebou Manneh, Banjul, 17 August 1997. Former senior officials within the MEA such as Ousman Othman, Ebou Taal and former Secretary-General, Sara Janha, echoed this view.

⁴⁴ R. Ofoegbu, in O. Olusanya and. Akindele (1990), *op. cit.*, p 72.

defended the principle of territorial integrity.⁴⁵

As Manneh contends:

I look back and I believe that scanty as this structure may look, it was adequate. It served our needs, which were not complicated. No complicated diplomacy – all day to day. It gravitated around one man...the Secretary General and the office of the President and while it lasted, it worked.⁴⁶

Successive Secretary-Generals (Jabez Langley, Moustapha Wadda, Francis Mboge Sara Janha) have all had an input to foreign policy choices and decisions.⁴⁷ Such was the importance of the Secretary-General that the President himself could not take any major initiative without consulting him.⁴⁸ The Secretary-General was thus the President's main advisor.⁴⁹ There are cases when the latter would come forward with a proposal and the President would suggest it to cabinet. The close relations between the President and the Secretary-General partly explains why the former used his executive powers to promote the Secretary-General to the rank of Cabinet Minister. Hitherto, the Secretary-General was Cabinet Secretary. With the recent modification in the 1990s, his rank, salary and status were akin to that of any government Minister.

There are cases when the Secretary-General and the MEA would have divergent views on policy issues. In cases like these, the President would decide whose advice to follow. There were also problems of co-ordination or occasions when one decision-making unit took up an issue without informing the other. For instance the letter written to the Senegalese Head of State asking for the Presidency of the confederation to be rotated, came directly from the Office of the President, according to a key government official.⁵⁰ He stated that the letter was strongly worded and did not conform to the subtleties and style of diplomacy. He concluded that the letter was sent directly to the Senegalese Head

⁴⁵ "Nigeria Goodwill Mission Visits The Gambia", The Gambia News Bulletin 3 August 1967.

⁴⁶ Correspondence, Ebou Manneh, Banjul, 17 August 1997.

⁴⁷ Zartman acknowledges the importance of the Secretary-General as part of the foreign policy machinery. Zartman (1966), op. cit., p 70.

⁴⁸ Personal interview with Bakary Dabo, 15 March 1996, London.

⁴⁹ Personal interview with Francis Mboge, former Secretary-General, 12 September 1996.

⁵⁰ The government official in question has expressed the wish to remain off the record.

of State and that the Ministry of External Affairs only saw a copy of the letter after it had been dispatched.

According to Mboge, his views were expressed by way of opinions. As Secretary-General at a crucial period, following the creation of the Senegambia confederation, his advice to the President was that the Swiss example of a confederation would perhaps be the ideal example to follow.⁵¹

According to Janha, the idea that the involvement of the President's office in foreign policy formulation was merely consultative is a fallacy. He argues that whenever there was a gap, the President's Office would get involved. He contends:

Our primary interest lies with Senegal, therefore the best people should be working on those issues. When the Foreign Minister or Foreign Ministry is not forthcoming with the necessary advice, the President takes his own advice, his own council, and would ask the President's Office to study the issue which we did and would give several options.⁵²

Nonetheless, officials such as Othman and Taal argue the contrary. Although, they recognise the Office of the President in its deliberative and consultative role in foreign policy formulation, they maintain that the latter only enjoyed a privileged status as a key determinant in the conduct of foreign policy, during the first half of the independence period.⁵³

Given the primacy of the Head of State in foreign policy matters, it is logical that the views of one his closest advisers, the Secretary-General, would reflect in the final complexion of policy-making. Nonetheless the ineffectual system of co-ordination and co-operation often resulted in a tug of war which as could be expected in small societies tended to hinge on personalities rather than issues. Thus rival ministries do not readily acknowledge the respective efforts of individual ministries and Government units.

⁵¹ Personal interview with Francis Mboge, 12 September 1996, Fajara.

⁵² Personal interview with Sara Janha, 11 October 1997, London

⁵³ Correspondence, Ousman Othman, 27 August 1997, correspondence Ebou Taal, 23 August

Likewise the MEA is generally perceived as being composed of members of the dominant élite group, enjoying rather privileged positions. Yet the formulation of policies is generally difficult to quantify into its respective functional roles. Subsequently, while it is important to assess and re-appraise the roles of the different actors within the bureaucratic unit, the value of individual or collective efforts is difficult to quantify.

The Ministry of External Affairs and its role in foreign policy formulation

Like most less developed countries, the structure of the bureaucracy is a reflection of the colonial legacy. The formulation of foreign policy in post-independent African states cannot be insulated from its colonial inheritance. Colonial overlords had set the tone and basis for policy formulation and quite often African leaders adopted this colonial inheritance. Language, culture, currency and institutions were not solely a reflection of a previous colonial presence; they served as emblems and identities.⁵⁴ The MEA came into existence in 1968. Schematic diagrams showing the evolutionary the structure of decision-making are included in Appendix 4. Prior to this it was amalgamated with the office of the Prime Minister.

The creation of the foreign ministry as an offshoot of the establishment of other ministries is not uncommon in Africa.⁵⁵ The structure of the MEA during the post-independence years was skeletal, and it was due to the intensity of The Gambia's diplomatic activities and the insight of certain officials that its structure became more viable.⁵⁶ The features displayed by the Gambian Ministry of External Affairs insofar as lack of expertise and resources are concerned, were evident in most newly-independent African countries in the post-independence era.⁵⁷

1997.

⁵⁴ Clapham (1996), op. cit., p 34.

⁵⁵ Zartman (1966) op. cit., p 69.

⁵⁶ The idea of structuring units into divisions, i.e. division of political and legal affairs, division of documentation and interpretation, division of administration and finance, division of international co-operation, was subsequently re-appraised in 1987 by Ousman Othman, former Permanent Secretary, MEA.

⁵⁷ . Skurnik (1972), op. cit., p 69.

The small size of the Ministry of External Affairs could have had a debilitating effect on the qualitative structure of decision-making. For instance because of the small size of the MEA, it could not afford to have different divisions (Europe, Africa, Asia, etc.) as would be the case in larger countries, and had to limit itself to sub-divisions. These structural constraints ostensibly limited the potential of The Gambia and its Foreign Ministry to exploit the available advantages that could be reaped from astute foreign policy choices. In this scenario, foreign policy may become reactive and ad hoc, limited to a problem-tackling unit.⁵⁸ In this vein policies are formulated without prior planning.⁵⁹

Yet one could also argue that the size of The Gambia's diplomatic activities did not necessitate a highly complex structures comparable to the Nigerian situation. The needs of The Gambia as mentioned earlier, were not complicated and its ability to influence foreign policy from an international perspective were limited. It would be false economy if valuable resources, were spent on the establishment of vast bureaucratic schemes, whatever their role, by the very Ministry that seeks to make the mobilisation of external assistance one of its key goals. While the primary functions of the MEA should not be lost, its structures must only be seen as meaningful in the light of its expected outcomes.

According to an MEA document outlining a five-year programme, two main functions were ascribed to the MEA: (i) to establish priorities for the extension abroad of what is the national policy and the adjustment of that policy to events abroad, and (ii) to manage the country's external representation in accordance with those priorities.⁶⁰

In the light of the rapid marginalization of the Gambian economy as a result of the twin problems of low agricultural output and declining terms of trade, the need to accommodate popular expectations by augmenting domestic resources with external capital became imperative. It is in this role that the

⁵⁸ Personal interview with Omar Njie, senior official at the MEA. 5 July 1996, Banjul. He stated that the MEA, because of material and other constraints could not reap the benefits it would have liked to have access to. Bolong Sonko, former Permanent Secretary and Foreign Minister, echoes this view and argues that the MEA as a small ministry with limited resources could not cope with all issues.

⁵⁹ Cited by I.A. Gambari *Party Politics and Foreign Policy: Nigeria Under the First Republic* (Lagos, Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd: 1980), p 1, Calvert, op.cit., p 14.

⁶⁰ O. N.R.Othman, "Five Year Programme for the Ministry of External Affairs- 1989-1994".

MEA sought to entrench its role as a key unit in the mobilisation of external resources. While decision-makers within the Gambian foreign policy set-up recognised the need to stimulate domestic growth at the national level, it was thought that the MEA should complement these efforts by marshalling resources at a bilateral and multilateral level. This would boost domestic efforts and enhance governmental projects to reform the social and other sectors.⁶¹

Consequently, excluding the formal duties mentioned earlier, the MEA had a major role in the determination of realistic policy goals and objectives in accordance with the national interest. Once policy orientations had been identified, the MEA, in co-operation and co-ordination with other Ministries, was to be responsible for intensifying and accelerating specific national goals. The MEA also concentrated on the preparation of ground work, and analysis of policies issues for Ministers representing The Gambia in international summitry.

Moreover, the MEA was also involved in the gathering of research findings on specific countries and issues. Through its overseas missions it served as the external arm of The Gambia and in co-ordination with its headquarters assumed functions relating to protocol affairs. These included visa requests for Gambian diplomats and Ministers on foreign missions, organising state visits of Heads of States to The Gambia, catering for the welfare of Gambians abroad and promoting The Gambia's interests outside its national borders.

It was in the light of its increased diplomatic activities that the MEA was restructured to increase its efficiency and make allowance for the necessary research that would guarantee the professionalism needed. Evidence of The Gambia's diplomatic expansion can be observed in Appendix 5. Conceived as virtually an appendage of the Office of the President in 1965, the MEA suffered from an absence of autonomy. Once the Ministry was officially created in 1968, it was able to steer itself away from its initial lacklustre role as an arm of the Office of the President. Moreover with a competent staff in key positions, the attitude and profile of the MEA evolved, being able to assert its authority as a key player in the conduct of foreign policy. An attempt was made in 1977 on the initiative of the first Permanent Secretary of an independent MEA, Ebou Taal,

⁶¹ Hassan Gibril, "The Review of Foreign Policy", Gambian Embassy, Paris, 105, Quai Branly, 75015 Paris, 1992.

to compartmentalise the department to ensure professionalism.

Thus evolving from a rather skeletal structure, the new structure comprised four divisions: (i) political affairs; (ii) economic affairs; (iii) conferences and protocol; and (iv) administrative and finance departments. Each department was headed by competent members of the MEA and each of these members had desk officers for specific areas, Commonwealth Affairs, United Nations issues, matters relating to Organisation of African Unity, Africa, Middle East, the United States and the Americas, Europe, Asia, the European Economic Community, the Economic Commission for Africa, ECOWAS, the OMVG, etc.⁶² Ten years later, in 1987, the MEA was further restructured by the then Permanent Secretary, Othman, to reflect progress garnered in a decade and qualitative differences in terms of functional competence. While nomenclature may differ from one Permanent Secretary to another the broad activities remain the same. The divisions were:

- Political and Legal Affairs
- Division of Documentation and Interpretation
- Division of Administration and Finance
- Division of International Economic Co-operation

The creation of these division was intended to increase in-depth specialisation and initiate advice by the MEA on different areas affecting The Gambia's foreign policy.⁶³ In the existing secondary literature discussion of the importance of the MEA, its role within the decision-making structure, its aims and goals in the general mission of foreign policy determination and its interaction with other ministries is, at best descriptive, at worse perfunctory.⁶⁴ Moreover, the different personalities that have empowered the ministries are left out, especially in the context of small developing states when personality takes precedence over policies.

In Touray's list of interviews he catalogues three principal interviewees: Lamin Kiti Jabang, former Minister of External Affairs, Babacar Ba, Counsellor at the Senegalese High Commission in Banjul, and another

⁶² Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

⁶³ Correspondence, Ousman Othman, 27 August 1997.

⁶⁴ Touray, *op. cit.*, pp 65-6.

Senegalese officer whose name was withheld upon request. Thus his chapter on decision-making suffers from a paucity of factual detail. Although Touray adds that these were selective, he fails to portray the salience of these interviews, and this consequently weakens the content of his chapter since he hardly departs from theoretical confines to distinguish the distinctive style of decision-making in The Gambia.

Likewise Gomez compares the MEA to the Ugandan model and argues that it had little substantive input in decision-making, yet he does not clarify his argument by showing the evolutionary structure of the MEA and its relative autonomy as a ministry in its own right.⁶⁵ Since Gomez's thesis concentrated on the first ten years of The Gambia's foreign policy, it is undeniable that a lot of his findings have become obsolete as the international system diversifies and new challenges emerge. Nonetheless the countless foreign policy choices formulated since the conception of the MEA in 1968 could not have been made without its input, directly or indirectly.

Cognisant of The Gambia's limited resources, the MEA was determined to use the democratic tradition of The Gambia to stimulate aid from countries world-wide. The MEA saw the democratic culture installed since independence as an asset unique to few countries. The respect afforded to Jawara was another component that decision-makers sought to use to maximise economic gains. In addition to this distinctiveness, is the small size of The Gambia, which discourages it from nurturing any territorial ambitions vis-à-vis its neighbours.

Finally, the liberal economic and trade policies adopted by The Gambia were to be made another of The Gambia's valuable hallmarks. Given these distinctive features of The Gambia, its uniqueness in every respect should be adequately emphasised. This task was directly incumbent on the MEA and its Foreign Service. Its overriding mission was not only to sell The Gambia's image abroad but also to utilise its distinctive character to maximise opportunities in terms of external assistance, aid and investment.⁶⁶

For the MEA it was important for countries sharing similar democratic

⁶⁵ Gomez, *op.cit.*, pp 231-252

⁶⁶ Othman, "Five Year Programme for The Ministry of External Affairs- 1989-1994". External Affairs document, 30 March 1989, p 2.

and Islamic ideals to be convinced of the need to give full support to The Gambia, confronted as it was by the gloomy prospects of poverty and underdevelopment. The economic domain was considered a major determinant of foreign policy in The Gambia and the need to develop strong economic and technical ties within the international system was paramount.

Thus in conjunction with the MEA's division of International Economic Co-operation and other economic ministries such as Finance and Trade and Economic Planning, overseas missions were to embark on a campaign whereby the mobilisation of external resources was given the immediacy it deserved. Consequently, it is evident that both The Gambia's political and economic objectives had a single goal, the need to tap as much external assistance as possible. Political goals, whilst genuine, were geared to serve this single purpose.

The dependency factor is all too relevant in the case of The Gambia where domestic growth, domestic stability, even domestic credibility were heavily aligned with the successes resulting from the mobilisation of resources. Schraeder's analysis on the irrelevance of the dependency factor is erroneous when one looks at The Gambia.⁶⁷ The end of the Cold War has in effect not only reduced alternatives available to African countries in terms of external assistance, it has also crystallised the problems relating to underdevelopment and made obvious their immediacy.

- Internal structure of the MEA – policies and personalities.

The four divisions mentioned earlier were important components of the internal structure of the MEA. These divisions were also established so that they could individually service bilateral meetings depending on the issue at hand. A Principal Assistant-Secretary working under the supervision of a Deputy Permanent Secretary headed each division. The Assistant-Secretary was given assignments, which he/she submitted to the Permanent Secretary. The permanent secretary edited the final draft and submitted it to the minister. The latter modified the final text either by adding or deleting certain points.

The Minister of External Affairs had a broad function. He defined

⁶⁷ Schraeder (1997) op. cit., p 507, The Gambia's chronic dependency on external assistance

policies, oversaw the ministry, managed the Foreign Service and advised the Head of State on different policy issues and priorities for The Gambia. The Minister relied heavily on the functional competence of his staff within the MEA. This is because unlike other African countries such as Sierra Leone, Ghana and Senegal, Gambian Foreign Ministers have been limited in terms of academic qualities. They have not been technocrats and therefore analysis and views on foreign policy issues are invariably shaped and fashioned by the proclivities and abilities of the Permanent Secretary.

The Permanent Secretary was the chief adviser to the minister. He has also the administrative and technical head of the ministry. He prepared and managed the budget. The deputy permanent secretary could replace the permanent secretary in his absence. According to Omar Njie, any Head of Department could stand in for the Permanent or Deputy Permanent Secretary. With increased professionalism the role of the Assistant Secretary become less awesome compared to the early 1960s when the MEA was an arm of the President's Office. The Assistant Secretary could prepare briefs, analyse foreign policy issues and even initiate policies. Thus even with relative professionalism, the absence of resources in manpower resulted in senior officials assuming accumulated posts, occasionally leading to bureaucratic mayhem or lack of co-ordination. Zartman⁶⁸ and Skurnik⁶⁹ reiterate the vexing problem of lack of co-ordination.

Whilst the Gambian MEA is criticised for its lack of co-ordination, this type of disorganisation is symptomatic of many foreign ministries in the developing world. It can be attributed to personality divisions, even more exacerbated in small states where allegiances are easily forged. It is not unusual for ambassadors to bypass their foreign ministries and deal directly with the Head of State.⁷⁰ Lack of preparation also suggests that the requisite groundwork, on which every policy formulation is dependent, remains largely deficient since it is done either half-heartedly or not at all. This partly explains

demonstrates the importance of the dependency factor. See Chapter 8 for more details

⁶⁸ Zartman, (1966), op. cit., pp 66-67.

⁶⁹ Skurnik, op. cit., p 65.

⁷⁰ Mr Ebou Ndure, official at the MEA for several years, former chief of protocol 1991-1994, states that this tendency of dealing with the Head of State instead of the Foreign Minister is quite tricky. Needless to say this could provoke tension within the ministry, especially since the Foreign Minister as head of the ministry might feel alienated. Personal interview with Ebou Ndure, former chief of protocol, 19 July 1996, Fajara.

instances when Gambian officials would go to meetings with a specific portfolio and instructions on how to vote, only to be instructed in an impromptu manner from Banjul to change the initial policy line. Disorganisation and lack of co-ordination affect the whole decision-making unit, since inaccurate or incomplete information could be passed on to the Head of State.

In addition, small, poorly endowed states like The Gambia are often faced with choice dilemma owing to the fact that they are lobbied by states that are invariably in a position to offer the state potential assistance. According to Dabo, the impression that other government officials had of the MEA, was that its competence was not always proven. He blames this on the MEA's structural mechanism. Its staffing composition left a lot to be desired, both qualitatively and quantitatively.⁷¹

Nonetheless the competence and abilities of the MEA to perform its primary role of foreign policy formulation can be enhanced or hindered by the personalities in key positions within the Ministry. The background work conducted by the MEA is not visible to the general public or civil servants in other ministries. Thus officials at the MEA are usually (wrongly) branded as apathetic in their foreign policy duties. The MEA prepares the framework for co-operation necessary for the mobilisation and in-flow of external capital. As Taal argued, while the sum total of this ground and background work remains invisible, it is technical and economic Ministries that tend to enjoy the publicity with the realisation of completed projects.⁷²

Hence the Heads of these Ministries would address the House of Representatives as well as inaugurate road projects, etc.⁷³ For instance, with the severance of diplomatic ties in 1981 between The Gambia and Libya, the latter almost abandoned projects that were earmarked for The Gambia, e.g., the construction of a Central mosque in the capital city of Banjul. Jabang and his then Permanent Secretary, Ebou Taal took the project up and solicited assistance from the Saudis. Taal took plans and projects to Nairobi where the OAU summit was held in 1981. After the meeting, Jabang and Taal flew to Jeddah and presented these plans to the Foreign Minister who had excellent

⁷¹ Interview with Bakary Dabo, 6 February 1996, London

⁷² Loc. cit.

⁷³ Loc. cit.

working relations with Jabang and uncharacteristically to Saudi custom, received the two men in the holy month of Ramadan.⁷⁴ The project was approved on the spot with the Saudi government agreeing to commence construction with an initial advance of \$30 million.⁷⁵ Yet at the opening ceremony, the contribution of the MEA was not acknowledged.⁷⁶

In a similar vein, Taal attests to the influence of the MEA in other political arenas outside of The Gambia. One example was the promotion of the Human Rights cause which The Gambia is associated with. Taal and his assistant Hassan Ceesay launched the idea at the 1977 OAU summit in Khartoum. It started off as "Steve Biko Day" and was subsequently renamed "African Martyrs' Day", now celebrated annually. Together with the Assistant Secretary General, Peter Onu, Taal drafted the Khartoum declaration. He recalled that its initial acceptance by other African countries was lukewarm, but it was subsequently presented at other summits, Monrovia, Freetown and Nairobi. Thus once the idea was launched, the Ministry of Justice became involved and joint ministerial meetings were convened in Banjul. It is perhaps the fact that concrete policies are conducted outside the limelight of the public and other Ministries that gives the MEA a more "routinised" image, a ministry responsible for day to day administrative and protocol affairs rather than the core issues of foreign policies.

The decision to recognise Israel at the height of the peace talks in the Middle East could be interpreted as a positive policy initiative emanating from the Foreign Ministry. Njie argues that some ministers were angry at The Gambian position towards Israel. It seemed right to restore diplomatic ties with Israel especially since Egypt, with whom The Gambia was siding, had already initiated peace talks with Israel.⁷⁷ While the policy was an initiative, the timing according to the Foreign Minister was not propitious.⁷⁸ From this statement and a general study of foreign policy choices and decisions, it would appear that the model adopted is that of the rational choice model. This involves the formulation of policies on the basis of sound analysis, with a deliberate focus on

⁷⁴ Loc. cit.

⁷⁵ Loc. cit.

⁷⁶ Loc. cit.

⁷⁷ Personal interview with Omar Njie, Banjul 15 July 1996.

⁷⁸ Personal interview with Omar Njie, Banjul 15 July 1996.

politico-economic benefits, and an avoidance of potential losses or risks.⁷⁹

Problems of co-ordination whilst pervasive in small undeveloped ministries, should not obscure the positive aspects and achievements of the MEA and some of its seasoned, capable diplomats and civil servants such as Othman, Bah, Gibril, Sowe Manneh, Diarra, Sallah, and Taal. Taal, a career diplomat, and bilingual in French and English, took it upon himself to set out foreign policy guidelines for The Gambia. The final product was published under his editorship, entitled "Foreign Policy Guidelines of The Gambia".

Although this might seem a prerequisite in the general conduct of foreign policy, to this day it is the only official document that sets out to explain some of government's key external policies. Taal had a wide horizon and an insight of what The Gambia was supposed to achieve in its foreign policy objectives. By virtue of efficiency in his task as permanent secretary, he managed to make his superiors look good.⁸⁰ The sheer intensity of diplomatic activities undertaken under the Taal/Jabang tandem was highly impressive.

Undoubtedly, the efficacy of African foreign ministries can only be improved if governments invest more in the proper training of staff. The role of foreign ministries in small, weak states is vital and it is imperative that governments invest in them to be able to reap positive outcomes from their external relations and foreign economic policies. Inadequate resources are a disincentive to staff, however devoted, and foreign policy goals are likely to lose their overriding importance.⁸¹

- Ministerial Input

The conduct of foreign policy should hardly be the prerogative of a single actor. The input of the Minister as well as his personality are of immense importance.

⁷⁹, Timothy M. Shaw & Olajide Aluko, Nigerian Foreign Policy, Alternative Perceptions and Projections p 82.

⁸⁰ Information supplied by a key Gambian official who worked with Taal and wishes to remain anonymous.

⁸¹ The other criticism levelled against the MEA is that it tends to shy away from complex issues to concentrate on protocol affairs. Omar Ndure, former Chief of Protocol, 1991-1994, claims that this assessment is unfair since diplomacy by its very nature remains incomplete without its protocol character. Bakary Darbo and Momodou Bobb, former chief of protocol, and Gambian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, aver that protocol is an important element in the functions of the MEA. They assert that because protocol affairs are more visible and therefore more easily quantified, they should not be overstated in the light of the

His perception and knowledge of international relations may enhance or affect policies. For instance former Minister of External Affairs, Sey, avers that The Gambia's policies towards Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War were disapproving partly because of his distaste for the Iraqis. Given the Minister's idiosyncrasies, he advised the government to give full support to the Saudis and the Kuwaitis.⁸² Jawara also asserted the importance of the Minister of External Affairs regarding him as the core of his main advisers.⁸³ Sey believes that when the minister has the trust of the President, foreign policy becomes a routine matter.⁸⁴ The Minister of External Affairs should be in a position to understand the security interest and the national interest.⁸⁵ Consequently he works in close dialogue with the President. He is expected to keep the latter informed on all issues.⁸⁶

In the 30 years of The Gambia's independent external relations, there have been a number of foreign ministers and these have differed in personality, experience and knowledge of international affairs. Alieu Badara Njie, commonly known as A.B. Njie was The Gambia's first resident High Commissioner to Senegal. He was appointed Foreign Minister in 1968, following the creation of the MEA. Between 1974 and 1977, he was to resume direction of the MEA. A.B. Njie is believed to have been the driving force behind The Gambia's policy of "multilateralisation of dependency". Cognisant of the importance of the economy in foreign affairs, his aim was to put The Gambia in a situation where it could take full advantage of the particularities of a small under-endowed state. He believed that The Gambia, given its weak economy, should not hesitate to accept aid from potential donors irrespective of their ideological leanings.

His policies were characterised by his own sense of pragmatism. Under his tenure as Foreign Minister, he travelled extensively to communist countries like the People's Republic of China (PRC), soliciting much needed financial assistance. Gambian relations with countries like the PRC and Taiwan became

actual desk work the Ministry is involved in its daily duties.

⁸² Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara

⁸³ Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawara, 6 March 1996, Haywards Heath

⁸⁴ Personal interview with Omar Sey, Fajara 9 September 1996.

⁸⁵ Loc. cit.

⁸⁶ Personal interview with Omar Sey, Fajara 9 September 1996. This view is reiterated by

more intense as a result of A.B. Njie's contribution. It was partly through his influence that The Gambia sought to court friends outside traditional colonial affinity. A Wollof, and therefore sharing ancestral origins with Senegal, he was a true Senegambian and advocated closer ties with Senegal.

He was conservative in terms of The Gambia's relations with Senegal and always felt that geographical and ethnic affinities between the two peoples should be used as a stepping stone for future relations. Conscious of size constraints, which The Gambia had to contend with, he always advocated an assertive policy in which The Gambia should make its voice, heard even where diplomatic representation was concerned.⁸⁷ He died during the 1982 election campaign, after being recalled from retirement to assist the government.

Assan Musa Camara pursued his policy of extending The Gambia's circle of friends. His contribution was instrumental in the resolution of the border conflict in Kantora (his constituency) that juxtaposed The Gambia and Senegal. Camara was a key man in the Jawara years and held several significant ministerial posts including Vice-President between 1972-81. As Vice-President during the eventful period leading to the 1981 coup, Camara played a significant role in the negotiations leading to the Senegalese intervention and subsequent negotiations.⁸⁸

He was one of the key players that negotiated the Senegambia Confederation in the aftermath of the July 1981 insurrection. As foreign minister Camara had to deal with the 1970 incident that led to the extradition of Guinean dissidents and the subsequent rapprochement between Guinea and The Gambia.⁸⁹ He handled the The Gambia's two Chinas policy and condemned the exclusion of Taiwan from the UN in 1971. Camara subsequently resigned from office after a disagreement with Jawara and later formed his own party, the Gambia People's Party in 1986. In 1996, the military government of Captain Jammeh banned the GPP like the rest of the old guard parties (PPP, NCP), in the run-up to the 1996 presidential elections.

Omar Njie, personal interview, 15 July 1996, Banjul

⁸⁷ Personal interview with Abdou Njie, former governor of Central Bank, 12 August 1996, Fajara.

⁸⁸ J.A. Wiseman and Elizabeth Vidler "The July 1994 coup d'état in The Gambia: the end of an era? *The Round Table* (1995) 333, p 61.

⁸⁹ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, , August 1996, Banjul

Lamin Kiti Jabang succeeded Camara. Jabang was previously parliamentary secretary at the MEA. He was the longest serving Foreign Minister, having held the post from 1977-1987. Although his academic capabilities were limited in comparison to his successor, Omar Sey, his experience as a junior minister when he established contacts, gave him a relative edge when he assumed the function of Minister of External Affairs.⁹⁰ What Jabang lacked in academic abilities, he made up for in terms of personal, informal, diplomatic networks. He was reputed to be courteous, friendly, and approachable, a man who knew the people he was dealing with. His personality helped more than hindered in his duties as Minister of External Affairs. His strong personal affinities with his colleague Moustapha Niasse, Senegalese Foreign Minister during the confederal years, helped to enhance bilateral relations with Senegal. He played a considerable role in the establishment of the confederation and Senegambian relations were at their highest point during the Jabang/Niasse period.⁹¹

During his years in office as Foreign Minister, he had to deal with a broad array of foreign policy issues. He was head of the delegation at the OAU summit in 1982, which divided African states over the unexpected presence of the Polisario. Although The Gambia advocated a policy of self-determination for all people, he was staunchly opposed to the forceful entry of the Polisario as part the membership of the OAU. He was however, generally considered a subtle diplomat.⁹²

Jabang was succeeded by Omar Sey, who was appointed Minister of External Affairs in 1987, a post he held until the military take-over in 1994, and the subsequent purge of government ministers and key civil servants under Jawara's rule. In terms of academic qualifications and knowledge of international relations, Sey was perhaps The Gambia's most intellectual Foreign Minister. His critics assert that his extensive travelling, though inescapable for a Foreign Minister, meant that he could not give his full potential to the Ministry. His ascent to office coincided with the breakdown of the Senegambia confederation. A key decision-maker observed that Sey was considered by his

⁹⁰ Personal interview with Galandou Goree Njie, , 13 August 1996, Serrekunda

⁹¹ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

⁹² Personal interview with Galandou Goree Njie, 13 August 1996, Serrekunda.

Senegalese peers to be anti-Senegalese and intransigent, a marked difference between himself and his predecessor.

The Gambian Minister, unlike his colleagues in Ghana, Senegal and Sierra Leone does not necessarily have to hold strong academic qualifications to establish himself. Quite often, particularly in the aftermath of independence, ministers were appointed on the basis of their allegiance to the party rather than their intellectual considerations. Thus the bulk of the duties fell to the Permanent Secretary. Given the shortage of skilled personnel and the small size of the country it is important to observe whether personalities have had any bearing on foreign policies. The relevance of foreign economic aid to The Gambia is such that Ministers and Permanent Secretaries alike would gear their policies towards that goal. However, the success, scope and expediency taken as a given in the general conduct of foreign policy is ultimately dependent on the charisma, diplomatic skill and dedication of the individual. While intellectual skills may be important, The Gambian example has shown that experienced ministers can be skilful diplomats, empowering their position with all the vital qualities relevant to a good statesman.

The Gambian foreign service, observer or key player in policy formulation?

The Foreign Service is a subsidiary of the Foreign Ministry. If allowed to perform its role properly, the Foreign Service should be the external arm of the MEA. It is an important element in the overall decision-making unit. The role of the Foreign Service is chiefly to promote, project and implement foreign policy determined and decided by the MEA in co-ordination with the President's Office and other economic ministries such as Finance and Trade and Economic Affairs.⁹³ Yet the MEA recognised the fact that the Foreign Service had in the past suffered considerable neglect.⁹⁴ Observation in the course of this study has revealed that the role of the Gambian Foreign Service to a great extent needs to be conceptualised in a purely prescriptive framework. To date, very little research has been done on the Foreign Service of African states.⁹⁵

⁹³ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

⁹⁴ Ousman Othman work on the MEA, op. cit., pp 4-9

⁹⁵ A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, 'Diplomacy and diplomats: the formation of foreign cadres in Black

Given the almost umbilical dependence between coloniser and colonised, the establishment of a mission in the territory of the coloniser is seen as vital to the continuity of relations between the two. Geographical representation depends on the government of the day and the area and extent of rapport it wishes to establish with the host country. The economic factor and the need for greater economic gains have in many instances necessitated the opening of an embassy. Nonetheless the cost of running a mission for a small state is considerable as can be observed in Appendix 6 regarding estimates for the London Mission. The High Commission in Dakar seemed a mandatory requirement in the light of the special relationship between the two states. The title High Commission instead of Embassy is atypical among non-Commonwealth countries, and is a reflection of the affinities between The Gambia and Senegal.

Ba, the former Gambian High Commissioner in Dakar, acknowledges the fact that although protocol duties are part of the daily functions of the mission, these are radically different from the London mission where 70 per cent of its duties are protocol-related. He states that since 1994 (following the military take-over), the mission has had to play a crucial role.⁹⁶ The High Commission in Dakar is involved with the preparation of all the groundwork for meetings and conferences between delegates of both countries. The closure of the borders in 1993 over the irksome and perennial subject of smuggling intensified the involvement of the mission in Dakar in all the main talks to diffuse the tension and normalise the flow of trade between The Gambia and Senegal.

The High Commission in London is perceived to be of considerable importance given the colonial heritage. However, although the embassy offers other functions through its tourist office, its role in formulating policies and putting forward proposals to the Foreign Mission is rather limited. London was widely perceived as a transitory passage for a great number of ministers and key government officials. Consequently, the daily routine of the mission was circumscribed by innumerable trips to the airport to either collect or drop off government officials depending on their itinerary.⁹⁷ This is due to the fact that

Africa', op. cit., p 279.

⁹⁶ Personal interview with Njojou Ba, 28 August 1996, Dakar.

⁹⁷ Personal interview with Njojou Ba, 28 August 1996, Dakar. This view is one that the

ambassadors are designated by the Head of State, and ambassadors or high commissioners with key information on their host countries tend to owe allegiance more to the leader than to the Minister of External Affairs. In addition, ambassadorships rank high on the bureaucratic scale of key positions within the bureaucracy and in certain cases consider the Minister of External Affairs as a peer, not a superior. It is a popular perception that politically appointed diplomats tend to show more allegiance to the Head of State than to the Foreign Ministry.

Bobb refutes the allegation that the Embassy in London was primarily concerned with protocol affairs. The protocol aspect of diplomacy he argues, is visible and needs 'to be seen to be done'. This should not however overshadow the interactions between the government of The Gambia and the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office of which the Overseas Development Agency (ODA) was a subsidiary until the 1997 British elections. Bobb states that relations between Nigeria and Britain were at a low ebb during Babangida's tenure of office.⁹⁸ Consequently, Jawara acted as an intermediary between the two countries through close dialogue between officials of the Gambian Foreign Mission in London and the British Foreign Office. This intervention led to a period of *détente* symbolised by Babangida's visit to the United Kingdom.⁹⁹ The High Commission in London was also concurrently accredited to other countries such as Austria, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, The Vatican, Ireland and Israel.

The Gambian embassy in Brussels was primarily linked with the commercialisation of groundnuts as the main cash crop.¹⁰⁰ With The Gambia's decision to join the ACP states as part of the EEC agreement with African states, the embassy assumed a new *raison d'être*. The establishment of the Brussels embassy came into being with the inauguration of the Lomé Conventions and the creation of the ACP. Economic Ministries were heavily dependent on the Mission in Brussels headed by Taal to advise the government on policy issues to

overwhelming number of officials subscribes to.

⁹⁸ Personal interview with Momodou Bobb, 8 May 1997, London.

⁹⁹ Personal interview with Momodou Bobb, 8 May 1997, London. Sallah argues that due to frequent visits by the Head of State and other government officials to London, considerable time was devoted to protocol duties. However, he states that the protocol aspect of foreign policy must not obscure the fact that the High Commission participated at several levels including the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Foundation, Tourist Promotion, student affairs and the general welfare of Gambians in the United Kingdom.

¹⁰⁰ Personal interview with Omar Njie, 15 July 1996, Banjul

be adopted within the ACP and the OAU.¹⁰¹

The Brussels mission not only advised the relevant Ministries on different policy guidelines, it also defended The Gambia's interests within the ACP/EEC negotiations. For instance, The Gambia exports groundnut cake to EEC countries. However, some EEC countries claimed that that groundnut cake contained an excessively high level of aflatoxin, a toxic element that had a harmful effect on their livestock. The Embassy through its Head of Mission, communicated regularly with the Agricultural Ministry in Banjul, and with sufficient background knowledge on the alleged toxic, i.e. aflatoxin, it was able to successfully argue in favour of The Gambia.¹⁰² The Gambia was now in a position to reap benefits from ACP/EEC loans.

The opening of the Gambian embassy in Paris in 1989 could be perceived in similar light. In a city as central as Paris, with a number of key international bodies, such as UNESCO, and given France's key role in West Africa, it was *de rigueur* to open an embassy that would not only cater for the growing Gambian community in France but also take advantage of potential benefits.

Njie avers that the Gambian High Commission in Sierra Leone was established in the interest of African unity and to promote cultural affinity between the two states.¹⁰³ Given Nigeria's political ambitions and its position as the heavyweight economic power in the West African sub-region, it was considered crucial for The Gambia to have some form of diplomatic representation in Africa's most populous country.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, many Gambian students pursued higher studies in Nigeria and it was felt that a mission would serve the interest of the government and that of Gambian nationals.

Although financial constraints were prevalent in the first half of The

¹⁰¹ Correspondence, Taal, 23 August 1997. Taal states that he accompanied and advised the Minister of Economic Planning and Development at all meetings relating to ACP/EEC negotiations, including the signature of the first ACP/EEC convention in Lome. Furthermore, he handled meeting with EEC officials relating to STABEX (Stabilisation of Exports Earnings) from which The Gambia derived considerable benefits.

¹⁰² Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

¹⁰³ Personal interview with Omar Njie, 15 July 1996, Banjul. Mr Galandou Goree Njie (personal interview, 13 August 1996, Serrekunda) expressed the same view.

Gambia's independence, it soon became apparent as diplomatic activities intensified that geographical representation would need to be appraised. Representation in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh, was stimulated by the Islamic factor. In 1974, Sallah was appointed the first Gambian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Oman and Somalia.

By the end of his mission, in 1978, the Arab world had become one of The Gambia's largest external donors, contributing over \$US 80 million in projects such as the Soma/Basse road, Banjul/Serrekunda dual carriage way and the Yundum Airport runaway. The Islamic criterion in Gambian foreign policy is an important factor. The Gambia's membership of the Islamic Conference Organisation and the annual pilgrimage to Mecca by Gambian nationals make representation in the Saudi capital an even more compelling imperative. An Islamic Solidarity Fund was created under the influence of Sallah,¹⁰⁵ which has been involved in several areas relating to charity work in The Gambia.¹⁰⁶

In the post-independence years, the issue of geographical representation became more pressing for some Gambian parliamentarians, particularly regarding representation in the US. The fact that the United Nations has its headquarters in New York was an added incentive to get The Gambia established in what was perceived to be a central and strategic country. The joint foreign policy agreement between The Gambia and Senegal afforded the latter the onus of representing The Gambia in areas where it could not afford diplomatic representation. It was not unusual for Gambian politicians to claim that the interests of The Gambia could only be properly served if it was represented in person. However, the government's policy of pragmatism, meant that it did not feel it worthwhile to spread its tentacles to New York.

Now with fully-fledged embassies in Washington and New York, the pressure on the government to establish a mission in the US has eased. Nevertheless Njie avers that The Gambia has no clear-cut policy as far as the US is concerned. He intimated that they were serving more as consular sections and couriers rather than diplomatic entities. Consequently the embassy in New York could not influence policies in any significant way. He states that The

¹⁰⁴ Personal interview with Galadou Goree Njie, Banjul, 13 August 1996, Serrekunda.

¹⁰⁵ Correspondence, Ousman Sallah, Washington, 1 September 1997.

¹⁰⁶ Correspondence, Ousman Sallah, Washington, 1 September 1997.

Gambia had no policy regarding African Americans. The embassy would send quarterly reports to the Foreign Ministry in The Gambia, but no feedback was received. On the other hand when advice was afforded to the Ministry it was hardly ever followed.¹⁰⁷

Sallah on the other hand refutes this information as inaccurate. He argues that The Gambia's attitude towards African Americans was perceived within the general framework of bilateral relations between The Gambia and the U.S. According to him the publication of "Roots" by Alex Haley reflected the need for The Gambia to foster a special relationship with the African American community in the U.S. The Gambia was one of the first African countries on the initiative of Sallah, the then Head of Mission, to support the idea of an African-American Summit. Sallah subsequently became Chairman of the African Ambassadorial Committee responsible for formulation and implementation of policies on behalf of the Summit.¹⁰⁸ Sallah concludes:

The Gambia has benefited greatly from establishing embassies in both Washington and New York. Any former Gambian diplomat who may suggest that the U.S mission served more as a consular section in which diplomats were couriers is not only cynical, but could not have been an active productive member of the Gambian embassy. Consular work in the U.S Embassy is rather insignificant –limited to the issue of visas to US citizens and extension of Gambian passports.¹⁰⁹

Commercial aspects of foreign missions

In comparison to most foreign missions equipped with commercial divisions, the Gambian Foreign Service is atypical, except for the High Commission in Dakar. In the early 1960s, the High Commission in London had a commercial division, which offered groundnuts and groundnut derivatives to the rest of the world.

¹⁰⁷ Personal interview with Galandou Goree Njie, Serrekunda 13 August 1996, Serrekunda.

¹⁰⁸ Sallah recalls that under his chairmanship several activities such as debt relief for sub-Saharan Africa, One Thousand Teachers for Africa Program, factories and business development, campaign to combat river blindness in sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS containment program. Correspondence, Ousman Sallah, 1 September 1997.

¹⁰⁹ Correspondence, Ousman Sallah, Washington, 1 September 1997. Both Taal and Manneh confirm the importance of the US mission and its contribution to foreign policy particularly under the direction and supervision of Sallah.

The commercial attaché was responsible for advising UK consumers, industries, and also assisting governments in their purchase of goods.¹¹⁰ Establishing a tourism office was also deemed necessary to advise British nationals on holidays in the light of the increase in tourism, a vital industry for The Gambia's weak economy. The promotion of commerce is an important element in the general operation of a mission particularly for small developing states where maximising economic gains is so vital. As Njie argues: "One invests in a mission to reap something out of it".¹¹¹

On a bilateral level, talks, meetings and forums were organised on the initiative of the Brussels mission. Tour operators in Holland were exposed to the benefits of investing in The Gambia. Gambians residing in Holland were able to organise local Gambian masquerade festivals.¹¹² It was through such initiatives that The Gambia became a tourism destination for the Dutch.¹¹³ Similarly contacts with the Belgian national airline, Sabena and its charter subsidiary proved fruitful. Belgian tour operators and journalists were sent to The Gambia at Sabena's expense to gauge tourism prospects.¹¹⁴ Today Sabena is the major scheduled air link between Banjul and European capitals. The embassy in Brussels is responsible for servicing bilateral and multilateral meetings. With its limited resources The Gambia, like most small states, has to opt for a policy of multiple accreditation. In this respect, the embassy in Brussels is accredited to the Benelux countries, Germany and Italy.

In the U.S, several opportunities relating to trade and investment were pursued. Co-operation between the Gambian National Investment Board (NIB) together with the Trade and Investment Board of the United States was encouraged in close collaboration with the African American Institute. Gambian ambassadors also attended a forum known as the Dallas Ambassadors' Forum, whose main role was to promote trade and investment by bringing together ambassadors and businessmen alike.¹¹⁵ On Sallah's initiative several trade and investment activities between The Gambia and the U.S were

¹¹⁰ Personal interview with Omar Njie, 15 July 1996, Banjul

¹¹¹ Loc. cit.

¹¹² Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

¹¹³ Loc. cit.

¹¹⁴ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

¹¹⁵ Correspondence, Ousman Sallah, Washington, 1 September 1997. The latter was invited annually to this event, however, he states that The Gambia ceased to be a party after the events of July 1994.

encouraged. These activities included the Annual Roots Festival in The Gambia, an event supported by Alex Haley's son, William Haley, with sponsorship from Coca-Cola and Macdonalds.¹¹⁶ Other ideas such as the Gambian partnership with the Memphis World Trade Fair to promote trade and investment were encouraged.

Relations between the MEA and its Overseas Missions.

Relationships between the MEA and its Foreign Missions have depended to a large extent on the calibre of diplomats representing The Gambia, particularly at the level of the Head of Mission and Permanent Secretary. In cases where ambassadors themselves have carried more weight than the Permanent Secretary, or the Minister, then the former would have a more determinant role in foreign policy formulation. This was the case between 1974 and 1977 when strong career diplomats such as Taal, at the Brussels mission, Sallah at the Washington mission, and Diara at the Dakar mission assumed the functions of Heads of Mission. Sallah avers that due to the small size of the Foreign Service, Gambian diplomats, unlike their counterparts in other African countries, were in an enviable position since they had sufficient leverage to advise their governments on policy issues and most importantly to formulate policies if they so wished.¹¹⁷

The level of co-ordination between the Brussels mission and the Banjul headquarters was sufficiently regular. Diplomatic reports and other communications were addressed to the MEA, copied to the Permanent Secretary, Minister, and the President.¹¹⁸ Taal contends that he had a direct line of communication with the Ministry of Economic Planning regarding EEC matters, and he would send special reports directly to the Ministry, before subsequently directing copies to the MEA. According to Manneh, directives from the MEA regarding policy actions to be adopted by the African Groundnut Council, an intergovernmental organisation, involved in the production,

¹¹⁶ Correspondence, Ousman Sallah, Washington, 1 September 1997. The Roots Festival celebrates Haley's books "Roots". African Americans are given the opportunity to visit The Gambia and explore culture and historical notions of the slave trade as depicted in Haley's "Roots". Today, the festival has become more commercialised as The Gambia through its Tourism Ministry, tries to secure more tourism and investment prospects for The Gambia.

¹¹⁷ Correspondence, Ousman Sallah, 1 September 1997.

promotion and sale of groundnuts, were few.¹¹⁹

Taal admits that feedback on reports from the MEA were not always forthcoming, though urgent and vital matters received prompt attention.¹²⁰ He states however, that the economic Ministries were more communicative than the MEA.¹²¹ Taal goes on to suggest that the special mission of the Brussels Embassy, primarily related to trade and economic development, might help to explain the interest of the economic and technical Ministries.¹²²

The calibre of diplomats within the Foreign Service has controlled the level of responsibility and independence enjoyed. With the expansion of the Gambian Foreign Service, the number of career diplomats increased. However, there is evidently a patent need for more skilled and experienced diplomats. The increase in political appointees in African diplomacy as a whole exacerbates the conflict between career diplomats and their political appointee colleagues. There is a popular perception that political appointees tend to be caught up between their ambassadorial duties and their allegiance to the Head of State. There are occasions when it is difficult to differentiate between serving the national interest and serving the Head of State, thus the demarcation line becomes heavily blurred.¹²³

The MEA expects briefings, proposals and recommendations to be put forward to it from the Foreign Service but a number of missions fell short of this basic requirement or provided only episodic reports. According to Njie it was important to screen people sent abroad.¹²⁴ Yet there were evident flaws. The lack of training characteristic of the Foreign Ministry extended to the Foreign Service. Only a handful of its personnel were highly trained career diplomats and even less had a command of European languages outside of English. However, a few individuals, all career diplomats have empowered their missions

¹¹⁸ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

¹¹⁹ Correspondence, Ebou Manneh, 27 August 1997

¹²⁰ Loc. cit.

¹²¹ Loc. cit.

¹²² Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

¹²³ Abdoulaye Mboob, former High Commissioner of The Gambia to Nigeria and Senegal respectively, affirmed in a personal interview that the High Commissioner/Ambassador, is appointed by the Head of State, and as such he is representing the latter. It is important that the High Commissioner does not indulge in anything that would embarrass or compromise the interest of the Head of State. Personal interview with Abdoulaye Mboob, 11 September 1996, Banjul.

¹²⁴ Personal interview with Omar Njie, 15 July 1996, Banjul

and contributed actively to the conduct and content of foreign policy formulation in The Gambia. Thus while the role of the Foreign Service is easily dismissed as merely administrative and protocol-related, its ability to initiate policies on a bilateral or multilateral level should not be underestimated.

The bureaucratic input in foreign policy formulation: other ministries and decision-making.

The Ministry of External Affairs is officially entrusted with the prosecution of foreign policy formulation and execution. However, foreign policy inputs can rarely be linked or traced to a single unit. They are therefore, multidimensional. Foreign policy formulation in The Gambia is a reflection of several inputs, with the MEA as the main executor of decision-making. Agreements are signed by the Foreign Minister, but depending on the nature of the agreement, he might have to step aside for the Agriculture Minister if the matter at hand is agriculturally related.

However with reference to foreign economic policies, the Ministry of Finance and other ministries such as the Ministry of Economic Planning have the requisite expertise to deal with financial institutions like the IMF, World Bank, Agricultural Development Bank, and BADEA.¹²⁵ Economic Ministries are very important in the foreign economic policies of African states. Over the years the MEA has departed from a highly centralised to a more co-ordinated foreign policy.¹²⁶ Although co-ordination still remains haphazard, gone are the days when the MEA shaped all policies both economic and political.

According to Tom Senghore, Former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, this department has an important place within The Gambia's conduct of external relations. In the aftermath of the 1981 coup, it was the Ministry of Finance that suggested that the government should send a

¹²⁵ Personal interview with Bakary Dabo, former Finance Minister, 15 September 1996, London.

¹²⁶ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997. Even speeches were written exclusively by the Assistant Secretary without the necessary guidelines from the President's Office. Consequently, Taal had to adopt a style that suited the President, even though he was more inclined to be influenced by the euphoria of Nkrumaism.

delegation to Arab countries to solicit help.¹²⁷ Former Foreign Minister Sey avers that the MEA would occasionally receive advice from the Ministry of Finance on which countries to court in order to maximise economic returns. Likewise the Ministry of Interior would counsel the MEA not to encourage countries like Libya and the Sudan. The Interior Ministry distrusted the Libyans in particular. However, the MEA advocated a policy of continuous dialogue with these countries rather than keeping them at bay.¹²⁸

Certain officials of the Ministry of Finance have been critical of the MEA. In their eyes the MEA should have demonstrated a more assertive role in foreign policy. It should not only have produced policy statements, it should also have spelt out priorities for government to follow. Insofar as relations with the World Bank and the IMF are concerned, officials at the Finance Ministry insist that this aspect of foreign economic policy was not under the jurisdiction of the MEA. As Calvert mentions regarding the rivalry between the Ministries: "...in practice the rivalry between foreign ministries and finance ministries means that a great deal of diplomatic significance that takes place in the economic sphere is in fact undertaken directly by ministries of finance".¹²⁹

Until the 1980s, the Central Bank, a key institution in monetary policies, played a rather traditional role as government banker and commercial bank, involved chiefly in the printing of money. Its role in economic management was thus a subsequent addition albeit an important one, particularly regarding negotiations with the BWIs. The Central Bank now has a rather extensive part to play in monitoring the financial health of the government, overseeing economic aggregates, and providing statistics. In terms of loan negotiations, the Central Bank plays a very key role. It is fully equipped with the requisite manpower capacity, and it keeps a close track on whatever loans are likely to affect the debt profile of The Gambia.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Personal interview Tom Senghor, former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Banjul, 6 August 1996

¹²⁸ Personal interview with Omar Sey, Fajara, 9 September 1996.

¹²⁹ Calvert, *op. cit.*, p 94.

¹³⁰ Personal interview with Mr Abdou Njie, former Governor of the Central Bank. Njie is a highly seasoned economist with an interesting profile having served as a key civil servant in different capacities with the bureaucratic machinery. He has served under the Ministry of Economic Planning as an economist and under the Ministry of Finance. He was Permanent Secretary for 8 years between 1981-89, and was appointed Governor in 1989. Personal interview with Abdou Njie, 12 August 1996, Fajara..

By virtue of its financial dealings with bilateral and multilateral institutions, the Central Bank has to work in tandem with the Ministry of Finance. However working in concert does not mean that the Central Bank is an appendage of the Finance Ministry. The former is a force and an institution in its own rights. Mamour Jagne, former Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance, claims that there are occasional differences at technical level between the two institutions, but in the final analysis it would be entirely up to the Finance Minister to convince his colleagues in Cabinet before policies are finalised.¹³¹

According to Njie, the Central Bank could be considered in terms of its independence as The Gambia's version of a "Bundesbank", although its independence is rather limited. It can set interest rates, advise the government and cabinet on monetary and financial policies, but the government has got the final say in terms of implementing these policies.¹³²

With reference to the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), the two institutions (Ministry of Finance & the Central Bank) played a key role.¹³³ The decision to fully adopt IMF policies and not take palliatives in the light of The Gambia's poor economic health was a key determinant. Njie avers that there was a great deal of apprehension among key government ministries involved in economic and monetary issues. Cabinet perceived as political suicide the redundancies that SAP could trigger, six months before elections. The President particularly, was reticent and feared that the economy could spiral further out of control. The Ministry of Finance "was basically paddling its own canoe".¹³⁴ Jagne affirms that the positive dividends of IMF policies were almost immediately felt, and that they ushered in a complete liberalisation of the market. The Gambia's Economic Policy, including ERP policies will be more thoroughly explored in Section 2.

In small states where the bulk of foreign policy is actually aid-driven, it

¹³¹ Personal interview with Mamour Jagne., 11 August 1996, Fajara. Mr Jagne has held several key posts within the bureaucracy. A highly trained economist, he has served as Permanent Secretary under the Ministry of Finance and Trade and held the same function under the Ministry of Trade Industry and Employment. He was Governor of the Central Bank for a year. He now works for the International Development Bank.

¹³² Personal interview with Abdou Njie, 12 August 1996, Fajara.

¹³³ For more information see Cooke's thesis on structural adjustment in The Gambia.

¹³⁴ Loc. cit.

would seem logical that government widens its structures to allow other ministries to participate in the conduct of foreign policy. Mboge, former Permanent Secretary, Minister of Agriculture and Secretary General, argues that to see the MEA as the sole actor in policy formulation would be inaccurate.¹³⁵ The Gambia's two Chinas policy adopted in the early 1970s was partly due to the Ministry of Agriculture, who advised the government to extend its circle of friends to include Mainland China. This was because the PRC had embarked on an active policy in African states and concentrated on agricultural developments and other key projects. On the other hand, the nexus of Taiwanese assistance was also on agriculture.

Likewise the Agricultural Ministry provided background information to the Brussels Mission in the 1970s when The Gambia's exports earnings were under threat due to the aforementioned aflatoxin crisis. It was deemed logical in the light of The Gambia's national interest to encourage the PRC so that The Gambia could gain from Chinese *largesse*.¹³⁶ The decision, according to Mboge was justified and beneficial judging by the considerable Chinese input in different fields of development, the construction of a stadium, hospitals, and a hostel, as well as maintaining a strong emphasis in agricultural development and river transportation.¹³⁷

An example of the sort of squabble that can arise between government departments over direction in policy formulation was when the Ministry of Works, which is also the ministry responsible for religious affairs, decided to cater for pilgrimages on their annual trip to Mecca. The MEA was convinced that it was its duty to deal with the Saudi government, oversee the protocols and requirements in terms of visas, etc. The Ministry of Works, perhaps for pecuniary reasons and other fringe benefits, wanted to have the full monopoly to choose guides to accompany the pilgrims. The MEA reluctantly agreed to give the Ministry of Works full control in the management of the Hajj but insisted that the Saudi government would not wish to deal with officials outside the Ministry.¹³⁸ Sey concludes: "It was resolved, but there was a lot of acrimony".¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Personal interview with Francis Mboge, 12 September 1996, Fajara.

¹³⁶ Personal interview with Francis Mboge, 12 September 1997, Fajara.

¹³⁷ Loc. cit.

¹³⁸ Personal interview with Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

¹³⁹ Loc. cit. Njie, actual Minister of External Affairs (Personal interview, 15 July 1996, Banjul) and Ndure both confirm the validity of this squabble between the two ministries.

Thus it could be argued that the need for decentralisation in terms of foreign policy has been properly recognised over the course of time. While the role of other Ministries was at best consultative, at worse perfunctory during the first half of independence, a considerable increase in contribution has been evident. Economic ministries in particular, with the relevant requisite expertise, have demonstrated their abilities to participate in intense diplomatic negotiations and thus contributed to The Gambia success in attracting foreign capital.

Parallels units of decision-making

Cabinet

The foreign policy decision-making role of the Cabinet cannot fairly be ignored. Foreign policy decisions have to go through cabinet and they have to be approved by it. Cabinet Ministers are bound by the principle of collective responsibility.¹⁴⁰ The popular perception is that Parliament and Cabinet are generally feeble entities with little authority, all too often agreeing with the Head of State rather than displaying any form of disapproval. Gambian officials interviewed during the course of this study unanimously accept that Cabinet is a participatory organ in foreign policy.

However some believe that it is more a 'machine of endorsement' than a contributory organ. Dabo subscribes to this view,¹⁴¹ whereas former Foreign Minister Sey asserts that debates in Cabinet are usually very heated, particularly when the issues at hand are related to The Gambia's relations with Senegal.¹⁴² Njie on the other hand avers that the quality of debates in Cabinet up to 1994 was much better than in the post-independence years.¹⁴³ With a

However, Njie attests that the matter was resolved amicably.

¹⁴⁰ Gomez, op. cit., pp 231-2.

¹⁴¹ Personal interview with Bakary Dabo, 15 September 1996, London.

¹⁴² Personal interview with Omar Sey, , 9 September 1996, Fajara

¹⁴³ Personal interview with Galandou Goree Njie, 13 August 1996, Serrekunda. He states that with the nomination of seasoned intellectuals like Bakary Dabo and Hassan Jallow, former Minister of Justice, cabinet debates became more meaningful. Former Vice-President, Minister of Finance and Leader of the opposition National Convention Party (NCP) Sheriff Dibba, says cabinet debates are serious and far from a mere endorsement of government policies. Personal interview with Sheriff Dibba, 29 July 1996, Banjul.

younger, more articulate and intellectual profile, Cabinet has become less of a rubber stamp.¹⁴⁴

Regarding external relations, the MEA prepares cabinet papers and makes recommendations. As already suggested, external policies are not the monopoly of the MEA. Each ministry would bring forward a specific policy depending on its relevance to the Ministry in question. The President would allow each Minister to put his case. Sey contends that Ministers would sometimes react bitterly to what they perceived as The Gambia's submissiveness to Senegal. The President, using his experience and statesmanship would consequently come to the defence of the Foreign Minister.¹⁴⁵

Regardless of this, one issue that Cabinet had to contend with was that regarding Gambian nationals in Libya. Cabinet learnt that Gambian students had occupied the Gambian embassy in Libya in protest against the alleged involvement of the Gambian Ambassador, Musa Darbo, in drug, alcohol, and foreign currency trafficking in Libya. Moreover, the Libyan Police in Sapha were allegedly holding around 200 Gambians. The Libyan Ambassador in Banjul was asked to intervene on behalf of the Gambian government, and ask for the release of the Gambian nationals. In addition to the verbal request, the MEA wrote to the Libyan Ambassador but received no reply. Cabinet was informed that the opposition party (NCP) might be involved with the Libyan government, and that opposition leader Sherrif Dibba had made trips to Libya on the invitation of the Libyan government.

Cabinet had to debate whether to inform the general populace of developments in Libya. It was decided that in the interest of the 1000 or so Gambian students in Libya, government should adopt a cautious stance and not dramatise the affair. It was also suggested that the Minister of External Affairs should give the Libyan Ambassador an ultimatum. The Gambian government decided that either it would get a favourable response from the Libyan government by Wednesday 23rd July 1980, or it would issue a release on the following lines:

Cabinet concludes that the Libyans have some leverage on account of the

¹⁴⁴ Zartman (1966), op. cit., p 67.

assistance they have given to our people for the construction of Mosques and in view also of the many Gambian students and immigrants workers in Libya. When Senegal recently broke off diplomatic relations with Libya the Libyans closed their embassy in Dakar and transferred their sophisticated telecommunications equipment to their embassy in Banjul. The fear was expressed that they might use The Gambia as a base for their activities in Senegal.¹⁴⁶

This is a classic example of the rational model, where the government considers the odds at stake and decided to play it cautiously and not to sever ties with Libya which would have further exacerbated a difficult situation. According to Francis Mboge, Libyan government behaviour in Africa was undesirable. He adds:

Their reputation in the sub-region especially insofar as their relations with Chad were concerned, was distasteful, and this pushed the government to re-think its foreign policy. It appeared that the Libyan government had a definite policy of destabilising Black Africa.¹⁴⁷

Another event brought to Cabinet's attention was the situation in Afghanistan and the Olympic games that were to be held in Moscow in 1980. The Gambian government had suspended cultural relations with the Soviet Union in 1979 after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. With the Olympic Games being held in Moscow, The Gambia debated whether to attend the games. Cabinet concluded that the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan and the Olympic Games in Moscow should be considered separately. Cabinet further decided that a statement should be issued pointing out that the decision of the Gambia National Olympic Committee was not in any way indicative of approval by the Gambian government of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The statement according to Cabinet would make it clear that the Soviet invitation did not compromise the position of The Gambia, since it was extended to the Olympic Committee.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996 Fajara,.

¹⁴⁶ Cabinet conclusion 1980, "Conclusion of a meeting held in the Cabinet room on Saturday 9th July at 12 p.m." present at this meeting were, Sir Dawda Jawara, Assan Musa Camara, L.K. Jabang, H.O. Semega Janneh, and the rest of the Cabinet Ministers.

¹⁴⁷ Personal interview with Francis Mboge, 12 September 1996, Fajara.

¹⁴⁸ Cabinet conclusion, 'Conclusion of a meeting held in the Cabinet room on Tuesday 8th

Cabinet also had to deal with issues like the ratification of the treaty on delimitation of the land boundaries between The Gambia and Senegal, the Algerian earthquake and the issue of The Gambia's contribution towards relief efforts, the issue of suspension of residential permits to Senegalese nationals and so on. These issues were all debated in Cabinet and irrespective of whether Cabinet has an effective role or not, it remains part of the decision-making unit and is thus involved in the implementation of foreign policies. Although these issues were brought to Cabinet attention, the time they occupied was generally brief. The assertion that Cabinet is primarily a rubber stamp institution is therefore not entirely accurate, certainly in the Gambian scenario.

Touray does not account for the role of the Foreign Service, Parliament, and Cabinet in the greater framework of decision-making. In failing to mention these, Touray confines the scope of his chapter on decision-making solely to the MEA, the Head of State and a scanty appraisal of the role of other ministries.¹⁴⁹ Gomez goes a step further than Touray in underlining the importance of Cabinet as a unit of decision-making. Gomez mentions that a number of crucial external decisions such as government's attitude towards the Lomé Convention Agreements, as part of the ACP/EEC negotiations, were partly influenced by cabinet decisions.¹⁵⁰

Parliament

Parliament, due to its legislative (especially in the ratification of treaties) rather than negotiative or diplomatic role, is all too often omitted in the analysis of decision-making. Touray, in his unpublished thesis, recognises the fact that the leadership factor has been a fundamental trait in The Gambia's external relations. Although the Ministry of External Affairs is singled out as the main policy unit, the role of political parties, especially opposition parties is a glaring omission in studies on The Gambia's external relations.

Scholars tend to focus on the role of the executive to the detriment of

April 1980 at 9.30 a.m.', Public Records Office, Banjul.

¹⁴⁹ Touray, op. cit., pp 66-9.

¹⁵⁰ Loc. cit., Gomez, op.cit., p 639

other relevant bodies.¹⁵¹ Due to The Gambia's adoption of parliamentary democracy in the aftermath of independence it is important to consider Parliament as a potential actor in the decision-making process of foreign policy. The importance of Parliament emanates from its role as the people's representative and in that light its views on foreign policy should be a populist reflection.

Exchanges were often limited to trivial issues, personality clashes and name calling. The House of parliament was usually very vocal on domestic issues and foreign policy issues usually related to Senegal. Invariably, parliamentarians complained of Senegalese attitudes towards Gambian farmers and over border incidents, but comments were simply in the form of complaints. Since the 1960s when union between The Gambia and Senegal was advocated as a means of giving The Gambia a more viable status in the light of its small size and population, opposition parties rallied to the Senegambia cause for party political reasons and once elected, sang a different tune.¹⁵² Foreign policy initiatives from Parliament are quite rare.

One clearly divisive issue was the decision to change from driving on the left to the right. The reciprocity act as it was called, met with little approval from nationalist Gambians who perceived this as a clear manifestation of The Gambia towing the line of Senegal in order to effect harmonisation between the Gambian and Senegalese system.¹⁵³ The decision was taken primarily to decrease the number of road accidents and also to increase the flow of trade between the two countries. During the post-independence years, issues pertaining to the Rhodesia crisis in the 1960s and the Nigerian Civil War, and the two China question were debated.¹⁵⁴ However, such matters were usually articulated by parliamentarians such as J.R. Forster.¹⁵⁵

The feebleness of African parliaments appears to be a constant insofar as

¹⁵¹ Olusanya and Akindele (1990) op. cit., pp 159-172.

¹⁵² Senghor, unpublished Ph.D thesis, pp 161-8

¹⁵³ 'Question time in Parliament', *The Gambia News Bulletin* 13 April 1974

¹⁵⁴ 'Question time in the House, question of Red China's U.N. membership', *The Gambia News Bulletin* January 20th 1968, see also 'Question time in Parliament', J.R Forster MP for Banjul Central urged the OAU to find a peaceful solution to the Nigerian conflict in Biafra, *The Gambia News Bulletin* 9th September 1967.

¹⁵⁵ J.R Forster, from the Aku ethnic group, was an MP in the Banjul area. According to Assan Musa Camara he was highly principled and militant politician who took interest in both domestic and international politics.

The Gambia is concerned.¹⁵⁶ Opposition parties have been unable to assert themselves and their contribution is fairly minimal. Wiseman shares this view: "Overall, I would argue, the House does not form the dominant decision-making body within the state, but it does have important effects on the decisions which are made and how they are implemented".¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the primacy of domestic matters demotes foreign policy issues to a secondary position. Parliamentarians to a large extent, articulate the needs of their constituencies.¹⁵⁸ Therefore relations between The Gambia and Nigeria might be a subject of interest to the educated élite and any informed national but this does not in any way address the interest of the majority of the Gambian populace. More recently, particularly in the late 1980s the level of discourse in Parliament has improved due to the calibre of government ministers.¹⁵⁹

Thus it must be argued that parliaments have become redundant institutions, more keen to rubber stamp decisions of the executive rather than act as a participatory active body.¹⁶⁰ Their role as "applaudisseurs", or applauders¹⁶¹ has remained entrenched even in societies where democratic culture is a given. However, their enthusiasm to dilate on domestic politics suggests that the latter take primacy over foreign policy.¹⁶²

Opposition Parties and their Contribution to Foreign Policy

Parliament in The Gambia is a reflection of the weakness of opposition parties. The majority of the opposition parties, like the NCP and GPP, were offshoots of the PPP, and therefore offered little in terms of distinction in ideology, style or real politics. Defections from smaller parties to join the ruling party, invariably for opportunistic reasons, have grossly undermined and weakened the democratic structure in The Gambia. In addition, because of a lack of ideology

¹⁵⁶ 'Parliament debates confederation', *The Gambia News Bulletin* 4 January 1982, 'Question time in Parliament', *The Gambia News Bulletin* 6 July 1981. Akindele makes reference to the feebleness of Parliament in the foreign policy formulation of Nigeria, Akindele (1990), op.cit., pp 159-172.

¹⁵⁷ Wiseman 'The role of the house of representatives in the Gambian political system' in A. Hughes (ed.), *The Gambia: Studies in Society and Politics* (University of Birmingham, Centre of West African Studies, 1991) 86.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p 88.

¹⁵⁹ 'State opening of parliament', *The Point* 30 November 1992. Issues on ERP were discussed at length.

¹⁶⁰ Olusanya and Akindele (1990), op. cit., p 160.

¹⁶¹ Schraeder (1997), op. cit., p 499.

¹⁶² 'Question time in Parliament', *The Gambia News Bulletin* 7 February 1978, 'Question time

or ideological orientations ¹⁶³, the arenas of foreign policy and even domestic policy offer very little alternatives and are almost devoid of confrontation. Indeed, Dibba, the leader of the main opposition party until 1994, confirms that foreign policy is basically consensual.¹⁶⁴ Nonetheless, PDOIS offered a more militant approach to domestic and foreign policies. They criticised Jawara's pro-Western stance as neo-colonial and a 'sell-out'. According to PDOIS, The Gambia's heavy dependence on international aid was partly due to the poor domestic policies and the mismanagement of state resources. In addition, PDOIS strongly condemned the Senegambia confederation, which they regarded as a parasitic institution that benefited the ruling élite at the expense of the masses.

Consensus was clearly manifested when the issue of the Senegambia Confederation was brought before Parliament. There was hardly any divergent opinion, save from the opposition member, Foday Makalo, who walked out during the debate in Parliament.¹⁶⁵ Camara avers that Makalo's action was not a reaction to government policy towards Senegal, it was a matter of principle because he complained that the NCP as the major opposition party was not included in the preliminary talks. Perhaps the main reason for the lack of effective participation by the NCP should be interpreted in its correct context. Sheriff Dibba, as leader of the NCP, was held in custody for alleged involvement in the July 1981 insurrection. Their position thus compromised, this could explain the relative restraint exhibited by the NCP.

The weakness of opposition parties in The Gambia has resulted in a de facto one party state. Opposition parties tend to focus on personalities rather than policies. The fact that the majority of the opposition parties, the NCP, and GPP were off-shoots of the former ruling PPP party, could explain the absence of a strong ideological message offered by contending parties. Even with key policies such as Senegambia, opposition parties failed to come up with viable alternatives and thus gave the government sufficient elbowroom to formulate policies.

in Parliament', *The Gambia News Bulletin* 5 February 1976

¹⁶³ Wiseman in Hughes, p 87. He talks of a lack of "any clear ideological division" among the different opposition parties. The argument here is very much in line with that of Wiseman, since empirical findings have revealed that there was no perceived ideology in Gambian politics until the advent of the leftist party PDOIS, which until 1996 had no parliamentary representation.

¹⁶⁴ Personal interview with Sheriff Dibba, Leader of the Opposition Party, the National Convention Party (NCP) 29 July 1996, Banjul.

CONCLUSION

Quite clearly, the decision-making machinery of the Gambia is rather broad, involving many organs from the Head of State to Parliament. Undoubtedly foreign policy issues can be discussed, shaped and influenced by any of the organs listed above. The important thing is, which organ is most influential in policy formulation? This study has revealed the incontestable role of the Head of State in foreign policy. The reasons for this can be traced to the pre-independence era.

From independence in 1965 Jawara was at the forefront of decision-making of The Gambia's external relations. In that vein it is understandable that most of his colleagues in government had stated that he enjoyed a wealth of experience and knowledge. Jawara, as was distinctive of first generation leaders, conjointly became the "father of the nation" when assuming the levers of statehood. The fact that The Gambia was in a singular situation in terms of its size and geographical future meant that as a leader he had to demonstrate an even greater control of leadership. His long tenure in office as Head of State witnessed numerous events on the international scene. Successes, failures and diplomatic gaffes were all to a varying degree part of Jawara's legacy. However, inasmuch as personal rule is often equated with authoritarianism, it would be inaccurate to suggest that Jawara ruled erratically either in domestic or foreign policy.¹⁶⁶

The function of Head of State invariably extends to that of leader of a political party. Jawara's role, like that of many of his peers as leader of a political party, was a sign of the dominant role he was to play in government.¹⁶⁷ His contribution to foreign policy was indeed considerable. His resistance in the face of pressure in the early 1960s to any binding relationship with Senegal, thus promoting the distinctive character of the Gambian people.

The Ministry of External Affairs, given its responsibility in the prosecution and execution of policies, has been a key determinant in the conduct of The Gambia's external relations. The Ministry has developed from the

¹⁶⁵ 'Parliament debates confederation', *The Gambia News Bulletin* 4 January 1982

¹⁶⁶ Wiseman in Hughes, op.cit., p 83.

¹⁶⁷ Zartman(1966), op. cit., p 65.

rudimentary structures of the post-independence years. However, due to constraints in expertise and resources, the Ministry's ability to effectively initiate policies is severely circumscribed. In general, the effectiveness of the Ministry tends to depend on the personality at the helm. Knowledge of international relations although important, is not entirely sufficient. Like other Ministries, the Foreign Ministry is characterised by its quibbles over personality issues, which in a small Ministry, can be easily polarised and thus limit efficacy.

The structural set-up, though improved, still displays a number of inadequacies. Such limitations amplify the problems of co-ordination and also confine the ability of the Ministry to articulate coherent, core policies that could enable The Gambia to solicit assistance from other countries. Moreover, the Ministry can only work within the parameters that government sets. It is therefore incumbent on government to allocate the requisite resources to ameliorate the efficacy of the Ministry. Its role in protocol affairs should not be dismissed as peripheral and overbearing, since protocol duties are also a crucial part of any country's diplomacy

The structural unit of foreign policy, though somewhat defective and functioning within severe limitations, is also capable of formulating meaningful policies that are relevant to The Gambia's needs and its objectives. Paradoxically, the inadequate structure of the Foreign Ministry during The Gambia's thirty odd years of independence has not greatly incapacitated the quality of decisions and choices formulated on behalf of The Gambia.

CHAPTER 6: The Gambia's African Relations: the Imperatives of Economic and Political Unity

Intra-African relations in all its forms: social, political and economic, has been a key factor in the wider agenda of African leaders in the aftermath of independence. The need to co-operate with African states immediate or remote is a guiding principle in African international relations. Organisations such as the OAU were indeed designed to reflect the necessity of African unity in order to foster a climate of co-operation, peace and stability in the African continent. Pan-Africanist ideals *à la Nkrumah* have remained still-born, yet in the absence of a truly continental unity, African leaders have come to realise that the stability of the continent is the responsibility of the leaders and the people themselves.

The new world equilibrium following the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar structure between the two superpowers is gradually shifting. Africa, with its endemic problems of civil and ethnic strife, malnutrition, disease, corruption, coups d'état, instability and unaccountable governments, has become less of a priority for Western governments, and more of a preoccupation for African leaders. The new phase should be seen in the light of current trends in Zaire and the prominent part played by South Africa to facilitate the end of Mobutu's despotic rule, ushering in Laurent Kabila's new regime. One may also look to the political role of regional blocs like ECOWAS and its military wing, ECOMOG, and to the promotion of stable government in countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone in the West African region. Henceforth, solutions towards the promotion of peace in Africa cannot and should not be delegated to external forces.

Having briefly looked at Africa's international relations as a premise to an understanding of The Gambia's foreign policy within the African framework, it is important firstly to analyse The Gambia's attitude towards Africa in terms of concentric circles. Secondly, The Gambia's relations within the West African sub-region have been an important hallmark of its foreign policy conduct. Consequently, the need to examine the motives of decision-makers behind The Gambia's deliberate policy of rapprochement and pragmatism with its neighbours is a component of this study. Thirdly, The Gambia's role within regional organisations such as the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), ECOWAS, and the OMVG will be briefly

examined. Fourthly, in the wider African context, both in terms of its economic and political objectives, The Gambia's contribution to continental groupings such as the OAU, its idealistic foreign policy stance within that organisation and towards liberation movements will be given some attention. The turbulent relationship with Libya within the wider African periphery is also worthy of attention, since it underlines The Gambia's policy of asserting itself as a small state not only within its immediate circle but also in a much wider framework.

The Gambia and Africa

The small size of The Gambia and its rather precarious geographical position have afforded it permanent national attributes. Moreover, these national attributes have created a prefixed image both in terms of how The Gambia perceives itself and how countries perceive it far and near. Conscious of its limitations, The Gambia is cognisant of the fact that territorial ambitions of whatever complexion are simply not a viable aspiration that decision-makers can nurture. Moreover, The Gambia is not seen as a threat to any of its neighbours (with the exception of Senegal) and in that light, the rivalry present between African states and African leaders particularly in the post-independent years is absent in The Gambia's relations with other countries and their leaders. The Gambia was also lacking in the radical ideology portrayed by Guinea, Ghana, or some other African countries. Its brand of diplomacy was moderate and conciliatory both in form and content and the former Gambian leader conveyed this distinctive style of diplomacy in his interactions with African states and in his general comportment.

At the same time, conscious of its inability to make an impact on the international system, The Gambia nonetheless adopted a more assertive role within the African continent, particularly vis-à-vis the immediate West African sub-region. Figure 2 is indicative of The Gambia's position within West Africa. Yet in the wider African arena, The Gambia also sought to make its presence felt and it is particularly within that arena that sovereignty of states is strongly asserted. Irrespective of its small size and the arbitrary nature of its location, decision-makers felt the need to reaffirm the sovereignty of The Gambia as an equal state. Othman confirms: "it is important to make our presence felt in an independent and sovereign nature".¹ Yet while the limitations of size

¹ Othman, op. cit., p. 3.

and other constraints seemed overbearing in the wider international setting, they were utilised resourcefully, as if to underscore the distinctiveness of The Gambia, in terms of its democratic culture, its proclivity to peace, and its respect for human and individual rights.

This illustration is missing in the original.

Figure 2: The Gambia setting within the wider West African sub region (from Hughes 1991).

Cognisant also of the weakness of African economies, and the need for government to obtain resources to supplement their own meagre coffers, Gambian decision-makers came to realise that the only economic gains that could be expected from African governments is to be in the form of collective development. The need to combat poverty and underdevelopment through collective efforts has been a constant rhetoric of the Gambian government. Thus in the light of its interests within the African continent, its conduct was not comparable to that adopted within Western, Asian or Middle Eastern spheres. With crisis in Nigeria in 1967, triggered by secession in Biafra, the value of peace and oneness among all Africans was not lost on Gambian decision-makers. Thus while on the one hand the economic value of co-operation was encouraged and sought, political unity was given an added premium.

The Gambia's relations within the wider African realm then, were pursued more from an idealistic standpoint. The need to strengthen the bonds of African unity was felt by the Jawara administration. This policy ultimately meant seeking collective peaceful solutions to Africa's political problems. The Gambia's advocacy of peace and mediation with African governments was pursued within the OAU whilst idealism, social justice, and freedom dictated The Gambia's policy towards liberation movements. The conviction that the general African populace, irrespective of race or creed, should determine its

future was a commitment that Gambian decision-makers took seriously. Consequently, the need to prioritise its relations with African countries was important both for pragmatism and reasons related to the national interest. It can be said that regarding The Gambia's African relations three dominant concentric circles could be observed.

The first concentric circle limits its relations to its immediate and most important neighbour, Senegal. The second circle represents its relations with its West African neighbours, and this could be further divided into anglophone and francophone groupings. The third circle groups its relations within the larger African periphery, relations with East Africa, North Africa, Central and Southern Africa, with varying degrees of importance accorded to each state, depending on the issues at stake.

The Gambia and its West African neighbours

The Gambia's African relations focus primarily on its immediate neighbours. Efforts have been made to consolidate ties with neighbouring countries in the West African sub-region. Relations with Senegal, part of The Gambia's immediate environment, are pursued in a separate chapter. The strengthening of relations within the sub-region is in consonance with The Gambia's policy of good neighbourliness. However, The Gambia's West African option was also conceived as an alternative to its occasionally stifling relationship with Senegal.² In addition, awareness of a shared heritage, particularly with its anglophone neighbours have strengthened the bonds of affinity between The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Ghana.

Situated in a geographical space which is predominantly francophone, The Gambia has sought to exploit existing affinities with its anglophone neighbours. Similarly, it has on various occasions played the role of the honest broker, in trying to bridge differences between francophone and anglophone neighbours. Relations with its West African counterparts assumed a crucial role in The Gambia's external policies especially since it created a forum where countries within the sub-region could articulate strategies to address common concerns. Moreover, regional bodies such as ECOWAS, CILSS and OMVG provided the opportunity to prosecute an active regional policy. Considered as an anomaly due to its small size and the fact that it is situated in a predominantly francophone region, The Gambia advantageously used its geographical environment to

play “big time politics” and contribute to the stability of the region. Relations with neighbouring countries may also be seen as a security anchor as well a collective economic tool for greater development. The gradualist approach remained the ultimate *modus operandi* of a more evolutionary method of obtaining economic security. In other words, The Gambia’s West African policies were generally motivated by realism and dictated by functionalism.

Although The Gambia demonstrated a firm commitment to regionalism and political unity within the sub-region, attempts to solidify West African relationships into an even firmer commitment can be interpreted as an afterthought in the light of its increasingly contentious relations with Senegal. The border incidents of 1969-1971 reminded Gambian decision-makers that the Senegalese government could easily swap its policy of co-operation vis-à-vis The Gambia for a more intrusive policy.³ Moreover, with a track record of procrastination and recriminations on both sides, economic co-operation between The Gambia and Senegal was slow to materialise.⁴

Thus it would seem that The Gambia had plenty of reasons to make West Africa a priority. From a political and security standpoint, the leadership needed to send a clear signal to the Senegalese authorities that The Gambia was not alone. With a strong regional commitment comes a strong tie, in which affinities are sought, fostered and consolidated. While not seeking to deliberately isolate Senegal, a strong web of friends rallying behind The Gambia could neutralise Senegal in the event of any coercive policy. In economic terms, The Gambia sought to cultivate economic ties with its neighbours on the basis that numerical strength would bring about collective development.

Economic co-operation was to be pursued with Senegal but the importance of extending the cycle of integration and regional harmony to all West African states became a dominant theme within Gambian circles. While Hughes’ thesis regarding the rapprochement between The Gambia and West Africa is valid,⁵ it should be noted however, that relations with West Africa had always been a key component of Gambian foreign policy. Indeed, in a secret memorandum relating to the issue of Senegambia, the Gambian leadership had outlined its desire, in the event of union with Senegal, to explore

² Sall in Diop, op. cit., pp 40-1. Hughes (1974), op. cit., pp 9-11.

³ See Chapter 6 for more details.

⁴ See Chapter 6.

close relations with English-speaking neighbours such as Ghana, and Sierra Leone.⁶ Jawara recalls that Sierra Leone was one of the first countries he visited on The Gambia's attainment of independence in 1965.⁷ However, it was feared that The Gambia's geographical position would constitute a serious stumbling block.⁸

While it remained within the confines of diplomatic priorities, the new impulsion given to the West African axis was indicative of the recognition by Gambian decision-makers that such ties deserved a stronger commitment. It could therefore not be interpreted as a newly devised policy as Hughes suggests but rather a reorientation of foreign policy initially aborted due to financial and other constraints.⁹ Co-operation with West African neighbours has always been a key objective and the leadership reiterated this during Senegambian negotiations in the 1960s.¹⁰ Moreover, whether or not West African diplomacy fulfilled The Gambia's security, economic, or political needs, its primacy could not render Senegambian relations redundant. As Taal acknowledges:

On foreign policy in the West African region, our approach was positive and realistic. The principal determinant was geopolitics. For me and my Minister the centre-piece or pillar of such relations had to be with our only neighbour, Senegal. By applying the concentric circles concept, such relationships were expanded first to the OMVG area then further afield in Africa to Nigeria and especially through CILSS and ECOWAS. But none of these could be as important or as relevant as Senegambian relations and integration which must be given primacy if both countries are to maximize their development potential.¹¹

The commonalties and affinities shared by some African countries offer an opportunity to resolve collective constraints in the smaller framework of a regional bloc. The Gambia has found regional blocs such as CILSS a worthwhile organ to combat the ill effects of drought. Likewise the development of the Gambia River Basin under the auspices of the OMVG, created in 1978 with Senegal, was triggered by a collective

⁵ Hughes (1974), *op. cit.*, pp 9-10.

⁶ PRO (London), FO 371/176778, File JE 1061/19 J. Peck to G.E Millard, dd. Dakar, 7 February 1964.

⁷ Personal interview with Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

⁸ PRO (London), FO 371/176778, File JE 1061/19 Peck to Millard, dd. Dakar, 7 February 1964.

⁹ Hughes (1974), *op. cit.*, p 9.

¹⁰ See Chapter 8 for more details.

¹¹ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

decision that the benefits of co-operation would be necessary for riparian states, especially since Guinea controlled the headwaters of the river Gambia, thus making Guinean participation vital. The invitation extended to Guinea-Bissau as member of the OMVG was partly due to geopolitical reasons.

Touray highlights The Gambia's need to participate in sub-regional bodies as a way of alleviating common problems such as drought and food insufficiency. In spite of the validity of his argument, he gives primacy to economic factors. Geopolitical reasons for The Gambia's involvement in West Africa are omitted. Economic reasons are highly relevant in Africa's international relations and The Gambia's in particular, but The Gambia's West African ties go further than its relations with neighbouring countries within regional bodies such as CILSS and the OMVG. Geopolitical reasons are also a prime factor in The Gambia's foreign policy guideline vis-à-vis West Africa. Touray only marginally mentions The Gambia's relations with countries such as Nigeria.¹² Key West African relations and events are omitted, in particular, the Nigeria/Gambia rapprochement following the demise of the Senegambia confederation in 1989, leading to the British and subsequently the Nigerians assuming a key role within the nascent Gambian army.

In addition, Touray seems to suggest that The Gambia's economic difficulties in the late 1970s caused by world inflation and energy crises resulted in a reorientation of its foreign policy insofar as it looked towards its West African neighbours to alleviate food shortages.¹³ However, The Gambia's foreign policy with its West African neighbours dates back to the late 1960s, when it sought to establish more meaningful relationships. The problem of food insufficiency in the sub-region cannot currently be solved purely from within. This is because, partially due to the colonial legacy, West Africa is still unable to feed itself, even when acting collectively.

Moreover, collective co-operation within regional bodies becomes diluted, if efforts are not translated into concrete action. Recognition of similar problems and interests is a useful foundation to any great edifice. However, it is important to strip regional groupings away from long rhetorical declarations, extravagant summits and outmoded romanticised concepts, reminiscent of the euphoric years of the 1960s. So far,

¹² Touray, *op. cit.*, p 181.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

examples of regional groupings in Africa have not been unqualified successes, and while organisations such as OMVG and CILSS have been striving to implement their often over-ambitious projects, they still face serious limitations.

The smallness of domestic markets in countries such as The Gambia, only amplifies their economic vulnerability. In the case of The Gambia, this increased the realisation of decision-makers that economic development would remain a remote possibility if pursued alone, with a population of less than one million inhabitants. Industrialisation has been a basic prescription option to alleviate the difficulties of economic dependency in African states. Yet in smaller states, the size of the domestic market is so limited that the only logical option towards achieving economies of scale has been the formation of free trade associations, customs unions or common markets. The belief that comparative advantage, which involves states focusing on the specialisation of specific products, will ultimately widen the market has proved illusory.¹⁴

It is fair to say then, that relations between The Gambia and some West African states had commenced in the first few years of independence. What occurred from 1969 onwards was a sharp tilt to West Africa, in which relations with other countries were sought, established and celebrated. Not wishing to negate the importance of Senegal in The Gambia's external relations, Senegal was gradually seen as a state within West Africa, instead of *the* state that The Gambia enjoyed privileged ties with. Therefore, geopolitics simply cannot be left out of the equation if one is to examine The Gambia's West African ties. The benefits of regionalism, however important, cannot outweigh the need for states to create strong ties with other states as a security and political anchor. Yet whatever importance is accorded to West Africa, Senegal remains the most important piece in The Gambia's foreign policy jigsaw puzzle.

The Gambian West African rapprochement should not be perceived in a complicated manner. Pragmatism has been the hallmark of The Gambia's policies in West Africa. By the late 1960s, the country's economy was making steady progress. In 1966, steady growth in groundnut production was observed, with an output of 100,000 tons a year, plus an increase in value.¹⁵ In 1966/67, British grants afforded to The Gambia for economic development became redundant due to the considerable

¹⁴ B Brown, *Africa's Choices* (London, Penguin Books, 1995), op. cit., p 139.

¹⁵ Hughes (1974), op. cit., p 11.

improvement in the country's economy. Thus by the late 1960s The Gambia had acquired confidence in its ability to survive as a sovereign state and West African ties were simply an indication of that confidence.

The Gambia and its anglophone neighbours.

Gambia/Nigeria

Nigeria's contribution toward the successful establishment of ECOWAS has been perceived by successive Nigerian governments as a logical step in enhancing Nigeria's African image and augmenting its leverage in the West African region.¹⁶ Nigeria's hegemonic aspirations in Africa were in opposition to those of the French and the Soviet bloc. Nonetheless, with the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the East/West cleavage, the level of intervention, direct or indirect, either from Western or Eastern blocs, has drastically reduced in Africa. This has opened a gateway for Nigeria to assume a leadership position in the African continent.¹⁷

Relations between The Gambia and Nigeria can be traced back to the euphoric period following independence. With the advent of the Biafra crisis in 1967, The Gambia was one of the African states that rallied in favour of the federal government of Nigeria. The notion of territorial integrity had always been a cherished principle of Gambian decision-makers as has been argued in Chapter 4. The Gambian Prime Minister, Sir Dawda Jawara, told a Nigerian goodwill mission led by Dr Okoi Arikpo in 1967, that in addition to his government's policy of territorial inviolability, the policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of another government is one that the Gambian government held very dear.¹⁸ While Jawara made clear his hope for a speedy outcome of the Nigerian civil war, he maintained that The Gambia had no intention of recognising the secessionist state of Biafra.¹⁹ Jawara reiterated that the Biafran crisis was "a great tragedy, not only for Nigeria, but for the rest of Africa in particular and the world in general".²⁰ Moreover, The Gambia was in its early days of statehood, and it would have

¹⁶ Ogwu, op. cit., p 61.

¹⁷ Clapham (1996), op. cit., p 122.

¹⁸ 'Nigeria goodwill mission visits The Gambia', The Gambia News Bulletin 3 August 1967.

¹⁹ Loc. cit.

²⁰ The Gambia National Bulletin 9 September 1967.

been folly if it were to trigger any form of malice from a government potentially capable of assisting The Gambia in technical or in material terms. The position of Nigeria as a leading African power, in spite of rivalry for supremacy with Nkrumah's Ghana, made it a force to be reckoned with.

Among The Gambia's West African "connections", Nigeria ranks as key state among the its list of friends and allies. As the most populous state in Africa and well endowed, the Gambian leadership felt that relations between Nigeria and The Gambia should remain special. From a political and security viewpoint, the need for a bigger brother and a more powerful neighbour was a necessary option. In addition, the similarity in colonial legacy and the identical nature of institutions in both countries were an added incentive to what was considered a natural ally. The small size of The Gambia together its security and economic vulnerability, has increased relative dependence on Nigeria. According to decision-makers' logic, in the light of The Gambia's unpredictable and ambiguous relations with Senegal, especially in the late 1960s, Nigeria, could serve as an "insurance policy" if events between The Gambia and Senegal became troublesome.

It could be asserted that while Senegal and Nigeria enjoy cordial relations as suggested by Cissé,²¹ there has been friction in Nigerian/Senegalese relations and the development of a forward looking foreign policy between the two states has been absent at different phases. The similarity in ideology and governance between Senghor and his successor Diouf meant that the pro-French affinity, a trademark of Senghor's reign was still present in Diouf's administration.²² The rivalry between France and Nigeria has always been a nagging problem in Franco/Nigerian relations, which led to French and Ivoirian support for Biafra in 1967.²³ Although Balewa and Senghor belonged to the conservative ideology advocated by the Monrovia bloc, with the ascendancy of General Gowon, Nigeria and Senegal adopted divergent foreign policy stances.²⁴

Senegal was reluctant to support the Nigerian-sponsored idea leading to the creation of ECOWAS, and Senegal, unlike Nigeria, remained anti-MPLA in the Angolan

²¹ Personal interview with Salieu Cissé, former Senegalese High Commissioner to The Gambia, and actual Senegalese Ambassador to Nigeria, 27 August 1996, Dakar.

²² G.O Olusaya and Akindede, (1986), *op. cit.*, p 189.

²³ *Loc. cit.*

²⁴ *Loc. cit.*

crisis.²⁵ Differences between the two states were manifested during the FESTAC festival in 1966 in which Senghor and the Senegalese Secretary General of FESTAC were averse to the involvement of Arab African countries in the Colloquium pertaining to “Black Civilisation and Education”.²⁶ Nigeria demonstrated its disagreement on this issue, and Senghor threatened to boycott the festival.²⁷ Because of this antipathy between Senegal and Nigeria, albeit at different stages, it would seem logical that Nigeria would wish to foster closer ties with The Gambia, and the latter would be keen to celebrate its ties with a “bigger and much more powerful brother”.

The visit of General Gowon in 1971 to The Gambia seemed highly propitious due to the rift between The Gambia and Senegal during the period 1969-1971 and served to accentuate Senegalese suspicions of The Gambia seeking alternative allies among its anglophone West African neighbours.²⁸ Consequently while Senegalo/Nigerian relations have not always been contentious, it could be argued that rivalry between the two countries could have paved the way for a better relationship between The Gambia and Nigeria. Thus Nigeria in the light of its quarrelsome relationship with Senegal, could afford to solidify its relationship with The Gambia, and the latter could use Nigeria to neutralise Senegal whilst enjoying the support of Africa’s largest state.

Over the years The Gambia’s diplomatic relations with Nigeria have intensified. Nigerian Heads of State have been invited successively to The Gambia’s independence celebrations. Personal diplomacy, as articulated earlier, was cherished by the Gambian leadership as an effective form of communication among African leaders.²⁹ The visit of the former Nigerian Head of State, Yakubu Gowon, in 1971 to The Gambia, further cemented relations between the two countries. A treaty was signed in which each government pledged “perpetual peace and firm, lasting friendship to each other”.³⁰ In 1978, during The Gambia’s 13th Independence celebrations, the Nigerian Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo, was The Gambia’s honorary guest.³¹ Personal relations between Jawara and successive Nigerian leaders were consistently good.

²⁵ Loc. cit.

²⁶ Loc. cit.

²⁷ Loc. cit.

²⁸ Loc. cit.

²⁹ ‘African leaders should visit each other more frequently’, *The Gambia News Bulletin* 1 April 1967

³⁰ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 23 February 1971.

³¹ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 16 February 1978.

Nigerian doctors and judges served in The Gambia and their presence is still evident within the general administration in The Gambia. Nonetheless, the security vacuum created by the precipitate departure of the Senegalese left the Gambian leadership worried and anxious. According to Sey, the need for advisers was felt.³² After debating on whom would be best qualified to fill the Senegalese vacancy, the Gambian leadership decided to solicit assistance from Nigeria. According to Sey, Ghana was not a popular option because of its close ties with Gadaffi.³³ Sey subsequently visited Nigeria to put forward the request and was well received by the Nigerian Foreign Minister. The Nigerian government condemned the Senegalese decision to “freeze” the confederation and pledged full support to the Gambian leadership.³⁴

The Senegalese authorities worried about the rapprochement between The Gambia and Nigeria, especially following the failure of the confederation. According to Sey, the Senegalese government was worried about Gambian/Nigerian links and conveyed its apprehensions to the British and the Americans. Sey adds that he was instructed by Jawara to impart to the Senegalese government that The Gambia, even with the break-up of the confederation, would not seek to compromise the Senegalese position. However, it was in any case unlikely that the Nigerian government would become involved with The Gambia, in an anti-Senegalese skirmish. According to Sey, Nigeria’s assistance was called upon because The Gambia needed to replace its military equipment and personnel. Gambian officers in the main were very young and inexperienced, the oldest was 28 years old.

However, the need to solicit assistance from Nigeria goes beyond the leadership’s preoccupation of replacing equipment and the training of military personnel. Indeed, these were genuine concerns. The leadership was still living in the shadow of the July 1981 coup, and the security of the regime was of the utmost importance. The withdrawal of the Senegalese had further exposed the weakness of the nascent army and subsequently that of the leadership. Such was the intention of Abdou Diouf when he decided to withdraw Senegalese troops from The Gambia. The Gambia thus needed a replacement that would be responsible for training the army. The British, and subsequently the Nigerians provided this.

³² Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

³³ Loc. cit.

³⁴ Loc. cit.

However, even security comes with a price, however minimal. While providing their services, states hardly ever act out of altruism. According to Sey, many Nigerians considered The Gambia to have a reasonable cost of living and saw an opportunity to settle comfortably there. The Nigerian government paid handsome salaries to its officers, but The Gambia was responsible for providing housing, transport, and local allowances.³⁵

Personal relations between Jawara and Babangida, were excellent. In 1990 Babangida was invited to The Gambia's independence celebrations as guest of honour.³⁶ The Gambian leader and his Nigerian counterpart pledged to help bring about peace between Senegal and Mauritania subsequent to the Senegalo/Mauritanian crisis of 1989.³⁷ Also discussed was the rift between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia due to the Liberian civil war and allegations that the Ivoirian government was supporting one faction against the other. The two leaders stated their wish for these conflicts to be resolved.³⁸ In the light of the Senegambian tiff and the failure of the confederation, Babangida's presence according to Hughes was much appreciated.³⁹ Sey remembers that Babangida paid three state visits to The Gambia, a gesture that the Senegalese leadership found rather puzzling.⁴⁰ Sey argues that had Babangida still been in power during the July 1994 coup, it would have been foiled. He argues: "Babangida understood the Gambian position, the fragile nature of the military situation, the vulnerability of our army and he was committed to prop up the Gambian army to ensure that no funny game took place".⁴¹

With the departure of Babangida, the nature of the relationship with Nigeria shifted. Sey states that although the new leader Abacha was receptive, he was under a lot of pressure at home. He recalls the difficulty he had in communicating with the Nigerian authorities, following the departure of Babangida. The situation in Nigeria he argues was too fluid. Foreign Ministers were "waltzing" in and out of office. He described the situation as frustrating. Thus, Sey's assertion would suggest that certain aspects of African international relations are premised on the leader whose initiatives, decisions,

³⁵ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

³⁶ See 'The Gambia Senegambian confederation dissolved' *Africa Contemporary Record* XXII, 1989-90, B 38.

³⁷ Loc. cit.

³⁸ Loc. cit.

³⁹ Loc. cit.

⁴⁰ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

⁴¹ Loc. cit.

choices and foreign policy implementation is dependent on the element of affinity or opposition between leaders.

Relations between The Gambia and Nigeria are symptomatic of those between small and large states. The question therefore is, to what extent can foreign policy alleviate or even redress certain endemic weaknesses that are prone to small states? The vulnerability of The Gambia, in both security and economic terms is above all an internal feature. Foreign policy solutions such as the alliance with a relatively larger state to strengthen security structures in The Gambia, can only be short term. The input should be drawn from internal sources and built upon gradually. The question of unequal partnership is also relevant to the Nigerian/Gambian relations. The larger state, not always dictated by altruistic ideals, has very little to gain from the small state. Whether the small Nigerian team in The Gambia National Army (GNA) could have foiled the 1994 coup remains highly hypothetical. However, the question is, was the political will present from the Nigerian government?

Gambia/Sierra Leone

Relations between The Gambia and Sierra Leone have been dictated by geographical proximity, colonial heritage and ethnic considerations. Indeed a large section of the Gambian civil service was composed of Aku (Creoles), whose descendants can be traced to Sierra Leone. The ethnic factor in itself has created a bond between the two countries. Moreover, at times during the colonial period, The Gambia and Sierra Leone shared the same colonial administration.

Siaka Stevens, the late Sierra Leonean Head of State, was welcomed to The Gambia in May 1970, thus becoming the first Commonwealth Head of State to visit The Gambia after the latter attained self-rule.⁴² Prior to this visit, Jawara visited Sierra Leone when The Gambia gained independence.⁴³ In concrete terms, 1970 not only signalled the beginning of an intensified Gambian diplomatic offensive, it heralded the start of a new form of diplomacy, i.e., personal diplomacy. State visits during these years and successive years, multiplied.

⁴² The Gambia News Bulletin 21 May 1970.

Subsequently, the Sierra Leonean Prime Minister announced his intention to establish formal diplomatic relations with The Gambia. An Honorary Consul was appointed followed by a fully-fledged High Commission.⁴⁴ Stevens called for constructive economic co-operation from a regional perspective.⁴⁵ Although The Gambia could not commit itself to opening a High Commission in Freetown because of limited resources, when the requisite funds became available, and the need manifested itself, a diplomatic mission was established in Freetown. This was partly due to an increase in Gambian students studying in Sierra Leonean institutions, particularly Fourah Bay College, prompting the government to establish a diplomatic mission in order to meet the needs of the growing Gambian community in Freetown.

Relations between the two states, have since remained consistent and cordial. Coupled with the personal affinity between Presidents Jawara and Stevens, there existed an atmosphere of goodwill and trust. Indeed President Stevens was among the most virulent critics of the July 1981 aborted coup that took place in The Gambia. Excluding the need to cultivate good rapport between the two states and their leaders, the government does not gain in real terms.⁴⁶ Although relations between the two countries have remained excellent, from a bilateral standpoint, real economic co-operation has been limited. In cases where specific areas of co-operation have been highlighted, implementation has not been forthcoming.

Gambia/Ghana.

Similar to the relationship with Sierra Leone, The Gambia has maintained a cordial relationship with Ghana based on good neighbourliness. During Nkrumah's era, Gambian/Ghanaian relations were very strong, much to the discomfort of the British who feared that Nkrumah's radicalism could be transposed to The Gambia and thus result in the indoctrination of Gambian youth. The Senegalese leadership also expressed its reservation as rapprochement between Garba Jahumpha's Muslim Congress Party and the Nkrumah government intensified. Scepticism grew as Senegalese authorities feared

⁴³ Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawra, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

⁴⁴ *The Gambia National Bulletin* 26 May 1970.

⁴⁵ Loc. cit.

that radicalisation of Gambian youths could prove to be counterproductive for a meaningful Senegambian union. The Ghanaian government funding of scholarships was seen not from an altruistic perspective but rather as a political ploy which would encourage defiance and undermine any form of Gambian acquiescence to a Senegambian union. In a correspondence between J.H.A Watson from the British Embassy in Dakar, to Sir R. Stevens, of the Foreign Office in London, Watson outlines Senegalese reticence towards Gambia/Ghana:

...The Ghanaian leader's secondary motive for assistance to The Gambia is to "keep an extra voice in Nkrumah's chorus". Support of such actions can be found among Gambian left-wing nationalists, which seems to coincide with the pan-Mandinka stirrings south of the River Gambia.⁴⁷

The Gambian DCA party was known to have close ties with the Ghanaian leadership. The British Governor in The Gambia, stated that in the event of a Ghanaian influenced leftist political victory in The Gambia, a Senegalese annexation could occur if:

1. disruptive action in Casamance necessitated the deployment of Senegalese troops and thus resulting in the use of The Gambia as a transitory route to enable ready access into Casamance;
2. Senegal decided to depart from the image of bowing to neo-colonialist dictates by adopting a pan-Africanist plan, or allay domestic discontent by showing greater authority⁴⁸

The security of The Gambia has always been intertwined with that of Senegal since Senegalese authorities remained watchful to any subversive, or disruptive actions that could impact on their domestic policy. Any radical element in The Gambia could team up with radical and separatist elements in Casamance, thus undermining Senegalese authority in the area. Such prospects would have had disastrous consequences on a Senegambian union since a leftist regime in The Gambia would seek to alienate itself from any union that would give Senegal, and by extension France, an upper hand in its destiny.

⁴⁶ This assertion has been put forward by both Omar Njie, actual Minister of External Affairs and Goree Njie, former diplomat and civil servant at the MEA. These findings in the form of an interview have been mentioned in previous chapters.

⁴⁷ PRO (London), FO, 371/161579, File JE1061/12. 23 February 1962.

Nkrumah's pan-Africanist ideology was incompatible with neo-colonial principles. It was clear that Senghor's affinities towards France meant that the latter would continue to play a significant role in Senegalese domestic and foreign policy, as is the case with other francophone countries. Thus it would appear that Senegal would favour a progressive moderate, conservative government, which would be more flexible to Senegambian union than a leftist radical government that would act on Ghanaian dictates regarding Senegambian issues. Senegalese fears regarding Gambia's Ghana links were real in the light of Nkrumah's mid-1960s reputation for encouraging subversive elements in Togo and Côte d'Ivoire. Cognisant of the implications of a radical Gambian government with strong leanings towards Ghana, it is possible that the Senegalese government perceived Jawara and his PPP party as the lesser of the evils.

Subsequent to Nkrumah's deposition, Jawara paid an informal visit to Ghana on the invitation of Lt General Ankrah. Much later, the Ghanaian Head of State Dr Hilla Limann visited The Gambia during the latter's 16th independence celebrations. Such visits were meant to strengthen African unity and promote co-operation between African countries. With Ghana, relations were facilitated by the colonial legacy, which created a sense of a shared past. The colonial legacy had left similar judicial, educational and administrative systems. The fact that some Gambians pursued higher education in Ghanaian institutions (including Jawara who undertook his veterinary training in Ghana) reinforced relations and smoothed the path for further co-operation.⁴⁹

Nonetheless, the change in leadership in Ghana with Jerry Rawlings at the helm of the government in 1982, changed the nature of the relationship between Ghana and The Gambia as the radicalism pervasive in Ghana in the 1960s resurfaced. As with Nkrumah, Rawlings' radical and leftist leanings fascinated radical Gambian youth and the Gambian government harboured deep suspicions of the Rawlings government, which was suspected of acting as a conduit for Libya.⁵⁰ The leadership's suspicions of Ghana under Rawlings could explain the low-key relations between the two countries during this era.

⁴⁸ PRO (London) FO 371/161579, JE1061/2, J.H.A. Watson to R. Rogers, dd. Dakar, 8 February 1962.

⁴⁹ 'Gambia/Ghanaian links', *The Gambia News Bulletin*, 16 February 1981, *The Gambia News Bulletin* 'Dr Limann's visit will give impetus to Gambia/Ghanaian relations', 20 February 1981.

⁵⁰ Personal interview with Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex. Jawara mentioned the Ghanaian role in the post-coup period and Rawlings' involvement with Libya to give the coup plotters

According to Sey, the Ghanaian leadership was opposed to The Gambia's confederal alliance with Senegal.⁵¹ In a continent where personality is a key factor in foreign policy, it is hardly surprising that the radical, somewhat abrasive personality of Rawlings was not compatible with Jawara's more moderate and conservative persona. Apart from differences in personality, the Gambian leadership was extremely distrustful of Rawlings. On Sey's instigation, Rawlings denied acting as a conduit for Gambians to be trained in Libya with the aim of overthrowing Jawara's leadership:

I tried hard to clear the air but it was hard to convince the government that Rawlings could be trusted. Civil society felt that there were too many Nigerians in The Gambia. I urged the President to turn to Ghana, that they could be trusted. The Ghanaian foreign Minister was here. He visited The Gambia, he was not supportive of the Senegambia confederation. He embraced the idea of African unity but the Ghanaian position was to pull The Gambia away from Senegal.⁵²

The rapprochement between The Gambia and Ghana, following the July 22nd coup in 1994, and the reliance of Jammeh on the Ghanaian leadership for advice in foreign and domestic policy, is indicative of the cogency of the personality equation in Gambian foreign policy.⁵³

Gambia/Liberia

Given Liberia's lack of real exposure to European colonialism, The Gambia's relations with Liberia have not been dictated by ties of colonial heritage. Nonetheless, the two countries have, over the years, maintained a friendly relationship. In 1973, as part of Jawara's "diplomatic offensive" in West Africa, former Liberian Head of State, President William Tolbert paid a five-day state visit to The Gambia.⁵⁴ The visit coincided with The Gambia's eighth anniversary of independence celebrations, to which President Tolbert

a firm stronghold. This aspect of Gambian foreign policy after the 1994 military overthrow will be discussed in the postscript.

⁵¹ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

⁵² Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

⁵³ Personal Interview Fafa Mbai, former Attorney General, 12 September 1996, Banjul.

⁵⁴ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 22 February 1973.

was to be guest of honour.⁵⁵ A treaty of friendship and co-operation was signed between the two states.⁵⁶ The visit was an opportunity for both Heads of State to re-affirm their friendship and reiterate their views and mutual preoccupation on the African plane in the form of a joint communiqué. Both Heads of State echoed the need for bilateral co-operation, but there is hardly any evidence of real implementation.

In 1984, the two countries decided to revive a friendship and co-operation treaty signed in August 1974.⁵⁷ The treaty was signed on May 27th following a three-day visit made by President Jawara to Monrovia and his Liberian counterpart, Commander-in-Chief Samuel Doe.⁵⁸ The treaty outlines co-operation between the two states in economic, political and cultural areas.⁵⁹ The two Heads of states agreed upon a joint ministerial committee headed by the respective Foreign Ministers, which would meet annually.⁶⁰ Trade relations under the auspices of ECOWAS, conforming to the Lagos Plan of Action, were to be promoted by the two states.⁶¹

Relations between the two countries did not seem to undergo any significant change during the course of Doe's regime. It took the civil war in Liberia between the two factions of Charles Taylor and Prince Johnson, for The Gambia to play an active role in mediation between the factions under the auspices of ECOWAS. The role played by The Gambia will be evaluated in brief subsequently. According to Jawara, as Chairman of ECOWAS, he had to show a high degree of impartiality and could not be seen to be taking sides.⁶²

The Gambia and its French-speaking neighbours.

It would be impossible to detail the extent of The Gambia's francophone relations. Senegal was the key French-speaking state that The Gambia co-operated with from a bilateral level, due to reasons elucidated earlier. However, by 1968, The Gambia was making timid headway in its openings to other francophone countries with the courtship of

⁵⁵ The Gambia News Bulletin 15 February 1973.

⁵⁶ The Gambia News Bulletin 22 February 1973.

⁵⁷ 'Gambia-Liberia', Africa Research Bulletin political social and cultural series, Vol. 21, 5 May 1984, p 7238.

⁵⁸ Loc. cit.

⁵⁹ Loc. cit.

⁶⁰ Loc. cit.

⁶¹ Loc. cit.

the Mauritanian Head of State, President Moktar Ould Daddah.⁶³ The Gambia continues to host a large community of Mauritanian nationals, who in the main are petty traders and are in the forefront of the retail trade in The Gambia. Amongst other things, Ould Dada, expressed his appreciation of facilities extended by the government of The Gambia to the numerous Mauritanians residents there.⁶⁴

Regarding the Mauritanian /Morocco dispute over the Western Sahara, The Gambia, in spite of its subsequent policy of the primacy of self-determination of the Saharawi people, supported the Mauritanian position on the “basis of history”.⁶⁵ During a meeting in which the Minister of External Affairs, Lamin Kiti Jabang was accompanied by Ebou Taal, the Permanent Secretary and Mr Omadi Diarra, the Gambian Ambassador to Mauritania, the Minister noted the affinities between the two states, symbolised by religious commonality, i.e. Islam.⁶⁶ Indeed, many Gambians continue to reside in Mauritania, in pursuit of Islamic knowledge.⁶⁷ When Mauritania subsequently pulled out of the Saharawi dispute, Jawara commended the Mauritanian leadership and urged the Moroccan government to take a “leaf out of the Mauritanian book”.⁶⁸

In 1989, following the dispute between Mauritania and Senegal, The Gambian government welcomed Mauritanians who were fleeing Senegal from fear of reprisals. It is difficult to ascertain whether the Gambian leadership deliberately exploited the Senegal/Mauritanian crisis to extract itself out of a suffocating relationship. Undeniably, relations between The Gambia and Mauritania solidified, subsequent to the break-up of relations between The Gambia and Senegal.⁶⁹

Relations between The Gambia and other francophone countries intensified during the late 1970s, including with the late President Olympio and current President Eyadema of Togo. No account has been given for the Gambia’s excellent relations with Togo in the light of the latter’s appalling human rights abuses. It would seem that The Gambia’s need to strengthen its West African policies and maintain a policy of good

⁶² Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

⁶³ The Gambia News Bulletin 6 February 1968.

⁶⁴ Loc. cit.

⁶⁵ The Gambia News Bulletin 4 February 1978.

⁶⁶ Loc. cit.

⁶⁷ Loc. cit.

⁶⁸ The Gambia News Bulletin 14 August 1979.

⁶⁹ Hughes, ‘The Gambia, Senegambia confederation dissolved’, Africa Contemporary Record XXII, 1989-90, p B37.

neighbourliness carried more weight. In an interview Jawara stated that it was difficult to equate autocratic African leaders with the accusations of atrocities levelled against them because in their personal comportment and in one-to-one meetings they seemed charismatic and agreeable.⁷⁰

As part of his personal diplomacy, Jawara visited Togo in 1978 where he received a warm welcome from President Eyadema. This visit was quite fruitful as the Togolese government donated D675,000 to The Gambia in aid for drought relief.⁷¹ This is quite a substantial sum from one developing country to another, and compares with Iraq's grant of D67,000 to The Gambia for the same purpose.⁷² It also symbolises the level of co-operation between the two states. The Togolese government demonstrated its support and solidarity for The Gambia at the time of the July 1981 coup and relations since then have been strengthened through the regional body of ECOWAS. The Gambia under the leadership of Jawara was one of the first countries to support the idea of ECOWAS, under the impetus of Togo and Nigeria. In addition Jawara who earned a reputation for his mediatorial persona, serving as an honest broker between francophone and anglophone states, was solicited by Eyadema to mediate between Togo and Ghana, but this was aborted as a result of Rawlings' intervention.⁷³

However, among francophone countries within the West African region, Guinea is perhaps the most interesting case study because it marked a radical change, and a departure in The Gambia's West African relations. In spite of the late President's Touré's appalling record on human rights, 1970 marked a rapprochement in relations between the two states. The case of Guinean dissidents planning to overthrow the Touré regime being sent back to Guinea in the absence of an extradition agreement between the two states, is relevant. Subsequently a Gambian goodwill mission, including former foreign minister, Mr Assan Musa Camara and the late Attorney General, Alhaji M.L. Saho, went to Guinea to discuss methods of strengthening relations between the two.⁷⁴ Prior to this, relations between the two states had been practically non-existent. The visit was also an opportunity to discuss incidents of Guinean dissidents, previously tried in The Gambia, being subsequently deported back to Guinea.

⁷⁰ Personal interview with Dawda Jawara, 14 March 1997. Haywards Heath, Sussex.

⁷¹ The Gambia News Bulletin 27 April 1978.

⁷² The Gambia News Bulletin 18 May 1978.

⁷³ Personal interview with Jawara, 14 March 1997, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

⁷⁴ The Gambia News Bulletin, 12 November 1970.

Autocrat Sekou Touré who pledged to stand by The Gambia whatever the circumstances, welcomed this gesture. The government had hitherto urged all Gambians to “report at once any suspicious activity likely to be prejudicial to the good government of this country or a friendly state”.⁷⁵ It was later revealed that the Guineans were mercenaries working under the instructions of Portugal to depose the Touré regime.⁷⁶ The Gambian leadership affirmed that extradition was carried out under specific conditions. However, questioned on the prospect of criticism being levelled against the leadership in the event of extradition, Jawara replied that “that there would be criticism from sympathisers of the Conakry regime if the exiles were not handed over”.⁷⁷

The Gambian leadership had clearly identified a potential foreign policy gain by sending Guinean dissidents back to the autocratic regime of President Touré. This event is considered to be one of the embarrassing chapters in Gambian foreign policy since the Gambian Government knew, consciously or subconsciously, that they were sending the dissidents to their graves due to Touré’s extremist and dictatorial personality. The fact that the Gambian government decided to return these rebels regardless of the fact that there was no extradition treaty between The Gambia and Guinea may be seen as an over-zealous foreign policy stance of a government that wished to seal a bond of friendship with Touré.

It could well be that this was a message Jawara was sending to neighbouring or other powers that, irrespective of its small size, The Gambia would not tolerate any subversive acts. On the other hand, the most plausible explanation was that the Gambian Government was sending a signal to the Senegalese government. The Senegalese government was critical of Jawara’s stance and the fact that The Gambia was gradually extending its circle of friends to include Guinea as a response to its rather volatile relations with Senegal. Jawara was to subsequently mediate between Touré and Senghor, thus bringing their long rivalry to an end. Touré’s personality often clashed with that of former President Senghor of Senegal and this consequently caused a strain between the two states.⁷⁸ This gesture was indicative of Jawara’s international reputation as a

⁷⁵ Loc. cit.

⁷⁶ The Gambia News Bulletin 26 November 1970.

⁷⁷ Loc. cit.

⁷⁸ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 14 July 1996, Banjul. On Touré’s gratitude towards the Gambian leadership for extraditing Guinean dissidents, see Dabo and al, op. cit., p 215.

mediator. In a personal interview he stated that he undertook the mission because he was confident that he had gained the confidence of both leaders.⁷⁹

However, according to Camara, former Minister of External Affairs, who led the delegation to Guinea in 1970, Guineans were contravening Gambian laws by not having the proper immigration papers to reside in The Gambia. However, he affirmed that the whole event was a foreign policy ploy to take advantage of increasingly worrisome relations with Senegal. Camara mentioned that Touré was very grateful and that the whole incident paid off well for The Gambia.

It was due to the influence of the Gambian leadership that Guinea became part of the Organisation for the development of The Gambia River Basin, i.e. the OMVG. By April 1979, Touré had agreed in principle to becoming part of the organisation, which until then comprised only of The Gambia and Senegal.⁸⁰ The decision to include Guinea, (a Gambian initiative), another riparian state, is believed to have been to create a balance and to some extent diffuse tension that might arise between The Gambia and Senegal. However, the membership of Guinea has initiated another change in the OMVG, the membership of Guinea-Bissau. Relationships between The Gambia and Guinea continued to blossom. In 1984, following the death of Sekou Touré, Jawara was invited to succeed Touré as chairman of the Islamic Conference Organisation.⁸¹ Relations under the new Guinean leader, Brigadier General Lasana Conté and Jawara remained cordial.

Gambia/Guinea-Bissau (Lusophone ties).)

Relationships between The Gambia and its two lusophone neighbours are worthy of some mention. The Gambia had maintained trade and cordial relations with both countries. However, in 1981, following the attempted coup in The Gambia, relations between The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau became strained. The ringleader of the July 1981 coup attempt fled to Guinea Bissau and was arrested with nine other rebels.⁸² Vice President Camara, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives went to Guinea Bissau to

⁷⁹ Personal interview with Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex. Questioned on Touré's radical, extremist persona, which stood in contrast with Jawara's moderate personality, he replied that as with most autocratic leaders, Touré seemed quite charismatic and friendly.

⁸⁰ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 3 April 1979.

⁸¹ 'Jawara's mission and convictions', *West Africa* 17-23 February 1992, p 285.

⁸² *The Gambia News Bulletin* 31 August 1981.

arrange for the extradition of the rebels. Their return to The Gambia without the rebels suggested that their request did not produce the required outcome.⁸³ By September 11th 1981, the extradition of the rebels was still not imminent. However, Jawara expressed his optimism that the Guinea-Bissau government would not delay handing over rebels to the Gambian government any further.⁸⁴ Needless to say, the fact that Guinea-Bissau served as a sanctuary for the Gambian rebels caused a strain in relations between the two countries.

A constant theme for the leaders of the OMVG was collective security. Reports that the 1981 coup plotters frequently sojourned in Guinea-Bissau, and were given transport and comfortable villas there were a preoccupation of the Gambian authorities. It was felt that collective policing and surveillance of borders would ultimately minimise the risks of such insurrections and upheavals as that witnessed in The Gambia in 1981. The Senegalese, cognisant of the danger of such upheavals did not want to aggravate the nature of the separatist conflict in Casamance by adopting a *laissez-faire* attitude in their own backyard. The security of The Gambia's borders therefore, was intimately linked to the security of Senegal.

The Conakry summit was conceived in the light of expected results, i.e. a solution to the securing the borders from coup plotters and other subversive elements. Secondly, it provided an occasion for the long awaited return of the coup leader Kukoi Samba Sanyang to The Gambia. The Guinean Head of State, Sekou Toure, had promised this.⁸⁵ As the return of Kukoi appeared elusive yet again, the rift between The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau widened once more. Taal recalls:

Sekou Toure gave the impression that Vieira the Guinean President, would bring Kukoi to Conakry and hand him over to Sekou Toure. He must have made the same indication to Abdou Diouf who was also in Conakry. The morning before the meeting, the atmosphere was one of excitement and expectation. At the meeting after the usual courtesies, Vieira was expected to pronounce the magic words. Instead he announced that Kukoi and his colleagues had left for Cuba on the same day he was coming to Conakry. Everyone was disappointed....Jawara

⁸³ Loc. cit.

⁸⁴ The Gambia News Bulletin 11 September 1981.

⁸⁵ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997..

was very annoyed and demonstrated his feelings in words and comportment. Abdou Diouf was also disappointed because the Senegalese had wanted Kukoi just as badly as he was seen as the cause of death of hundreds of Senegalese soldiers. They had even contemplated kidnapping him while he was still in Bissau..⁸⁶

Taal's account demonstrates the dominant role of leaders in African diplomacy, regardless of judicial procedures. The affinities and personal chemistry between leaders are usually a key component in the understanding of inter-state relationships. Thus favours and promises are sought and rendered to a great degree by virtue of leadership interest, and less from the national interest perspective. In the case of Touré, it was his close relationship with former Minister of External Affairs and Vice-President Camara, rather than Jawara which help cement relations between The Gambia and Guinea. As elucidated in Chapter 7 the collapse of the Senegambian confederation represented not only a breakdown of relations between two neighbouring states, it was also the result of a breakdown in communications between two leaders. The same is true for the Conakry deception in 1982. Vieira's decision not to harbour the Gambian rebels was a testimony of pressure exerted on him, and the need to appease the Gambian authorities.

An analysis of the nature of African relationships should take into account the personality factor, the leadership factor and most importantly the personalised nature of foreign and domestic policies. The Gambian leadership's irritation with Guinea-Bissau was accentuated due to the assistance rendered by The Gambia during the long fight against Portuguese imperialism. As Taal confirmed:

Gambians could not forget the sacrifices made to help Guinea-Bissau when they fought the Portuguese. We gave their officers accommodation and free transport. Their leaders travelled on Gambian diplomatic passports and many of their nationals took refuge in TheGambia around the Kombos and Fonis where they received hospitality. I was witness to this as I handled their affairs in the Ministry. Moreover some Gambians joined the Guinea Bissauians in the jungle to fight the Portuguese..⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997

⁸⁷ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997

Although Jawara admitted that there was no bad blood between the two states⁸⁸ as the rebels were further repatriated to Cuba, the leadership felt embarrassed by the events as promises of Kukoi's extradition remain in vain. There is little to substantiate rumours that Sekou Toure encouraged extradition of rebels to Cuba.⁸⁹ Nonetheless by 1989, relations between the two countries had improved as Jawara sought to mediate between Guinea-Bissau and Senegal following dispute between the two states in 1989.

Gambia/Cape Verde (Lusophone ties)

Relations between The Gambia and Cape Verde have been excellent. The Gambia had strongly condemned Portuguese imperialism and advocated the independence of the Cape Verdean people. In 1978, during a visit to Cape Verde, Jawara signed the "General Agreement on Friendship and Co-operation". This agreement brought into being a joint ministerial position between the two states. President Aristides Pereira of Cape Verde visited The Gambia in 1981.⁹⁰ Due to the fact that Cape Verde, like The Gambia, is situated in the Sahel, the two countries have been vulnerable to drought and have co-operated in tandem with other states, at a regional level under the tutelage of organisations such as CILSS and ECOWAS. In 1989, Pereira made a technical stop in The Gambia, and was received by the former Vice-President, Bakary Dabo, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Momodou Baboucarr Njie, the former Chief Justice, Emmanuel Olayinka Ayola, and other officials.⁹¹ Trade relations manifested by The Gambia's lucrative re-export trade to Cape Verde and neighbouring states have continued over the years.

With the appreciation of West Africa as a key concentric circle in its foreign policy, the Gambian leadership sought to establish stronger ties with its neighbours. Clearly Senegal's intrusive policy reflected by the border incidents of 1971, proved to the Gambian leadership that alliances were to be sought in wherever this was feasible. The submission of Guinean rebels to the autocratic leader Sekou Touré in 1970, was a clear

⁸⁸ Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawara, 13 October 1997, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

⁸⁹ Personal interview with Sir Dawda 13 October 1997, Haywards Heath. Bobb in a personal interview maintained that Toure urged Veira not to hand over the rebels as he saw them as revolutionaries. Nonetheless Taal avers that Touré aversion for coup plotters coupled with his gratitude for The Gambia leadership regarding its decision in 1970 to extradite Guinean rebels, proved that such rumours had no foundation.

⁹⁰ 'Jawara and Pereira confer', *The Gambia News Bulletin* 24 April 1981.

indication that The Gambia was this time giving primacy to *realpolitik* rather than ethics. Yet this departure from traditional diplomacy was a means to an end. The Gambian leadership, in order to reassure Touré and obtain his commitment to assist The Gambia, in the event of Senegalese aggression, also exploited the ideological and personal rivalry between Senghor and Touré.

In addition West Africa became an opportunity to assert The Gambia's sovereignty, and to inject idealism into a foreign policy that was already heavily geared to *realpolitik*, given its economic dependence on external capital. Idealism was pursued in The Gambia's relationship with its lusophone neighbours in order to support and facilitate them in their struggle against imperialism. The need to solidify African unity through the consolidation of such ties was a key factor in The Gambia's African relations in general.

The Gambia in regional organisations

The contemporary concept of regional integration as a panacea for the protection of weak states and weak economies in the perpetually evolving world political and economic system has periodically exercised the minds of many of Africa's leaders in the post-independence era. The continent's contribution to world trade still only amounts to a paltry 2 per cent, irrespective of its considerable reserves of mineral resources. The development of powerful politico-economic groupings like the European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), with their concomitant inward trade creation, and outward trade diversion, threaten to further peripheralise already weak economies in the developing world, in turn impacting on the political stability of those states concerned.

However, wide disparities in the strength of developing-world economies, in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, and their lack of complementarity, have effectively stalled the progress of regional economic unity. Some African governments do not want to be in the business of allocating hard-earned national funds towards the economic welfare of "free riders". In addition to this, based on the experience of regional groupings in other

⁹¹ 'President Pereira stops over', The Gambia Weekly 23 June 1989.

parts of the developing world, such as Latin America and East Central Europe, there is a lasting perception that those states with the strongest economies stand to gain disproportionately from the benefits of integration. In other words, the phenomenon of uneven development, already a pressing issue in the developing world, is frequently exacerbated by regional integration.

The rationale that economic integration leads inevitably to collective self-reliance, greater economic development and more bargaining power on the global market, is not one that some African leaders accept. Also, the similarities of primary products produced by some African countries have circumscribed the expansion of an African market. Export goods from Senegal, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, coupled with the import of West African production into Ghana, has accounted for the bulk of intra-African trade within the sub-region.⁹² The concept that African governments have little to trade with each other is particularly relevant to small states, which invariably produce similar primary products.⁹³ Additionally, African governments still continue to import the bulk of their manufactured goods from non-African countries. Perhaps the words of Onimode, an African scholar, best sums it all up: "colonialism programmed African countries to produce what they do not consume and to consume what they do not produce".⁹⁴

In spite of the rhetoric of African leaders on the benefits of regional integration, economic co-operation and intra-African trade are still quite negligible. The concept of African economic unity originally perceived as a revolutionary concept has been gradually tamed. Moreover, the fact that the majority of the regional economic groupings have failed to make any significant contribution to economic prosperity of any sort, underlines the disillusionment felt by many on this issue.

The artificiality of the post-independence state in Africa and the obsession of African governments with the sovereignty of their countries, has made economic unity an elusive goal since the idea of surrendering any degree of national autonomy is still a foreign concept to most African leaders. In addition, the high dependency of African economies on the external purchase of their primary products is not compatible with the

⁹² Brown, *op. cit.*, p 141

⁹³ *Ibid*, p 142.

⁹⁴ Onimode, *A Future For Africa* cited by Michael Barratt Brown, *op. cit.*, p 139.

delegation of decision-making autonomy to a supranational body.⁹⁵ The stakes are simply too high, the responsibilities too many.

Gambia/ECOWAS

ECOWAS, established since 1975, is perhaps one of the boldest attempts at integration in terms of scope. Yet in spite of its ambitious schemes, the progress of ECOWAS has been limited. While the number of agreements signed between member states has proliferated, only timid attempts have been made at their implementation.⁹⁶ The inception of ECOWAS could largely be attributed to Nigeria's considerable influence and desire to establish a common market. Nigeria's attempt to co-opt reticent neighbours like Togo is relevant. Nigeria's use of "spray diplomacy", i.e. the offering of oil at concessional prices, grants and interest-free loans underlines Nigeria's desire to assume effective leadership in Africa.

In spite of France and Côte d'Ivoire's opposition to Nigeria's steely determination in establishing ECOWAS, this organisation was able to attract both francophone and anglophone countries, together with two lusophone countries. ECOWAS is the richest regional economic grouping in West and Central Africa. With a collective GDP of \$78 billion, it is also the largest economic bloc with a global population of 170 million inhabitants.⁹⁷ It groups 16 countries, Burkina Faso, Benin, Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo.

African Heads of State still see the ECOWAS organisation as an important instrument, and their assiduity at successive meetings is an indication of the significance they attach to it whatever its advantages or disadvantages. Indeed, the organisation has succeeded in some of its objectives; for instance it has set up a fund for co-operation, compensation and development, to alleviate the difficulties that poorer states face in meeting their financial commitments towards the organisation. Progress towards the freezing of customs tariffs has met with partial success though full implementation is still a

⁹⁵ Clapham (1996), *op. cit.*, p 119.

⁹⁶ C.Lancaster 'The Lagos three: economic regionalism in sub-Saharan Africa' in Harbeson et al, *op. cit.*, p 196.

⁹⁷ Brown, *op.cit*, p 141.

long way off.⁹⁸ From 1990, on the initiative of Nigeria, founding member and principal instigator of ECOWAS, a standing mediating committee was adopted. ECOWAS has since discovered renewed vigour in dealing with mediation among African leaders.

Prior to the establishment of the Standing Mediation Committee, the organisation facilitated the meeting of President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana and Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo; during the year, relations between the two Heads of State have been quite tense. Moreover, the Senegalese Head of State met with the Mauritanian Head of State, at an ECOWAS Heads of State conference, after the Senegalese/Mauritanian tension in 1989. These meetings are extremely useful in bilateral relations and enhance the diplomatic machinery since they afford leaders the opportunity to meet, usually on neutral ground. Personal relations between African leaders have always dictated the nature of bilateral relations on the continent. Invariably bad blood between leaders creates polarisation in a continent, which is already deeply divided.

The ECOMOG *ad hoc* peace keeping forces of ECOWAS, intervened in Liberia in 1990, in spite of the many divisions it revealed among African leaders. Consequently, ECOMOG has given ECOWAS the opportunity to engage in regional conflict management. The Liberian crisis and the attempt of ECOWAS to stabilise the region has been somewhat controversial, and has revealed the weakness of intra-African diplomacy.⁹⁹ Whether its political goals will meet more success than its economic ones, remains an enigma that belongs to the future.

Relations within ECOWAS have constituted an important element in The Gambia's regional foreign economic policy. In 1990, following the failure of the Senegambian confederation, the Gambian capital of Banjul was designated to host the ECOWAS May Summit.¹⁰⁰ In the light of its relationship with Senegal, the choice of Banjul was highly important for the leadership.¹⁰¹ The subject of Gambian membership will only be looked at in brief, since it has already received attention in this and previous chapters in terms of The Gambia's role within the ECOMOG peacekeeping force. ECOWAS afforded The Gambia the opportunity to pursue its multilateral diplomacy on a

⁹⁸ Lancaster, in Habeson et al, op. cit., p 196.

⁹⁹ S.Riley & M. Sesay "Liberia: after Abuja", *Review of African Political Economy* 23, 69 1996, pp 429-37.

¹⁰⁰ 'The Gambia, Senegambian confederation dissolved', *Africa Contemporary Record* 22, 1989-90, B 38.

wider plane. Despite the backing of Nigeria, ECOWAS continue to be dogged with financial difficulties, partly due to the absence of member-states that can meet their financial obligations.

The Liberian civil war in 1991 took place at a time when Jawara was the Chairman of ECOWAS. Thus as a symbolic gesture, it was expected of The Gambia to participate in the peace keeping force.¹⁰² The limitations of the Gambian National Army (GNA), poorly equipped as it was, with no planes or army trucks, meant that Gambian participation was indeed a token gesture on the part of the leadership.¹⁰³ The Nigerians offered to assist by providing transport for Gambian soldiers.¹⁰⁴

As Chairman of ECOMOG, Jawara travelled extensively to different capitals to muster the requisite funds needed in order to achieve a peaceful outcome of the civil war in Liberia.¹⁰⁵ He intimated that the intransigence of the factions in Liberia was such that the task proved quite daunting. The obstacles he avers to were not only from the factions involved but also from the member states supporting either faction thereby exacerbating the conflict and delaying a peaceful outcome.¹⁰⁶ He recounts that the Liberian situation was made even more complex because of the passivity of the international community. In all other areas, the solidarity of the international community was apparent, but with Liberia, even the US, (by virtue of its special relationship) fell short of expectations and manifested its impotence.¹⁰⁷

Questioned on the reasons behind the Gambian participation in the ECOMOG peacekeeping forces in Liberia, Jawara downplays the Gambian contribution as more of a token participation. He argued that the Gambian participation could in no way be compared to that of larger West African states such as Ghana and Nigeria whose contributions were far greater.¹⁰⁸ It would seem that Jawara's key role as Chairman of

¹⁰¹ Loc. cit.

¹⁰² Jawara in a personal interview confirms the point. Personal interview with Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex. In addition, Jack, former Permanent Secretary, and Omar Sey, former Foreign Minister, in an interview, echoed this point. Personal interviews with Sulayman Jack, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, 12 September 1996, Banjul. Personal interview with Sey, 9 September, 1996, Fajara.

¹⁰³ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara,.

¹⁰⁴ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara,.

¹⁰⁵ Personal interview with Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath Sussex,

¹⁰⁶ Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁷ Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁸ Personal interview with Jawara, Haywards Heath Sussex, 14 March 1996.

ECOWAS during the Liberian crisis was the main determinant in The Gambia's choice of participation rather than quiet diplomacy.

Gambia/OAU

The OAU charter is a reflection of the preoccupation of African leaders, given the principle of territorial integrity, to avoid further balkanisation of Africa given the artificiality of states. Yet the divisions, present at the very inception of the OAU, have gradually magnified in the course of the years. The number of intra-African conflicts has been remarkably few in number. Perhaps the Ethiopia/Somalia conflict over the disputed Ogaden in 1977 and the Morocco/Algeria conflict over the Tindouf region in 1963-64 are the most memorable. However, conflicts such as the Biafra Civil War in 1967, the Angolan civil war in 1975, the Western Sahara crisis which juxtaposed the ex-Spanish colony with Mauritania, Morocco and Algeria in 1976, the conflict in Chad in the late 1970s and the Liberian civil war in 1990, have to some extent collectively exposed the many cleavages between African states and the limits of political unity.

Yet the OAU has played a key role in helping liberation movements in their struggle to achieve self-rule. The Special Fund set up by a Commission in Tanzania is indicative of the OAU's solidarity. Undeniably, the principle of territorial integrity, a cardinal rule in the OAU charter has dissuaded African leaders from any nationalistic demands consisting of claiming a territory on the basis of ethnic or other affinities. Naturally the progress and success of the OAU is dependent on its member states and their political will to co-operate and translate their rhetoric of political unity into a real commitment.

As with most small states, the attainment of juridical statehood was further reinforced by The Gambia's membership of the OAU in 1965. The Gambian leadership has, on numerous occasions, invested a great deal of trust in the ability of the organisation to initiate peaceful and cordial relations between African states. Jawara also held responsible positions within the OAU as in 1968, when he was nominated for the second time to the vice-presidency of the organisation.¹⁰⁹ Jawara has also served on the wise men committee of the OAU, to mediate between feuding African states.

¹⁰⁹ The Gambia News Bulletin 26 September 1968.

However, what is of paramount importance is the way in which The Gambia has used the OAU to initiate structural and ethical changes. On the grounds of small size and paucity of resources, The Gambia urged member-states to revise the contribution of its own and other small states on a more equitable scale. Subsequently, The Gambia's contribution was brought down from 1.82 per cent to 0.7 per cent.¹¹⁰ The Gambia has subsequently put forwards structural proposals to cut the costs of maintaining the OAU.

On a more ethical standpoint, The Gambia was one of the countries that persuaded the OAU to adopt a Human Rights Charter. In recognition of The Gambia's role in the establishment of an African Human Rights charter, the capital city of Banjul was chosen as a venue to finalise what was to become known as the Banjul Charter. Jawara's respect for human rights had earned him international reputé and this was further acknowledged by the member states of the OAU when the African Human Rights Commission received unanimous votes from member states, agreeing to use Banjul as a headquarters. Indeed the question of human rights as articulated initially, has been one of the corner-stones of The Gambia's foreign policy. The Gambian leadership has reiterated the idea of human and individual rights in several international fora such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the UN and the OAU.

The establishment of the Human Rights Commission in Banjul, according to Jawara, was "one of the country's proudest foreign policy achievements".¹¹¹ It challenged the widely accepted notion that small states are invariably incapable of generating change on a wide scale. On the question of whether The Gambia used the subject of human rights to make a name for itself, Jawara discounted this assertion as inaccurate. He affirmed that the whole concept of human rights was based on conviction.¹¹² The fact that The Gambia succeeded in its efforts to assist in its institutionalisation came as a surprise to the Gambian leadership, since it had no knowledge of whether its efforts would be compensated.¹¹³

Jawara recounts that countries like Libya and Guinea did not appreciate the concept of human rights and were reticent about the adoption of an African Human

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Personal interview with Sir Dawda, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

¹¹² Personal interview with Sir Dawda, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

¹¹³ Loc. cit.

Rights charter.¹¹⁴ The Gambia's lobby to have the headquarters of the African Human Rights charter in Banjul is indicative of a small state garnering credibility for itself among its peers.

The Gambia within the OMVG

This organisation was created in 1978, as a result of a collective decision by the two founding member-states, The Gambia and Senegal to jointly exploit the Gambia River Basin. The organisation was modelled on the OMVS, the organisation of the development of the Senegal River, which includes Mali, Senegal, Mauritania and Guinea. The OMVG has been regarded as testimony to the absence of Senegambian co-operation since it has failed to construct a bridge across the River Gambia during the two decades since the idea was launched. The ferry crossing from Barra in The Gambia, has always been prone to delays, to the great irritation of the Senegalese. Indeed, the ferry, though an important source of income for The Gambia, is becoming more obsolete, with an engine which Senghor allegedly referred to as belonging to "prehistoric times".¹¹⁵

The bridge project has been dogged by several factors, from the height of the bridge, to the question of whether to construct a bridge/barrage instead of a bridge. The problem of funding, the debate over the leadership of the OMVG, and the recent question of ownership are all part of the legacy of the OMVG. Quibbles over whether a bridge should be built or whether it should be a bridge-barrage manifested themselves gradually. Initially, the idea of a bridge was accepted by both states, in anticipation of funding from the EEC.¹¹⁶ An arrangement was made which would yield the profits of a bridge payable by toll to The Gambia.

It is with the OMVG that The Gambia demonstrated a great deal of procrastination and confirmed the Senegalese leadership's conviction that it is prone to inconsistency. Nonetheless, The Gambia like Senegal, is situated in the drought-prone region of the Sahel, and the need for irrigated agriculture, in the absence of rain-fed agriculture, was felt by the Gambian leadership, to alleviate the effects of drought. The

¹¹⁴ Loc. cit.

¹¹⁵ Personal interview with Mbai Mbengue, former Senegalese High Commissioner to The Gambia, 30 August 1996, Dakar.

¹¹⁶ The Gambia News Bulletin 22 April 1975.

Gambian government had identified a potential additional 24,000 acres of extra land for cultivation in the event of construction of a bridge barrage, a solution to the problem of saline intrusion. The Senegalese found this proposal to their disadvantage. Senegal's gain would be in the form of better transportation facilities and easier access to the southern province of Casamance. The latter remains separated from Senegal because of The Gambia's awkward geographical position. Senegalese reticence stems from the fact that the bridge/barrage, as opposed to a simple bridge, would necessitate additional funding. The ultimate goals of the OMVG were considered to be of long-term benefits to the peoples of Senegambia, in terms of an increase in self-sufficiency, better transportation facilities, and an increase in trade.

However, the technocrats in both countries were constrained by bureaucratic squabbles and it seemed almost impossible to get around the problem. The membership of Guinea-Bissau and Guinea helped only minimally to diffuse the tension between The Gambia and Senegal, the two core member-states. The construction of a dam at Balingho in The Gambia, Kekreti, Senegal and at Kouya, Guinea were agreed upon during the Heads of States' 6th ordinary summit conference.¹¹⁷

According to one Gambian decision-maker, the bulk of the negotiations smacked of incompetence on the part of the Gambian team who had hardly done "their homework".¹¹⁸ He claims that at the inception of the OMVG, the Gambian Head of State, was given bad advice and informed that several enthusiastic donors would finance the bridge/barrage. Pakistan was of the few willing donors.¹¹⁹ However, the ADB the EEC, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and West Germany promised to earmark around \$51 million for the project.¹²⁰ The United States Agency for International Development, (USAID) pledged the sum of US\$13.4 million to the OMVG in the form of an agreement signed in 1981.¹²¹

Coupled with structural difficulties and a change in leadership of the OMVG, it was the study undertaken by the University of Michigan that put the final nail in the coffin. According to Nassirou Diallo, the actual executive secretary of the OMVG, the

¹¹⁷ Touray, op. cit., p 191-2.

¹¹⁸ Name withheld on request.

¹¹⁹ Personal interview with an insider, a key government decision-maker.

¹²⁰ *Africa Contemporary Record* 1980-1, p 483

¹²¹ For more information see *The Gambia News Bulletin* 2 November 1981.

Michigan study identified over 70 different hazards that would surface with the construction of a barrage.¹²² The study published its findings in 1985 and described the potential construction of the barrage as a major environmental hazard. Part of their findings on terrestrial ecology and the Gambia River Basin Development reads: "...the team identified a number of potentially severe negative impacts, including the extinction of one or two animal species in the Basin..."¹²³

Diallo refutes the claim that the organisation has shifted from being a potentially constructive organisation to a more polarised organ in which Senegalese and Gambian decision-makers articulate their differences. However, in a letter addressed to President Diouf, he highlights the lack of progress of the organisation due to claims by the Gambian leadership over the ownership of the bridge. The new Gambian leadership under Jammeh has blocked the progress of the bridge on the grounds that any bridge built on the Gambian River should be in the sole ownership of The Gambia. Senegal argues that such projects, according to the Treaty establishing the OMVG, should remain under the collective proprietorship of the member-states of the organisation. The OMVG has been commended by a World Bank report according to Diallo, for its new and positive orientation and its efficient leadership.¹²⁴ Whether a difference in orientation and structure will signal the beginning of real progress towards the construction of the bridge however, remains to be seen.

The Gambia and CILSS

The Gambia's membership of CILSS is motivated by pragmatism and the desire to work in concert with neighbouring countries facing problems such as drought. In 1973, The Gambia joined the organisation, yet real participation was fairly minimal in the first few years of Gambian membership.¹²⁵ CILSS comprises nine members, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia, Mauritania, Niger, Mali, and Senegal. The severity of the drought in The Gambia in the mid-1970s, and again in 1981, has been a major subject of preoccupation by countries in a region subjected to the vagaries of the

¹²² Personal interview with Nassirou Diallo, Executive Secretary of the OMVG, 22 August 1997, Dakar.

¹²³ 'Terrestrial Ecology and Gambia River Basin Development', *The University of Michigan* (Centre for Research on Economic Development and Great Lakes and Marine Water Centre, The University of Michigan with Harza Engineering Company, 1985), p 3.

¹²⁴ Personal interview with Nassirou Diallo, 22 August 1996, Dakar.

¹²⁵ Touray, *op. cit.*, p 199.

weather. With Jawara elected as Chairman of CILSS in 1977, the problem of self-sufficiency in food and the effects of drought provided an added incentive and increased The Gambia's participation within the organisation.

The Gambia continues to be affected by food shortages and in the mid 1980s, the country was hit by another severe bout of drought, which caused agricultural production to plummet considerably.¹²⁶ In 1978 Badara Njie, former Vice-President told the House that The Gambia derives a lot of benefit as a member of CILSS.¹²⁷ CILSS has been involved in some development projects as well as the Fishery and Forestry programmes. It has made available some equipment to the Hydromet department in The Gambia coupled with food aid to alleviate the effects of drought.¹²⁸ The Gambia prides itself on its role in CILSS. The fact that Jawara was elected Chairman of CILSS and a subsequent meeting convened in The Gambia, signified in the eyes of the government, that its foreign policy was paying off and that The Gambia was slowly coming out of oblivion.

Jawara's nomination as chairman of CILSS in 1977, meant an intensified Gambian involvement within the organisation. Under his leadership, enthusiasm for self-sufficiency increased. The Gambian leadership sought to make known the needs of the organisation in such international fora as the United Nations General Assembly, itself a valuable platform for increasing awareness on problems specific to West African countries in the Sahel region.¹²⁹

The Gambia's participation under CILSS grew as donor countries were urged by the Gambian leadership to help in the facilitation of capital in-flow with favourable loan terms, that would be tailored to the needs of Sahelian countries.¹³⁰ As well as hosting numerous meetings relating to the needs of the Organisation, in October 1982, Banjul under the auspices of CILSS, Banjul hosted a four-day regional seminar on the theme of ecology and rain forestry.¹³¹

By 1980, The Gambia's mandate as Chairman of the organisation had come to an end. Yet its intense involvement in the activities of the organisation continued. In the

¹²⁶ The Gambia News Bulletin, 7 September 1983.

¹²⁷ The Gambia News Bulletin 21 January 1978.

¹²⁸ Loc. cit.

¹²⁹ Touray, op. cit., p 200.

¹³⁰ Ibid, p 201.

aftermath of severe drought in the Sahel in 1983-84, The Gambia, like other countries suffered from a shortfall in production estimated at 50 per cent of normal crops.¹³² This event in the whole of the Sahel necessitated a fresh appeal to the international community to help towards alleviating the consequences of drought in the Sahel. It won positive and prompt response from the Italian government which witnessed an unprecedented bill adopted by the Italian parliament agreeing to allocate the sum of \$3 billions towards the eradication of hunger and its twin component disease in the developing world.¹³³ President Jawara was assigned an honourable duty in which he has to plead for the African case.¹³⁴

Given the relevance of famine and disease in Africa, Jawara's role was highly influential in his prime role as Africa's spokesperson. This role was a great boost for the Gambian leadership and a testimony that Gambian diplomacy had irrespective of obvious limitations, scored another decisive point. Apart from Jawara's crucial role in bringing to awareness the innumerable disadvantages relating to famine and starvation, the Gambian Minister of Agriculture Saihou Sabally, in his capacity as chairman of the Council of Ministers of CILSS, visited Tunisia and Morocco to lobby for more support.¹³⁵ Italian support also triggered assistance from organisations such as Club du Sahel, BADEA, Arab states and the OAU.¹³⁶

The Gambia strongly backed an OAU initiative, which sought to give support to African countries undergoing the consequences of drought, by setting an emergency fund.¹³⁷ Countries such as Algeria, with a contribution of \$10 million were commended for their support, and more than \$500 million was disbursed to help African countries prone to drought to resolve drought-related problems.¹³⁸ The Gambia has maintained its participatory role within CILSS and its contribution towards the realisation of the objectives and implementation of the organisation has been significant. The Gambia prides itself in its contribution to regional bodies . Jawara argued:

¹³¹ Loc. cit.

¹³² Ibid, p 102.

¹³³ Ibid, p 203.

¹³⁴ Touray, op.cit, p 203.

¹³⁵ Ibid, p 204.

¹³⁶ Loc. cit.

¹³⁷ Loc. cit.

¹³⁸ Loc. cit.

First of all one naturally wants to see one's country develop socio-economically, which of course one would see that it cannot be done in isolation, you have to interact with your neighbours even in concentric circles, you have to live with your neighbours in peace and harmony and together create a positive atmosphere, this is why we immediately gave our full support to OMVG, in the same way we gave our full support to ECOWAS right from the word go, and we played our part fully within that organ and then in the wider circle OAU, and in all these regional organisation such as CILSS, The Gambia's participation is disproportionate to its size.¹³⁹

The Gambia's active diplomatic activities in West African regional bodies stems from its domestic economic needs which are in consonant with its West African neighbours. Thus active participation could not be interpreted solely as a small state asserting itself in a wider framework, but also in the lights that effort made in the West African arena would bear fruitful outcomes in the domestic scene. Thus The Gambia was able to benefit from a \$67 million disbursed by the donor states of which 36 per cent money required for implementation of The Gambia's national projects as part of CILSS general development schemes.¹⁴⁰

However, it should be emphasised that for a country the size of The Gambia, its foreign policy stance within regional bodies such as OAU, ECOWAS, CILSS, OMVG, is highly impressive. Anxious to make its contribution to lofty principles such as regional peace and stability, cognisant of the rewards of good neighbourliness, and conscious of its economic limitations and the need to foster strong ties of co-operation with states sharing common problems, The Gambia conducted an pragmatic and idealistic foreign policy that afforded its leadership credibility, respect and recognition world-wide.

The Gambia's attitude towards liberation movements.

The absence of a traumatic colonial experience has encouraged the Gambian leadership to afford its support to liberation movements. The Gambia started off with those closest to home, the P.A.I.G.C., in their combined efforts to liberate the peoples of Guinea Bissau

¹³⁹ Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

¹⁴⁰ Touray, op.cit., p 206.

and Cape Verde from colonial subjugation. Similarly, Jawara, in his 1972 address, stressed that his government “will continue to support morally and otherwise the just wars of liberation in Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Guinea Bissau in accordance with the principles of the Lusaka Manifesto of 1969 and the principles of the OAU”.¹⁴¹

In 1975, an M.P.L.A mission visited The Gambia to inform The Gambian Head of State of recent developments in Angola. The delegation was received by the Minister of External Affairs, Mr Alieu Badara Njie and Yaya Ceesay, Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources.¹⁴² The delegation spoke of the solidarity and the support they received from the Gambian government and would duly inform the leaders of the M.P.L.A of the outcome of their visit to The Gambia.¹⁴³ This visit attests to The Gambia’s modest contribution in giving support to liberation movements like the M.P.L.A in the face of Portuguese imperialism and the repression of the Angolan people. Fortunately for The Gambia, independence was virtually handed over on a silver platter. On that basis, and also on the grounds of principles, The Gambia felt a sense of duty to help other countries’ liberation movements in their struggle for self-rule.

In 1976, prior to former President Senghor’s state visit, Sir Dawda commented on The Gambia’s position in Angola and affirmed that The Gambia’s policy regarding Angola was in line with that of the OAU and it would not recognise any movements since this would cause hostility among rival groups.¹⁴⁴ However, he urged South Africa to withdraw its troops from Angola and stressed the need for a cease-fire.¹⁴⁵ The Gambia had decided to adopt a policy of neutrality and on that basis, decided its unwillingness to recognise any of the three movements MPLA, UNITA, and FNLA.¹⁴⁶

In the case of the Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU), led by the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, and Robert Mugabe’s ZANU (PF), the question of succession was resolved by the resounding electoral victory of ZANU (PF) in 1980. While advocating the principle of self-determination, the Gambian government was resolute in its policy of non-recognition of any liberation movements until they

¹⁴¹ The Gambia News Bulletin 20 September 1972.

¹⁴² The Gambia News Bulletin 24 May 1975.

¹⁴³ Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁴ The Gambia News Bulletin 15 January 1976.

¹⁴⁵ Loc. cit.

demonstrated a more patent evidence of statehood, i.e., the constitution of a government and the effective control of territories involved.¹⁴⁷ The victory of ZANU (PF), coupled with support from the OAU, justified The Gambia's criteria of statehood and, subsequently was followed by the latter's recognition.

The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), received The Gambia's full approval. The case of Namibia has also been studied in the course of our thesis. Suffice it to say that The Gambia continued to help Namibian refugees in The Gambia and Namibian children through child fostering and sponsorship of secondary education.

The Gambia and the wider African setting

Relations between The Gambia and Libya have been examined in their various aspects in previous chapters. The fact that relations between the two states have received considerable attention from previous scholars on The Gambia's external relations, does not therefore necessitate an elaborate analysis of the subject.¹⁴⁸ The events leading to the break off of Gambia-Libyan relations in 1980, have already been mentioned in previous chapters. Prior to this, the two states had co-operated fully particularly in the area of transport. The joint agreement for a public transport corporation scheme was designed to improve standards in the area of public transport in The Gambia.¹⁴⁹

The Libyan government, in earmarking \$250,000 for the transportation scheme, announced its intention to provide 20 buses.¹⁵⁰ Omar Ahmed Mughsi, Libyan Minister of Food Affairs and Health, also disclosed his government's intention of providing scholarships grants for Gambians wishing to study in Libya. Discussion of a Gambian mission was also tipped to be underway.¹⁵¹ Mughsi also pledged to the former Minister of Works, Sir Ahaji Sulayman Jack, the sum of \$30,000 towards the construction of a mosque and of an Islamic school in Brikama.¹⁵² Relations intensified during the remaining three years, but reached low ebb in 1980 when The Gambia decided to sever ties with

¹⁴⁶ The Gambia News Bulletin 5 February 1976.

¹⁴⁷ The Gambia News Bulletin 24 May 1975.

¹⁴⁸ Touray, op. cit., pp 156-161, Gomez, op. cit., pp 380-1.

¹⁴⁹ 'Libyans foresee greater co-operation', The Gambia News Bulletin 25 February 1975

¹⁵⁰ The Gambian National Bulletin 25 February 1975.

¹⁵¹ Loc. cit.

¹⁵² Loc. cit.

Libya. Relations were restored in the mid-1980s. According to former foreign Minister, Omar Sey, Sir Dawda's role as chairman of the ICO, mediating chiefly between Iran/Iraq, necessitated that The Gambia needed to be on good terms with all member states of the organisation. However, relations between the two states remained rather minimalist and reached a high point in the wake of the July 1994 coup.

Over the years, Libya has been heavily engaged in the Islamisation of foreign policy, providing Libyan largesse to poorer states in Black Africa. Libya's interference in the internal affairs of states is quite notorious and events in Chad in the mid-1970s, remain a classic example. What is interesting regarding Gambia-Libyan relations is the fact that even a small state could refuse economic aid if it jeopardises the internal security of the regime.

Regarding the hitherto apartheid regime in South Africa, the Gambian leadership strongly condemned a regime that subjugated the masses for the benefit of the few. The leadership continued its stringent criticism in most international fora, particularly the OAU, and reiterated its views on apartheid in joint communiqués during the visits of African leaders to The Gambia. Jawara stated that his government was not only "anti-racist, it was anti-apartheid". The Gambia's relations towards Southern Africa as mentioned in previous chapters has always been consistent, i.e. condemnation of oppressive, minority, racist regimes.

Regarding Rhodesia, The Gambia vehemently condemned the Ian Smith regime but refused to be dragged into an Anglo/African crisis by threatening to withdraw from the Commonwealth, as did a number of other countries. It maintained that Britain was the main link in the conflict and that severance of links with Britain could mean a failure to resolve the conflict.¹⁵³ However, The Gambia subsequently criticised British foreign policy in Rhodesia, in spite of the economic support it has been receiving from the former colonial overlord.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 14 July 1996, Banjul..

¹⁵⁴ The Gambia National Bulletin 20 January 1972.

CONCLUSION

The Gambia has used its regional space to strengthen its relations with African leaders, and promote cohesion and co-operation between neighbouring states. The policy of the good neighbour was strictly pursued to extend The Gambia's circle of friends. The rapprochement in Gambian-West African relations was symbolised by personal diplomacy and the need to court neighbouring countries regardless of their colonial heritage. The low ebb in relations between The Gambia and Senegal coincided with the diplomatic opening of relations between The Gambia and its other West African neighbours. This gesture underlined the determination of the Gambian leadership to exploit its West African space and avoid over-reliance, or rather a stifling relationship with Senegal.

Although, the personalisation of foreign policy has had certain structural advantages, intensified foreign diplomacy has alienated the leadership from its base and magnified personal diplomacy as a sophisticated public relations exercise. These communiqués provide an opportunity for Heads of State to re-affirm their views on African affairs and the nature of their friendship. Thus these visits are invariably a way of re-appraising and re-affirming common goals and the need for effective co-operation. The number of real, concrete policies that evolve from these visits is minimal.

The use of rhetorical foreign policy is quite prevalent in The Gambia's relations with neighbouring countries. Although the need to co-operate with its West African neighbours was demonstrated, real implementation was not always forthcoming. Limited resources in both human and natural terms have circumscribed The Gambia's foreign policy scope and implementation.

Interestingly, although the Gambian leadership demonstrated a great deal of enthusiasm in multilateral summitry and in regional blocs (ECOWAS, CILSS, and OAU), it is quite puzzling that when such bodies include Senegal the two countries seemed to be imprisoned in a conflict of interest, with little progress being achieved. The OMVG is symptomatic of the Senegambian malaise.

The Gambia's active participation in regional organisations is highly significant. The fact that the Gambian leadership has been uninhibited and undertaken considerable structural and ethical changes within the OAU is indeed a rarity particularly if we are to believe the contention put forward by scholars on the behaviour of small states. The Gambia, in spite of its small size has sought to make a name for itself through the strengthening of a genuine foundation.

CHAPTER 7: The Gambia and Senegal, the Politics of Co-operation and Self-determination

It is common for scholars to underline the ethnic, cultural, and geographical affinities of The Gambia and Senegal as part of an introductory outline. These natural factors as has been mentioned in previous chapters, are so obtrusive that one cannot discount their importance. Nonetheless, while these factors have remained constant, the nature of the relationship between The Gambia and Senegal has moved from dialogue to breakdown in communication, progression to regression. The question that needs to be asked is, are natural attributes, ethnic affinities, geographical contiguity and the like, sufficient in themselves to build an edifice of lasting union? Throughout the history of the region it has been not so much the will of the people but that of governments that has been given priority. The people have been in a subordinate position, their aspirations less prioritised than those of governments.

The relationship between The Gambia and Senegal could itself be the subject of a thesis. Indeed the nature of the relationship is so extensive it cannot be fully explored within the confines of a single chapter. While this chapter does not cherish any such pretensions, it attempts to look at the key factors, political, economic and social, that have affected or hindered relations between The Gambia and Senegal. The aim here is not to expound on every issue that has transpired between the two states, but rather to evaluate the core and divisive issues that have contributed to making an enduring Senegambian union elusive.

The Gambia's relations with Senegal may be classified into five periods. The first of these periods runs from pre-independence to 1970. The attitudes of key protagonists, Britain Senegal and The Gambia in the period leading up to independence will be examined as a premise towards greater understanding of the Senegambian concept. The role, perceptions and attitudes of Britain in Senegambian relations provide a unique contribution to the study. Primary sources and archival material in the form of correspondence from 1961-1965 and actions taken to bring the two countries together are analysed, in order to determine the attitude of the British colonial establishment vis-à-vis Senegambia. The political class in Senegal meanwhile, had compelling reasons to espouse the idea of a union between The Gambia and Senegal, yet the long-term realisation of this aspiration remained elusive. In the

Gambia itself, a fluid and volatile political climate produced mixed reactions to the concept of a Senegambian union. Analysis and explanation for the Gambia's decision to choose independence and shun unity with Senegal will be advanced.

Secondly, the period from 1970-74, when The Gambia forged ahead with a policy of developing relations with other players in the sub-region will be discussed. Integration becomes a far-reaching goal during this period when differences in colonial heritage trade policies and economic philosophies created major stumbling blocks. However, attempts at institutional integration were undertaken between 1961-74. Organs such as the Inter-state Ministerial Committee, Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat and the OMVG, were established to enhance economic, political and other forms of co-operation between the two states

Thirdly, the period 1974-80 marks a period of relatively peaceful coexistence and détente in Senegambian relations although The Gambia's continuing foreign policy expansion was manifested in its support for admitting Guinea to the OMVG. Nonetheless, this period could be seen as a watershed insofar as attempts were made by both governments to resolve disputes arising from maritime or border boundaries. In addition, renewed commitment to joint development was undertaken and the proliferation of treaties and agreements at this time underlines the seriousness of both governments to make co-operation a priority.

Fourthly, the Senegambian confederation from 1982-89 marks a watershed period of unity between the two countries, but it also served to make apparent a renewed form of disunity. Thus, it is necessary as a prelude to any discussion of this period, to review the events of the July 1981 coup, which served as a catalyst and precursor to the establishment of the confederation. Attempts at political unity are important since they tend to show the differences in perception between the Gambian and Senegalese leaderships. In a similar vein, union did not serve to alleviate chronic problems such as smuggling but rather laid bare old suspicions from both sides. Meanwhile, imbalances of representation on institutional and government bodies during this period served to confirm The Gambia's suspicions of Senegalese attempts to keep the latter in a position of subservience

Fifthly, the period 1989-94 marks the end of confederation and the beginning of a Senegalese offensive towards its tiny neighbour. Border closures and the harassment meted out by Senegalese customs officers to Gambian nationals travelling to and from Senegal further undermined relations. The Gambia's attempt to solidify ties with other West African countries, i.e. Nigeria and Mauritania, was triggered more by domestic needs than an attempt to re-define its circle of friends. Efforts at resolving differences with Senegal, through the signature of the 1990 friendship treaty, is testimony that for the Gambian leadership, even a much diluted form of unity and co-operation with Senegal was preferred to inimical relations.

Global attitudes and perceptions of key actors towards Senegambia

British colonial establishment vis-à-vis Senegambia

References to Anglo-Gambian relations have been limited to historical, technical and material assistance with odd references to The Gambia's ability to escape neo-colonial tendencies in spite of British largesse.¹ With the wave of independence in the 1960s and the colonial period in Africa drawing to a close, the British government found itself in a dilemma regarding the future of its tiny West African colony. The small size and poor natural endowment of The Gambia represented to Britain impediments to its continued existence as a separate entity. The British government remained reticent on The Gambia's ability to survive as a sovereign state and viewed an independent Gambia as a potential responsibility and liability.

Thus after Senegal's independence in 1960, this reticence, together with factors of geographical proximity and ethnic contiguity, persuaded Britain that The Gambia should unite with Senegal in the interests of all concerned.² From then onwards, the colonial establishment in Bathurst (former Gambian capital, now Banjul), together with its Foreign office in London and its mission in Dakar, set about bringing The Gambia and Senegal into political and economic union. Given The Gambia's reticence and fear of losing its identity, the British colonial establishment played a formidable role in allaying Gambian fears. It

¹ Hughes (1983), op. cit., p 58.

² Robson (1968), op. cit., p 273.

urged the Senegalese to take a more active role and to proceed with the business of union with utmost immediacy. As this correspondence from the British embassy in Dakar to the Foreign Office in London reveals:

...The alternatives are all considerably worse, both for The Gambia and ourselves. But the advantages of the union with Senegal are not yet clear to most Gambians – certainly not as clear as some of the real or imagined difficulties. What we need is something to catch the imagination, as well as what the Governor calls “a very much more positive line by H.M.G”. A positive line will be necessary not only with the Gambians as the Governor suggests, but also with the Senegalese who seem to me rather complacent and unimaginative as well....³

The colonial establishment sought to induce decision-makers from both sides to see their futures as indivisible. The strategies used to achieve this end were both complex and over-lapping. First, the positive aspects of development of the River Gambia were emphasised. The proposal to develop the River Gambia, however attractive, required concrete action such as the disbursement of funds from international donors to enable preliminary surveys to take place. There was a perceptible air of urgency on the part of Britain so that union between the two states would be a *fait accompli* before Gambian elections in 1962. It was feared that after the elections the autonomous internal government of The Gambia would become preoccupied with “running its own parochial little affairs, join various organisations etc. and the longer this lasts the harder a union with Senegal will be to achieve”.⁴

Second, it was important to get the contending parties to work together in close collaboration. Senegalese fears about the prospects of a Gambian/Ghanaian rapprochement were downplayed, since such a possibility would augment the risk of subversive actions against Senegal. In addition, Senegalese leaders were worried about the possibility of a leftist government in The Gambia, because this would enjoy the support of Ghana and make Senegambian union remote. As the then former British Governor in The Gambia, warned:

³ PRO (London), FO 371/161579, File JE 1061/12, dd. Dakar, 23 February 1962.

⁴ PRO (London), FO371/161579, File JE1061/12, J.H.A. Watson to Stevens, dd. Dakar, 23 February 1962.

...I realise that pressure on The Gambia to reach an agreement with Senegal is not altogether consistent with various statements that have been made from time to time and might be politically difficult for a British government. The alternative, however, could well be that Gambia plods grimly on along the road to full independence, however nonsensical in terms of money or anything else, secure in a British guarantee to protect her and, by inference, a British guarantee to finance her. At worst it could mean an unhappy collaboration with Ghana in being a sort of West African Trieste.⁵

Third, the British government publicly advocated a “hands off” policy, avoiding accusations of interference and neo-colonialism by African states or external observers, while exerting pressure on the parties concerned behind the diplomatic scenes. By posing as The Gambia’s natural protector, the British government emphasised its indispensable role as a provider of advice and assistance and used The Gambia’s precarious economic situation to induce the Gambian leadership to act promptly in the interest of unity.

Fourth, the British colonial establishment also sought to give indiscreet advice to the Gambian leadership to ensure that the latter was not outmanoeuvred by Senegal. Consequently, another of the strategies employed by the British government was to make The Gambia’s attainment of independence conditional on the outcome of negotiations with Senegal. In addition, it appealed to the UN on behalf of The Gambia to initiate a study exploring the potential fiscal, economic, political and other outcomes of union with Senegal.

As far as the Senegalese political class was concerned, Britain sought first to reassure the Senegalese leadership of British unwillingness to challenge Senegalese aspirations of union with The Gambia. Second it gauged the political situation in The Gambia and Britain urged the Senegalese to act promptly. Third it helped to promote and foster an atmosphere of peace and unity to accommodate the fears and reservations of both sides

However by the time of the 1962 elections, British predictions of dwindling Gambian interest in a Senegambian union proved to be true and by 1964, British patience over The

⁵ PRO (London), FO371/161579. File JE 1061/2. Sir E. Windley, to Colonial Office, dd. Bathurst, dd. 8 February 1962.

Gambia's procrastination was running out. The British decision to use the Gambia River to entice the leadership of The Gambia to enter into union with Senegal was pursued on a wider level. It was decided that British aid would only be granted to The Gambia if the latter became part of a Senegambian union. By the same token, subtle diplomatic coercion was employed vis-à-vis western donors. Thus the US, French and German governments were lobbied by Britain, to refuse assistance to an independent Gambia, unless it was an integral part of Senegambia. This aspect of British assistance in terms of aid and other assistance will be discussed in Chapter 8 as part of The Gambia's foreign economic policies.

With Gambian insistence on independence before union, the British establishment was then faced with the unwanted prospect of an independent Gambia. By March 1964, the British government was making known its unwillingness to exert further pressure on The Gambia regarding a union with Senegal as both sides had now clearly been lobbied. While The Gambia's interests were marginally taken into consideration, it was British pecuniary interest that was of overriding importance. Thus, the concept of Senegambia was not pursued by Britain in the interests of African unity, a much-prescribed ethos of the 1960s. British failure to achieve the desired outcome was due to several factors:

- first, the resolve of the Gambian leadership to resist pressure from both the British and Senegalese governments to make union with Senegal conditional to attainment of independence;
- second, the lack of political will among the Senegalese governing élite to make annexation of The Gambia a primary motive;
- third, the reluctance of the British government to make public its diplomatic involvement in Senegambian union, without risking accusations of neo-colonialism by the various interest groups or of attempting to evade its responsibility vis-à-vis its colony;
- fourth, the equivocal role played by the British government attempting to assume the role of referee, player, and observer in Senegambian negotiations;
- fifth, French unwillingness to interfere in Senegambian negotiations coupled with the absence of concrete tangible economic advantages that could attract the Gambian leadership to become part of a Senegambian union;

- sixth, the wave of decolonisation in the 1960s and the general ethos geared towards self-determination, however bleak the political and economic outcomes will be for some countries;
- finally, the absence of precedents similar to the Senegambian scenario made Gambian decision makers sceptical of the likelihood of success.

For Senegal, The Gambia represented a security threat. The Gambia's position meant that Senegal was partially isolated from its southern province of Casamance and the location of the Gambia made overland access to Casamance from Dakar very awkward. In addition, The Gambia's political immaturity made it vulnerable to radical countries such as Ghana, thus potentially compromising Senegalese sovereignty and security. The prospect of the absorption of Portuguese Guinea by Guinea Conakry could have induced Casamançais irredentism to join these states.⁶ Acquisition of The Gambia, therefore, would increase Senegalese leverage over Casamance and possibly alter such scenarios. The Gambia was viewed as less of an economic threat in the 1960s than as a security risk which encouraged the Senegalese leadership to seek union as an elimination of the risks posed.⁷

However, with the failure of the Mali Federation still fresh in the minds of Senegalese decision-makers, union with The Gambia was pursued in a diffident manner. It took British encouragement and reassurance before the Senegalese government adopted a more active role. Nonetheless, with the 1962 PPP electoral victory in The Gambia and fears of Senegalese annexation, Senegalese leaders adopted a different semantic use of the word "union", preferring instead "loose form of association".⁸ They had previously favoured the rival contender, P.S Njie and his United Party, against the PPP/DCA alliance, which was dubbed "pro-Ghana". Nonetheless the extent of The Gambia's obsession with Senegalese annexation, and other preoccupations real or putative, clearly exasperated the Senegalese. As Watson, British Ambassador in Dakar, in his correspondence to the Foreign Office in London stated:

I took the opportunity today of seeking Mamadou Dia... to hand him a slightly watered down version of the list of anxieties on this score in Kenneth Smith's Secret

⁶ PRO (London), FO 371/161579, JE 1061/2, J.H.A Watson to R. Rogers, dd. Dakar, 8 February 1962.

⁷ Loc. cit.

⁸ PRO (London), FO37/161579, File JE 1061/22, J.H.A. Watson to R. Stevens, dd. Dakar, 6 June 1962.

letter to me (S3116B) of March 15. I explained that these were merely an unofficial compilation of complaints by Gambians that had come to our notice, but for which we of course accepted no responsibility.⁹

It would seem that both the Senegalese and the Gambian leaderships had come to an agreement whereby the former would avoid giving support to the rival UP party in The Gambia, and the latter would agree to keep Senegambia out of the 1962 electoral debate. Once the elections were over, the Senegalese leadership adopted a more active role geared towards the realisation of a Senegambian union. Having achieved British assurances regarding union with The Gambia, British involvement in negotiations was deemed uncomfortable by the Senegalese government, which feared that Britain would attempt to ensure that The Gambia got more than a fair deal. Watson concludes:

...the Senegalese wanted two things from us, that we approved the idea in principle, and with which Gambians they would have to deal. They now know both these things, and they no longer really want to bring us very closely into the discussion. On the contrary they seem to me to feel they would be able to drive a harder bargain with the Gambians without us, because we would inevitably want to obtain a better deal for the Gambians and would probably show them how to get it.¹⁰

Thus determined to achieve union without too much sacrifice on their part, the Senegalese sought to proceed in the following ways.

- first, seek a looser form of union which would solve problems relating to the use of English and guarantee the value of English degrees for lawyers and Gambian doctors;
- second, underline the importance of allowing Gambian assets to be developed in consonance with the existing Senegalese Development Plan; and finally make financial offers to leading Gambian politicians in the form of bribes to facilitate union.¹¹

⁹ PRO (London), FO37/161579, File JE 1061 J.H.A. Watson to G.E. Millard, dd. Dakar, March 1962.

¹⁰ PRO (London), FO37/161579, File JE 1061/22, J.H.A. Watson to R. Stevens, dd. Dakar, 6 June 1962.

¹¹ Loc. cit. Watson stated that the Senegalese government was more enthusiastic to embark on the third prospect, which consisted of affording pecuniary benefits to leading Gambian politicians.

The Senegalese sought to exert pressure on the Gambian leadership by issuing communiqués, possibly geared towards perturbing public opinion.¹² While advocating union with The Gambia, Senegalese leaders gave the impression that The Gambia would represent a financial burden in the event of association. As Palliser's letter suggests:

In conversation with her Majesty's Ambassador or myself, President Senghor and other leading Senegalese have sometimes adopted a rather patronising tone towards their small neighbour, implying that association is bound to be onerous and expensive for Senegal, but with characteristic Senegalese altruism they are prepared to accept this in the interest of the Gambia itself.¹³

This attitude is characteristic of Senegalese relations with The Gambia whereby Dakar, perhaps due to its important role as the former capital role of the *Afrique Occidentale Française* (AOF), tended to adopt a 'superior' attitude towards its tiny neighbour.

The Gambian Political Class and the Senegambian Issue : 1961-1965

As articulated in previous chapters, the volatility and uncertainty of the period affected the political situation in The Gambia. The nature of the political entity that was to succeed the British administration became a subject of great preoccupation for the contending leaders. The first half of the 1960s marks the decolonisation period, with Ghana, throwing down the gauntlet in 1957, followed by Senegal and Nigeria in 1960, and Sierra Leone in 1961. It seemed inevitable that The Gambia would follow suit, regardless of its unusual shape and location, its small size and population. Its unique geographical location also presented tangible difficulties. Towards the end of the 1950s, significant political changes occurred in Western Africa. The Mali Federation was rapidly disintegrating, and it was evident that a decision regarding The Gambia's future status would have to be reached by Britain in concert with The Gambia's political leaders. In addition, the decision of the Macmillan government to hasten British disengagement in West Africa gave a sense of urgency to The

¹² PRO (London), FO 371, File JE 1061/22 P.A. Gore to Watson, dd. London, 19 July 1962.

¹³ PRO (London), FO37/161579 File, JE1067/51 Palliser to Foreign Office, dd. Dakar 23 October 1962.

Gambia's potential independence. The "winds of change" that were blowing through the sub-region led to nationalistic outbursts, signalling the end of British rule.

Irrespective of the positive steps taken by The Gambia towards constitutionalism, the question of complete sovereignty seemed risky, given the country's weak economic base and its absolute deficiency in primary resources.¹⁴ The Malta Scheme¹⁵ favoured by Sir Percy Wyn Harris, (British Governor in The Gambia from 1953-58) was considered, but this idea faltered as plans were aborted. However, similar arrangements had been concluded between France and its West Indies. Wyn Harris favoured a Channel Island model, i.e. local autonomy and U.K protection.¹⁶ Similar schemes were adopted for the smaller British Caribbean dependencies- 'Associated States'

The preoccupation of the political class was manifested in the form of a leadership crisis triggered by the imminent disengagement of Britain. This signalled the start of a political struggle to determine which of the contenders should lead the country into statehood. Deliberations amongst the political élite on the question of union with Senegal meanwhile remained divisive with lack of clarity in individual positions. I.B.M Garba-Jahumpha, opposition leader of the Gambia Muslim Congress, advocated the Malta Scheme as the appropriate solution for The Gambia, yet in a radio broadcast in Dakar in 1959 he proposed that The Gambia should seek membership of the Mali Federation. Union with Senegal was presented as the ultimate loss of sovereignty and of Gambian identity. Membership of the Mali Federation would also yield the above outcome, but moreover, it would efface the British legacy by recognising France as the ultimate patron of the states within the federation.

Severance of ties with Britain either by will or by twists of fate, was unacceptable to local chiefs and Gambians politicians who identified themselves first in terms of their colonial heritage. Reverend J.C Faye, leader of the DCA (Democratic Congress Alliance, a merger between Faye's Democratic Party and Jahumpha's Gambia Muslim Congress), insisted on the difference in heritage, which he saw as a dichotomy between the French and British influence. Thus Senegalese administration and "culture" was seen as 'tainted' by the French heritage in

¹⁴ Welch, *op. cit.*, p 270.

¹⁵ For more information on the details and arrangements regarding the scheme, see Welch, pp 270-2.

¹⁶ Wyn-Harris, personal interview with Arnold Hughes.

the same manner as was The Gambia by its long interactions with Britain.¹⁷ Jahumpha's position was perhaps the most inconsistent in the light of his previous proposals. While he advocated strong ties with Senegal, he insisted on The Gambia safeguarding its "integrity and status as a state".¹⁸ The Gambian leadership harboured real fears at the prospect of losing its identity and particularly the British legacy.

This fear was particularly evident amongst the "*Akus*", the ethnic group constituting the backbone of the civil administration in the 1960s and expected by the British colonial establishment to articulate the most vocal opposition to Senegambia. The last British Governor in Bathurst, Sir John Paul, underlined the indelible British connection that the *Akus* have come to associate themselves with:

To these people the retention of "the British connection" in some form is a key point. As you are aware it is also a point to which Jawara, together with some Ministers, attaches the greatest importance...Frankly I do not think it is going to be possible to pull this Senegambia association off if the British Government is not prepared to accept the importance of attempting to retain in such ways as we can contrive the British connection, and to take constructive steps to this end.¹⁹

P.S Njie on the other hand did not conceal his preference for a Sengambian union. His affinities as a Wollof and his desire to curtail what he perceived as a potential Mandinka 'exodus' from the provincial areas to Banjul, made union with Senegal the ideal option. Association with the latter would help to maintain an urban Wollof hegemony and a solution to The Gambia's problems.²⁰ These ethnic considerations were sealed by his kinship with Senegalese Minister of the Interior, Valdiodio N'diaye, a cousin of Njie.²¹ Their affinities were further cemented through their common lineage; both Njie and Ndiaye traced their origins to a Sine Saloum family of some nobility.²²

¹⁷ Reverend J.C Faye, cited by Welch, op. cit., p 273.

¹⁸ Welch, op. cit., p 273.

¹⁹ PRO (London), FO371/161579, File JE1061/4, J.Paul to Eastwood, dd. Bathurst, 19 January 1962.

²⁰ Hughes (1983), op. cit., p 5.

²¹ Loc. cit.

²² Welch, op. cit., p 273

Njie, whose position as the first Gambian Chief Minister accorded him a certain degree of political leverage to add to his strong foothold in urban Bathurst, watched the political pendulum swing in favour of Jawara in the 1962 elections. Jawara's almost landslide victory as the leader of the PPP gave him a considerable edge and made him the likely contender to lead The Gambia to statehood. The issue of Senegambia, though carefully relegated to secondary level, now resumed a primary position in the political debate. The accusations meted out by Jawara, during Njie's tenure of office, namely blaming the latter for "selling" Gambian interests to Senegal, were now repeated by Njie, accusing Jawara of the same "sin".

It was now even more apparent that Senegambia was a party political issue, extrapolated and seized upon by successive party leaders for political ends. The PPP government, in the aftermath of its 1962 victory, decided to embark speedily on negotiations with Senegal in spite of opposition from members of Jawara's own majority. Watson seemed to suggest that this decision could have been the result of an agreement concluded between the Senegalese leadership and its Gambian analogue:

It seems to me, though I of course do not know about the Gambia that the new Premier, Jawara, has some inkling of Senegalese intentions, and that his answer to it is to avoid seeming eager for a deal and to try to make his price as high as possible...my guess is that Jawara probably underestimates the businesslike nature of the Senegalese in dealings of this kind, and the extent to which he will in fact need British advice and support if he is not to get the worst of.²³

Subsequent to the proposals stipulated in the U.N report, Jawara and his government seemed ready to make a number of concessions.²⁴ A federal alliance was proposed to the Senegalese delegation, which stipulated that the Gambian government would have full autonomy in local affairs and would cede foreign affairs and defence matters to the Senegalese. A 'Council of Alliance', consisting of seven members, which was to be hierarchically superior position to the two states. These concessions did not meet with the approval of the Senegalese government who wanted a more binding arrangement. Hughes

²³ PRO (London), FO371/161579, File JE1061/22. J.H.A. Watson to R. Stevens, dd. Dakar, 6 June 1962.

states: "The Senegalese it would appear, wanted a greater renunciation of national sovereignty and a different institutional structure to bind the two communities together".²⁵

Meanwhile Jawara had expressed the wish to invite Senghor in February 1964 and thought it judicious that a UN report regarding alternative forms of association between the two countries should not be published in the interim.²⁶ The two governments had now agreed that they would have a common defence and foreign policy agreement. These two important areas were not fortuitously selected since a combined defence and foreign policy would give Senegal more leverage to monitor The Gambia's external alliances.

By late January 1965, Jawara had visited Dakar to pursue talks relating to association between the two states. Rumour had it that the Gambian leadership was eager to keep the domain of foreign policy outside Senegal's scrutiny, to the great concern of the latter. According to Peck at the British Embassy in Dakar, Jawara conveyed to him that during his meeting with Thiam, Senegalese Foreign Minister, and President Senghor, Thiam interrogated him on rumours of The Gambia adopting an independent foreign policy from Senegal in the event of association between the two countries. Jawara responded that association should have a political and economic resonance but re-affirmed that The Gambia was unwilling to swap British imperialism for Senegalese colonialism and in the interest of mutual respect, both countries should share the cost pertaining to a joint foreign service.²⁷ Jawara was adamant, arguing that association between the two states from a position of equality would only be right if The Gambia could negotiate on the same basis as Senegal, i.e. as an independent state.²⁸ Njie, playing on the susceptibilities of the politically aware urban masses, reneged on his initial promise of a Senegambian union and condemned the PPP's "sell out" stance towards Senegal. The anti-Senegalese stance displayed by the Gambian press amplified the generally apprehensive mood. Njie downplayed economic union, one of the key reasons for the PPP government to seek union with Senegal. Increased suspicion of a British desire to dispense with its financial obligation by "dumping" The Gambia off to Senegal

²⁴ Hughes (1983), op. cit., p 6.

²⁵ Ibid, p 7.

²⁶ PRO (London), FO371/176778, File, JE1061/5 Telegram 20, dd. Dakar, 20 January 1964.

²⁷ PRO (London), FO 371/161579, File JE1061/7, J. Peck to Foreign Office, dd. Dakar, 22 January 1962.

²⁸ Welch, op. cit., pp 282-3.

frustrated Njie in spite of his initial position, which enjoyed the backing of Governor Windley on the issue of union.²⁹

By 1965 the two states had already agreed to co-operate and harmonise their positions in matters of foreign policy. Either Senegal or The Gambia would meet diplomatic representation depending on whether the country or countries dealt with were English or French-speaking. Senegal was to provide temporary accommodation for visiting Gambian representatives on missions.³⁰ A protocol agreement of consular assistance between The Gambia and Senegal is provided in Appendix 8. With independence on 18th February 1965, The Gambia decided to remain master of its own destiny, on the one hand daunted by the possible outcomes of such a significant step, yet on the other equally determined to count on itself.

Efforts at political and economic co-operation: institutional framework between The Gambia and Senegal, 1965-1974

Inter-state Ministerial Committee

In spite of differences between the two states on what form a Senegambian union should take, by May 1964 the two countries had laid down a series of institutional structures. Three institutions are worthy of mention, the Inter-state Ministerial Committee, the Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat, and the Conference of Heads of State. These institutions were established to provide a single finality and establish a concrete foundation for Senegambian co-operation.

Senegalese Premier Dia during a visit to Bathurst, outlined a series of proposals, including the establishment of an Inter-state Ministerial committee that would oversee measures taken between the two countries, towards the formulation of greater union. The creation of the Committee however, succeeded in exposing the already divisive relationship

²⁹ Welch, op. cit., pp 274-6.

³⁰ Loc. cit.

between the Gambian political parties..³¹ Nonetheless, the Committee convened two meetings in 1961, with Dakar hosting the first meeting and Banjul the second in June the same year.

The Committee representing the two states provided the opportunity to ministers and civil servants alike, to study areas in which their respective states could solidify their relations and promote better understanding. These meetings were used as a forum to view progress made and ensure the implementation of agreements concluded under the Treaty of Association signed in 1967. The overriding principle of this treaty was to extend co-ordination in all areas. The Inter-state ministerial committee was useful in that it enabled the two states to discuss problems relating to harmonisation of approaches in various fields, agricultural, health, technical, economic and cultural. Thus co-ordinating these activities would bring about the realisation of greater unity between the two countries.

The Committee had to deal with sensitive matters and provide solutions to disputes such as land and maritime boundaries, the perennial problem of smuggling, and questions regarding access for Gambian travellers to Senegal. Although previous discussions under the committee were mainly restricted to the improvement of road and telecommunications links between the two states, by 1974, the inter-state ministerial committee was now tackling core divisive issues regarding the delimitation of boundaries. Sessions usually ended with self-congratulatory speeches, however it was clear that the problems at hand especially those concerning boundaries were beyond the responsibility of the committee and merely reflected the extent and the legacy of colonial mayhem.³² The thorny issue of smuggling was a constant theme with mutual accusations of responsibility a common theme.³³

It would be easy to brand the Committee as a talking shop and discount its contribution to the promotion of co-operation and unity in Senegambian relations. However, such an assessment of the role of the committee would be unfair, since given the political and institutional parameters in which it operated the Committee did its best to provide a forum where issues affecting or enhancing Senegambian relations could be discussed. Yet its powers

³¹ Welch, *op. cit.*, p 280.

³² Report of the 9th ordinary session of the Senegambian inter-state ministerial committee, session of Banjul, 16th-17th April 1974.

³³ *Loc. cit.*

were circumscribed, and this obscured its role. However, its limitations were institutional and reflected the weakness of political institutions in Africa, especially those with strong political underpinnings. The Committee did not therefore enjoy full autonomy and its decisions were at times overridden by the executive, especially at the level of the conference of Heads of States between former Presidents Senghor and Jawara.

The Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat

The Secretariat was a bi-product of the Inter-state Ministerial Committee, assigned with the mission of implementing decisions of the committee. The Secretariat was a permanent investigative and informative body seeking to promote understanding and co-operation between The Gambia and Senegal.

The role of the Secretariat was to harmonise the position of both governments and thus defuse potential sources of conflict. The Secretariat established in 1968 had a more meaningful role than the Inter-State Ministerial Committee, in terms of its permanence as an institution entrusted with 'liaising' continually between the two governments. Culturally the Secretariat contributed to the promotion of exchanges in sports and educational activities between universities and schools of both countries. In collaboration with educational bodies in both countries the Secretariat created an Advisory Co-ordinating Council for Youth and Sports. The cultural aspect in the functional approach to integration was a key consideration in attaining the goals and aspirations of unity as noted by Seck, the aforementioned Senegalese Foreign Minister.³⁴

The Secretariat took an interest in co-ordinating co-operation in several other areas such as community development, agriculture, forestry, civil aviation, telecommunications, meteorology, tourism, new and renewable energy, and the co-ordination of foreign policy.³⁵ The Secretariat provided a unique structure in Senegambian and African inter-state relations.

³⁴ Speech by Senegalese Foreign Minister Assane Seck, 'Report of the 9th Ordinary Session of the Senegambian Inter-State Ministerial Committee' (1974) p 4

³⁵ Correspondence with Ebou Manneh 27 August 1997, Seydina Oumar Sy, 'Senegambian cooperation: operation and perspectives' in *Bridges*, pp 129-30.

It was to a large extent due to its efforts that the construction of various road projects such as the Dakar-Banjul highway funded by the EEC, and harmonisation of road and customs tariffs at border posts, were realised. In addition, other contributions such as an annual pest control campaign in border areas, joint security surveillance, fishing licences, research in the area of fisheries, crop protection, agriculture and water resources, and the establishment of solar electricity in selected border villages were conceived.³⁶

The leadership of the Secretariat played an important role in its contribution towards preparing the groundwork for strengthening ties between the two states. According to Senghor, Sy's (the first Executive Secretary of the Secretariat) role was highly influential in maintaining intensive contacts between the two countries involving both the bureaucratic and political élites.³⁷ Sy attests that, he tried to foster amicable relations between the two states in such a way that: "...la Gambia se sente respecter par le Sénégal et que le Sénégal et La Gambia soient conscients qu'ils ont le destin commun".³⁸

It is unfortunate that due to over-ambition and a tendency to try to proceed too swiftly, the Senegambia confederation consequently 'undermined' the Secretariat's efforts at gradualism and functional co-operation. The Secretariat had enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy even though it was under the nominal control of the Ministry of External Affairs in The Gambia. Yet its success was to a large extent due to this autonomy.³⁹ The politicised structure of the Senegambian confederation meant that the role of the Secretariat was now conceived in a new political character. Its dissolution was to a large extent the result of the weak foundation of the confederation, and especially the breakdown in dialogue.

The Organisation of the Gambia River Development (OMVG)

The development of the Gambia River had been a topical theme since the 1960s when the British colonial establishment saw it as a useful economic tool to entice both The Gambia and

³⁶ Correspondence with Ebou Manneh, 27 August 1997.

³⁷ Personal interview with Jeggan Senghor, Senegambian scholar 17 August 1996, Dakar.

³⁸ Personal interview with Seydina Oumar Sy, Former Executive Secretary and Foreign Minister, Dakar, 28 August 1996.

Senegal into union. For Senegal, there would be the advantage of having a new direct transportation link to the coast for agricultural produce from the South east of the country, thereby decreasing reliance on a deteriorating rail link. For The Gambia meanwhile, there was the opportunity of increased usage of port facilities at Banjul as well as a general increase in trade.

Thus by 1963-64, the development of the River Gambia was to take a central role in the study of the United Nations Experts Committee in the context of integration with Senegal. The benefits of the Gambia River were expected to be many in the event of Senegambian union, as the Van Mook findings attested.⁴⁰ Due to the fact that considerable attention has been devoted to the organisation in Chapter 6 regarding The Gambia's African relations and regional co-operation efforts, the OMVG will only be superficially discussed here. From its inception differences in priorities quickly emerged in joint negotiations. The Gambia's desire to realise the construction of a bridge/barrage would address the problems of saline invasion and provide additional land for irrigation and all-year rice cultivation. This seemed to clash with Senegalese enthusiasm for the construction of a Transgambia bridge, to replace the ferry and thus avoid the frequent delays that were experienced with the ferry.⁴¹

Moreover, the construction of a bridge would ensure a permanent and reliable link between Senegal and Casamance. The acrimonious debates between the two countries, and general lack of progress partly contributed to the inclusion of Guinea as a member-state.⁴² While the organisation is still trying to bring the Transgambia bridge project to realisation, the rival Organisation of the Senegal River, OMVS, has made considerable progress with the collaboration of other member states, Guinea, Mauritania and Mali. The fact that the construction of a Transgambia bridge and the development of the Gambia river has been in the pipeline almost two decades now, places serious doubts on the limits of bilateral co-operation between The Gambia and Senegal.

³⁹ Correspondence, Ebou Manneh, 27 August 1997

⁴⁰ Hubertus J. Van Mook et al 'Report on the alternatives for association between The Gambia and Senegal' Sessional Paper No 13 of 1964. (Printed by the Government Printer, Bathurst) p 73.

⁴¹ Personal interview with Bakary Darbo, 6 February 1996, London.

⁴² Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

Divisions in Foreign Policy Matters

Initial development in the early 1960s suggested that Senegal would play a central role in The Gambia's external relations in the aftermath of independence. On Gambia's Independence Day, in an obvious effort towards strengthening their relationship, the two states ratified a treaty on foreign policy and defence. This treaty as has been mentioned earlier, is rather symbolic since it guaranteed the security of The Gambia against the state that was most likely to switch from friend to foe. The pace at which the two states advanced towards association seemed rather slow and inappropriate to the rhetoric of the period. The harmonisation of foreign policy between the two countries remained still-born. Three foreign policy issues exposed the differences between the two countries and made their commitment to harmonisation and co-ordination of foreign policy issues an empty shell.

Firstly, regarding the venue of the OAU conference in 1965, The Gambia supported Ghana as a suitable venue, whilst Senegal took a contrary view. Secondly, with reference to the Rhodesian issue, The Gambia maintained that it was a British responsibility and adopted a less forceful stance. Senegal on the other hand, advocated a more aggressive policy towards Britain. Finally, when the question of Taiwan's admission came up in the United Nations General Assembly, while The Gambia voted against, Senegal abstained.⁴³ It was thus patently obvious that there was hardly any meeting of minds between the two states. Indeed, the joint Commission in foreign matters convened only once, between 27- 29 March 1965.⁴⁴ However, this did not impede the signature of further agreements, as was the case on 19 April 1967 with the Treaty of Association. This treaty can be found in Appendix 9. Thus the loose form of association (one of the three options in the Van Mook report), reflected in the Treaty of Association, was the weakest and the least binding, option, thus marking an effective victory for the Gambian position.⁴⁵

⁴³ Momen, op. cit., p 164.

⁴⁴ Sall, unpublished Ph.D thesis, op. cit., p 146.

⁴⁵ Vn Mook et al, op.cit.,

Tensions and Squabbles.

The reasons for The Gambia's minimalist approach towards greater union with Senegal stem from a number of factors. The opinions of a few over-zealous, and "imperialistic" Senegalese both within the government administration and without, with regard to The Gambia becoming Senegal's eighth province, were taken very seriously by many Gambians within the civil service. The impatience of Senegal to hasten union with The Gambia conveyed the wrong signals to the Gambian authorities. The visit of President Senghor to Bathurst in 1967 and the clear verve in his speech, were indicative of the urgency of union between the two states, particularly from a Senegalese perspective:

... We have no other choice than to proceed determined together, no longer side by side, like two bodies condemned to remain externally foreign to each other, but heart to heart? I mean that we proceed forward with one single conviction that in our Senegambian destiny, made of identities and complementarities; that we proceed forward with one single conviction that in this 20th century there is no room for mini-states.⁴⁶

The fear of Senegalese subordination was not easily dispelled, especially in the light of subsequent events. The appointment of Seydina Omar Sy, as Executive secretary of the Senegalo-Gambian Secretariat on 31st January 1968,⁴⁷ without prior consultation with the Gambian authorities as required in joint institutions, gave the Gambian leadership a negative perception of future Senegambian relations.

Core and divisive issues like smuggling did not help the occasional problem of absence of consultation on key appointments. This particularly contentious problem has always complicated relations between the two states. While it is difficult to apportion blame in the absence of thorough research on the issue, there is enough evidence to show that, smuggling is a real issue and one that affects the Senegalese economy.⁴⁸ However, it is not unusual for one

⁴⁶ President Senghor 'Together for a Better Future', *The Gambia News Bulletin* 20 April 1967.

⁴⁷ Touray, *op. cit.*, p 108.

⁴⁸ Hughes (1974), *op. cit.*, p 9.

government to castigate another for its economic woes in order to avoid accountability and risk a loss of confidence by the populace.

The rift between the two states came to a head in 1971, when Senegalese border patrol officers pursued a Gambian smuggler beyond Senegalese territory. Subsequently, Gambian villagers were arrested and held in custody. This incident was condemned by the Gambian government, which saw it as a further demonstration of subordination.⁴⁹ Jawara's government bypassed the Inter-state Ministerial Committee and Senegalo-Gambian Secretariat to bring the matter to the attention of the UN. Jawara's attitude shows the extent to which relations between the two states can become polarised.

In 1974 there was yet another border incident which led to the Senegalese again crossing the international boundary to arrest Gambian villagers. This incident received a lot of attention from Gambian nationals. In Parliament, the government was criticised for taking over a responsibility that was considered to have been that of the Senegalese authorities, i.e., the compensation of Gambian farmers in the event of the arrests. By 1974, it was obvious to both governments that the road to union was a more distant prospect and one that Gambians were not enthusiastic to take. The fact that each side appeared all too keen to safeguard its national interest is a natural and almost instinctive factor in foreign policy. However, in a union of two or more states, compromises have to be made. Union was inhibited by both occasional difficulties and by nagging problems such as smuggling. In spite of the Gambian leadership's obsession with Senegalese annexation, the leadership in Senegal, both under Senghor and Diouf, had acquired a reputation as a conservative, moderate government coupled with a sophisticated educated élite, not inclined to perceive annexation of The Gambia as a desirable option to Senegambian integration.

Undoubtedly, the need to deal with what was considered an irritant and a geographical absurdity, by a neat and tidy sweep into Senegal was a view expressed by certain circles within Senghor's administration. However, the personality of Senghor and his respect for what he called "*la spécificité gambienne*" meant that such advice was hardly given a serious thought. The national interest was the primary determinant in relations between the

⁴⁹ Ibid, p 18.

two states. The notion of African unity has been advanced as an inspiring example for two small states, a source of emulation for other African states within the sub-region or in the wider African framework.

The limits of Senegambian integration are obvious. Economically, a suitable arrangement with The Gambia in terms of a customs union would alleviate the smuggling issue and thus the Senegalese government could regain confidence among its populace. Smuggling goods from The Gambia to Senegal could provoke alarming consequences for Senegalese industries and invariably certain commodities goods such as sugar are bought in The Gambia as they are perceived by the Senegalese consumer to be of better value. The Gambian government feared a public backlash if the two economies were to merge, causing soaring prices of domestic goods, which by virtue of The Gambia's liberalisation policy and low import duties are cheaper in The Gambia.⁵⁰ Even though both are agrarian economies, integration presents certain structural, and attitudinal constraints.

The difference in economic philosophy was demonstrated by high discriminative tariffs in Senegal, coupled with restrictions on imports, in sharp contrast with The Gambia's liberal economic policies and low import duties. This disparity has poisoned economic relations between the two countries and accentuated the smuggling activity. According to Robson, goods imported to The Gambia and subsequently smuggled into Senegal represented approximately 10 per cent of Gambian imports producing 15 per cent of The Gambia's total revenue from import duties.⁵¹ Smuggled imports accounted for 1 per cent of total Senegalese imports and customs duties valued at FrF250 million, approximately 1 or 2 per cent of revenue from import duties, was lost by Senegal.⁵²

The benefits of customs union for The Gambia were fairly hazy according to Robson.⁵³ Moreover, Robson concludes that a customs union *per se* would have been detrimental in terms of revenue to the Gambia. What would be economically beneficial to

⁵⁰ . Robson (1968), op. cit., pp 273-86.

⁵¹ Ibid, p 278.

⁵² Loc. cit. Given the fact that Robson's book was published in 1968, these figures do not reflect contemporary realities but serve as a benchmark to gauge the extent of the illicit trade, almost thirty years ago.

⁵³ Ibid, p 282.

The Gambia is a free trade area especially in the Senegambian case where there are obvious fiscal disparities and where benefits of integration in terms of industrial development are few. Under this scheme, agricultural and manufactured goods could be freely exchanged without incurring import tax and the like.

With the assurance of British grants and other external aid, Gambian confidence increased and Senegambian issues were relegated to secondary status. With the Gambian leadership gaining confidence in the country's economy, the mood was more towards extending The Gambia's circles of friends and assuring more financial aid. Gambian procrastination in reaching agreement on issues such as customs union gave the authorities in Senegal a more legitimate mandate for tougher measures to protect their borders. This bold Senegalese stance ushered in a period of seizures and intense searches of Gambians crossing the Senegalese border.

1974-1980-The Gambia's West Africa rapprochement and Senegambian detente

Relations between The Gambia and Senegal are usually seen in a conflictual light. Yet even at the height of the setbacks that have forestalled Senegambia union, relations between the two have been adversarial at most, never resulting in one state attacking the other. As a former Senegalese High Commissioner in The Gambia recalls: "On s'est parlé, on s'est jamais battu. On a toujours eu des accords, on les a négociés difficilement, parfois des nuits entières".⁵⁴ Between 1974-1980, relations between The Gambia and Senegal improved considerably. Several treaties covering wide areas of issues affecting the two states were signed.⁵⁵ A list of treaties and agreements signed between the two states can be seen in Appendix 7. The signature of treaties implies a will by both governments to foster a close relationship and co-operate on issues in accordance with their national interest. However, of all these treaties and

⁵⁴ Personal interview with Salie Cissé. 26 August 1996, Dakar

⁵⁵ Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat. Banjul – 'Chronological List of 24 Agreements Conventions and Protocols Signed Between The Gambia and Senegal and Which are Within The Competence of the Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat' 15th May 1981.

agreements signed, only one agreement came into force, the agreement on administrative matters regarding customs departments.⁵⁶

The issue regarding the re-demarcation of villages in Kantora and elsewhere on the Senegalo-Gambian border will go down in the history of Senegambia as one of the thorniest issues *per se*. The problem of artificial and undefined boundaries is one that characterises the majority of states in Africa, being a colonial legacy. The sacred principle of territorial integrity, one of the binding clauses in the OAU, is one that all member states abide by. Its violation is often compared to opening Pandora's Box.

Regarding the Senegambian situation, it was more a question of whether the 1889 or the 1904 treaty signed between Britain and France should be validated. In 1889 a treaty was negotiated between France and Britain and subsequently signed in 1925, with boundaries pillars established on the frontiers. However on 8th December 1904, a convention based on the same issue of frontiers was ratified between the two protagonists, and thus became law. According to the Senegalese, the 1904 treaty, which was ratified, should be the legal document since its very ratification annulled the former 1889 Treaty. The Gambia's position is that the 1889 treaty is the key treaty that defines the existing boundaries and therefore should be accepted as such, dismissing the 1904 convention as invalid since it was never implemented. Assan Musa Camara, the then Foreign Minister and Vice-President, asserted that Gambian maps were all drawn according to the 1889 treaty. He adds:

Even when the 1904 Treaty was negotiated and ratified, the colonial people who were here objected strongly to the provisions of this Treaty. An attempt was made by a commission to put this on the ground, but immediately they started, they ran into difficulties because the provisions of the Treaty are not clear...It was a Treaty that could not have been implemented at the time by the colonialists who came and decided things for us against our own will; they could not put it on the ground, and it is after over seventy years now that you are asking us to put that Treaty on the ground? ⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Loc. cit.

⁵⁷ Proceeding of meeting of the Secretariat. 'Report of the 9th Ordinary Session...' op. cit., p 154.

The problem was resolved finally in 1976 by President Senghor. According to Mbaye Mbengue, former Senegalese High Commissioner in The Gambia, Senghor decided to resolve the matter amicably.⁵⁸ He sent envoys to the villages in contention to ask villagers to whom they paid their taxes. On that basis and in the interest of peace, he decided to re-demarcate the borders and a Treaty taking into account the realities of the modified landscape was signed by the two governments. Senegal accepted that 26 disputed villages were to be placed under Gambian jurisdiction and The Gambia recognised that two villages were to be controlled by Senegal. The Senegalese Press criticised Senghor for “giving away” villages that were perceived to be truly under Senegal’s jurisdiction. Yet it was also suggested that such action by the former President necessitated courage and was a reflection of his vision and leadership.⁵⁹ A memorandum on boundary matters could be found in Appendix 10.

1975 reflected the normalisation of relations between Senegal and The Gambia evidenced by the visit of Senghor to The Gambia on June 4th.⁶⁰ During this visit the two Heads of State signed agreements on Maritime boundaries, the Transgambia bridge project, and the issue of land boundaries. The two leaders also discussed co-operation in cultural matters. Furthermore, in a joint communiqué, Jawara undertook to work towards bringing about a rapprochement between Senghor and Sekou Touré of Guinea, Senghor consenting to Jawara’s offer to act as a mediator. According to Jawara, reconciling the two leaders necessitated travelling to the capitals of Dakar and Conakry, adding that because both men had confidence in him, he was able to make progress.⁶¹ The fact that Jawara was able to bring together the two neighbouring Heads of State, was indicative of The Gambia’s growing confidence in its external relations and its conviction that it could act as an honest broker to help bridge the gap between neighbouring countries.

By 1976, talks between the two states had intensified as negotiations on the development of the Gambia River basin, coupled with the construction of the Banjul-Brikama-, Ziguinchor-Bissau Road ensued. Both countries now saw co-operation through a wider framework that would include other neighbouring countries. The Gambia’s proposal

⁵⁸ Personal interview with Mbaye Mbengue. 29 August 1996, Dakar.

⁵⁹ Personal interview with Kader Diop, journalist, Agence France Press, 29 August Dakar.

⁶⁰ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 5 June 1975.

⁶¹ Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawara. 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex

in 1978 to introduce Guinea to the OMVG partly expresses the need felt for wider regional co-operation.⁶² Relations between the two states continued to prosper and more agreements on education were signed. Discussions were also held in the field of information and Broadcasting. The general mood of the Inter-state Ministerial Committee was that of relative satisfaction⁶³. During subsequent meetings of the committee in 1977 and 1978 projects such as the Brikama-Bissau-Zinguinchor road were followed up and discussions on cultural matters, co-operation on health and other issues were initiated.⁶⁴

The Gambian referendum in 1970 regarding its future status as a republic meant that Senegambian issues were attributed little importance. The victory of the PPP government in the referendum boosted its confidence and changed the constitutional framework of The Gambia's political make-up by allowing the latter to move from a monarchical to a republican status.

1981 - 1989 confederal years, new beginnings, old suspicions.

The relative co-operation and stabilisation between the two states helped pave the way for the events that were to follow the 1981 coup. In the first half of the 1960s economic and to some extent security considerations were key to the potential integration of the two economies. In 1981, relations between the two states took a new unprecedented turn.⁶⁵

The 1981 coup as a midwife to the conception of the Senegambia confederation

The events leading to the confederation have been dealt with in previous chapters. However, the failed coup attempt of 1981 is highly significant, in that it created precedence. In 16 years of parliamentary democracy, The Gambia had never witnessed a political upheaval of the

⁶² Although regional integration became a key determinant in the formulation of policies in The Gambia, it must be emphasised that this ideal was not the only reason motivating The Gambia's intention to bring in Guinea, see Chapter 6.

⁶³ From the Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat 'Report of the 11th Ordinary Session of the Senegambian Inter-State Ministerial Committee' (Banjul, 8th & 9th June 1976).

⁶⁴ '12th Ordinary Session of the Senegalo-Gambian Inter-State Ministerial Committee' in 1978.

nature, scale and barbarity of the 1981 coup attempt.⁶⁶ The coup served as mid-wife to the confederation signed in February 1982 and it is highly unlikely, given the history of Senegambian relations, that in the absence of the 1981 coup, confederation would have seen the light of day. The events of July 1981 exposed the weakness and vulnerability of the government on two counts, first that its paramilitary force of 500 men was incapable of curbing the wave of violence that took place in 1981⁶⁷ and second that in order to return to normality, The Gambia would need a security umbrella to protect itself.

In cognisance of its historical, socio-political and cultural affinities plus geographical proximity, Senegal seemed the ideal candidate to deliver The Gambia from the worst political, social and economic nightmare in its short history. The opportunity seemed ideal, the timing propitious, the cause legitimised by virtue of a mutual security and defence agreement signed in 1965 between the two states that allowed either one to come to the assistance of the other in the event of external aggression. However, internal mutiny was not included in the treaty. The agreement relating to security and defence between The Gambia and Senegal can be found in Appendix 11.

Senegalese intervention displayed personal diplomacy at its height. In spite of legal parameters and restrictions, African leaders are not motivated *per se* by legal requirements and rules can be bent if they are in conflict with personal motives or ideology, or even national interest. The Fode Kaba 1 intervention in October 1980, by Senegalese troops in The Gambia, provoked by a purely domestic incident, was a reflection that legal requirements could be given different interpretation depending on the leadership.⁶⁸ Jawara's personal survival as well as state authority was at stake.

Security considerations were crucial in Senegal's decision to intervene in the 1981 coup. The prospect of a Marxist-Leninist government was a worrisome prospect to the Senegalese government who feared that The Gambia could be used as a base for subversive actions against Senegal. The installation of a regime so radically different in ideology from its

⁶⁵ Arnold Hughes 'The Gambia at a cross-roads' in *Contemporary Review*. 239, 190, pp 225-230.

⁶⁶ 'Coups can be defeated', *West Africa* 10 August 1981, p1803.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 'Restabilising The Gambia' p 1805.

own and in its immediate “backyard” was a serious factor for the Senegalese government.⁶⁹ Diouf had just succeeded Senghor as Head of State (Diouf had previously served under Senghor in different capacities including Prime Minister). He had not only to prove himself and assert his qualities as a leader within Senegal, but also to take advantage of the coup to advance what Senegal had coveted since the early days of Senghor, closer ties with The Gambia through some form of federation.

However, Senegalese intervention in The Gambia was not as swift as expected. This was primarily because the Senegalese leadership insisted on a written request from The Gambia for assistance. In a specially convened Conference of Heads of State Senghor suggested that the 1965 defence and security agreement needed to be revised to ensure a more rapid intervention in the event of crisis. He advocated a more spontaneous arrangement rid of the usual formality and bureaucracy, to guarantee a swift reaction. However, according to Ebou Taal, Jawara rejected the proposal as he suspected this would mean a “*carte blanche*” for the Senegalese leadership to use at their discretion to intervene whenever they perceived that security was threatened.⁷⁰ Other reasons advanced for Senegalese delay were: to preserve the lives of hostages, including the First Lady, Chilel Jawara, and mitigate the prospect of alienating Gambian nationalists in the event of a swifter but probably bloodier intervention.⁷¹

According to Gambian and Senegalese leadership, the coup was seen as being primarily externally orchestrated. In the 1980s the two states had shared a large amount of intelligence to foil what was perceived by both governments as a Libyan attempt to destabilise the region.⁷² Events in October 1980 leading to the assassination of Eku Mahoney, the Deputy Commander of the Field Force, coupled with speculation about an imminent plot within the Field Force, led to the Gambian government’s decision to ask the Senegal for

⁶⁸ The 1980 attempted coup d’état in which Senegalese troops intervened on Gambian leadership request was given the code-name Fode Kaba 1.

⁶⁹ ‘Senegal, the birth of Senegambia and multi-party democracy’ in *Africa Contemporary Record*. XIV, 1981-82, p B533.

⁷⁰ Correspondence, Ebou Taal 23 August 1997.

⁷¹ *Africa Contemporary Record* (1981-82), op. cit., p 533.

⁷² Personal interview with Mbai Mbengue, former Senegalese High Commissioner to The Gambia, 29 August 1996 Dakar

assistance. 150 Senegalese soldiers were subsequently despatched to the Gambia as part of a “training team”.

The evidence of brand new Kalachnikov rifles, (alleged to have been officially purchased from China) suggested that the coup plotters could not have acted without support. Suspicions over Libyan involvement led to a swift deterioration in relations with Libya. In turn The Gambia accused the Libyan government of destabilising its internal cohesion by wilfully colluding with Senegalese national Sheikh Ahmed Niasse.⁷³ This should be seen in the light of concern over Libyan intentions in West Africa.⁷⁴

Jawara qualified the coup plotters as “traitors”, mere executors of orders from elsewhere”.⁷⁵ He intimated in an interview that as chairman of the Islamic Conference Organisation, he had to deal with member-states including Libya, who he stressed, openly admitted to their involvement in the July 1981 insurrection.⁷⁶ As suggested, full details of Libya’s role in the coup remain somewhat hazy⁷⁷. The subversion factor has always been a phobia of the post-colonial state in Africa from the days of Nkrumah to the involvement of France in Biafra. Subversion in some cases provides an ideal opportunity for African governments not usually prone to self-analysis and criticism, to castigate an external culprit both for nationalistic reasons and also to discount any form of popular uprising. The background in which the coup took place was⁷⁸ unhealthy especially given the bleak economic context of The Gambia in 1981.

The Senegalese opposition parties opposed the intervention on the grounds that it was a Gambian internal affair. In the official document published by the Senegalese government to explain its action to the general populace, no mention of the word “external” was made.⁷⁹ The opposition in Senegal adopted a nationalistic stance and blamed the government for

⁷³ For more information on this, Hughes (1991), ‘The attempted Gambian coup d’etat of 27 July 1981’, op. cit., pp 92-106, ‘Restabilising The Gambia’, 10 August 1981, p 1806.

⁷⁴ Wiseman ‘Revolt in The Gambia: a pointless tragedy’, The Round Table 284 (1981), p 378

⁷⁵ Ibid, p 1805.

⁷⁶ Personal interview with Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heaths, Sussex. For more details on external sponsorship of the coup see ‘Senegambian doubts’, West Africa 24 August 1981, p 1917, Hughes, ‘The Gambia at crossroads’ op. cit., pp 225-7.

⁷⁷ Hughes (1983), op. cit., p 68.

⁷⁸ Wiseman (1981), op. cit., p 376.

sacrificing the lives of hundreds of Senegalese soldiers in a crisis that was purely internal. While the Gambian trade unions condemned the coup as a Marxist-Leninist conspiracy⁸⁰, the opposition leader, Sheriff Dibba's condemnation had a rather hollow ring as he was seen by the government to be one of the orchestrators of the coup and was subsequently held in custody, but found not guilty and released. A handful of Gambians living in London liaising with their compatriots in European cities sent a letter to the Senegalese Embassy in London expressing their indignation at what they perceived to be interference in a purely Gambian affair.⁸¹

Nonetheless the intervention received support from many African leaders including President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania,⁸² who had intervened in Uganda. Diouf is said to have received messages of support from President Reagan, President Moi, (the then Chairman of the OAU), and many other governments and leaders.⁸³ President Nino Vieira of Guinea-Bissau in a special visit to Dakar, congratulated his colleague on the Senegalese intervention. It was rumoured that the Bissauian populace, particularly the Mandinka ethnic group, was sympathetic to the 1981 coup.⁸⁴ Mali expressed hesitant and fairly contrived support for the intervention but Mauritanian government sentiments were not made public.⁸⁵ The Mauritanian government harboured fears that Senegal would in the future attempt to annex the right bank of the Senegal river, with a majority of black Moors.⁸⁶ It is probable that the intervention in The Gambia could have been perceived by the Mauritanian government as a step in that direction, thus the reason for the lack of reaction from the leadership there.⁸⁷

However, having provided assistance for The Gambia, Senegalese troops continued to guard strategic areas in Banjul. The overbearing presence of the Senegalese, though an irritant to some Gambians, provided a more secure environment in the light of the bloody events of July 1981. Meanwhile the Gambian government lived in fear of a repetition of the

⁷⁹ *West Africa*, op. cit., 24 August 1981, p 1917.

⁸⁰ Hughes (1983), op. cit., p 73.

⁸¹ 'Gambians protest', *West Africa* 24 August 1981, p 1916.

⁸² 'Restabilising The Gambia', op. cit., p 1806.

⁸³ 'Senegambian doubts', op. cit., p 1917.

⁸⁴ 'Senegal, the birth of Senegambia and of multi-party democracy', op. cit. p B533.

⁸⁵ Loc. cit.

⁸⁶ Loc. cit.

⁸⁷ Loc. cit.

1981 coup or any form of recidivist action from rebels. The underlying fear was prevalent in the rhetoric of the government.⁸⁸

In an interview, Gaye reports that Jawara asked that \$1,000 000 out of the Saudi government's contribution of \$10m of relief aid be given to Senegalese authorities to compensate victims and their families.⁸⁹ The Gambian leadership was now in a position where it could hardly thank the Senegalese government for its intervention without conceding some form of compromise favourable to Senegal's ambitions towards The Gambia. Indeed, the then Vice-President, Assan Musa Camara, mentioned that Jawara was in a dilemma as he could not dispense with the Senegalese troops without annoying and subsequently jeopardising his position with the Senegalese government.⁹⁰ Key Senegalese observers believe that Jawara was so anxious to regain his presidency that he would have agreed to any proposal laid down by Senegalese leadership.⁹¹

On 14 November 1981, a joint communiqué was issued in which both governments expressed their wish to pursue relations to a confederal stage in which both governments would retain their sovereignty and independence but with integrated security forces, and other co-ordination and harmonisation measures. Significant steps were being taken already in Banjul as the government disbanded the Field Force and Jawara talked of creating a Gambian army to envisage the integration of the security forces of the two states.⁹² By the time the confederation was formally signed on 1 February 1982, criticisms were being levelled by some Senegalese opposition members claiming that the confederation rested on shaky foundations and that its chances of survival were virtually nil.⁹³ Indeed the spontaneity of the Confederation attests to the reality of African politics and the primacy of the idiosyncratic variable. The confederal agreement is enclosed in Appendix 12.

⁸⁸ 'The Gambia News Bulletin' 3 February 1982

⁸⁹ Personal interview with Bala Gaye, former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, 6 August 1996, Kanifing (The Gambia).

⁹⁰ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 14 July 1996, Banjul.

⁹¹ Personal interview with Seydina Oumar Sy, 29 August 1996, Dakar.

⁹² 'Senegambia arrival' *West Africa*, 4 January 1982, p 11.

⁹³ 'Starting off on the wrong foot', *West Africa*, 11th January 1982, p 79-80. In an interview with Mr Mamadou Dia, leader of the Mouvement Démocratique et Populaire, he criticised the inception of the

Imperatives of the Senegambia confederation - differences in perceptions (Decision-making and confederal institutions)

The confederal treaty *albeit* the product of eventful period in Senegambian history, took the form of a simple “*loi cadre*”, i.e. a treaty whereby contracting parties are required to complete the details, through protocols and agreements concluded over an undetermined period of time.⁹⁴ The treaty had five main elements:

1. the establishment of a common institutional framework with political and administrative slants, consisting mainly of the following organs, a president, vice-president, confederal assembly, confederal secretariat, council of ministers;
2. the co-ordination of policy in the field of external relations;
3. the realisation of an economic and monetary union between the two states;
4. the creation of a confederal army and gendarmerie, with partial integration of the armed forces of Senegal and The Gambia; and
5. the quintessential element of the treaty (at least from the Gambian perspective), the principle and maintenance of the sovereignty of each state.

The background in which the treaty was conceived has been widely explored. However, the fears of the Gambian leader regarding the implications of the treaty were enough for him to seek advice from a reputable Sierra Leonean barrister, Berthan Macauley. Macauley's role, apart from clarifying the semantics of the word “confederation”, consisted of issuing informal advice on likely loopholes. One of Macauley's suggestions was that the Gambian constitution should be amended as a precondition to any proposal accepted.⁹⁵ The full extent of Macauley's advice can be seen in the appendix. Suggestions of the name ‘Senegambia confederation’ were initiated by Macauley to avoid confusion in the international arena about the nature of the entity established. The Gambia acted on his advice regarding the legislative authority and competence of the confederal assembly. Macauley warned The Gambia not to:

confederation and maintained that it started off on the “wrong foot” by not allowing the people of both countries to vote in a referendum and articulate their acceptance or disapproval.

⁹⁴ Hughes(1992), op. cit. p 202.

give any undertaking which would lead to it being perpetually subject to legislative and military domination of Senegal. It should therefore insist upon a blocking mechanism in the Confederal Parliament if there is no equality in numbers of members of the Confederal Parliament⁹⁶

Macauley's correspondences on matters relating to the establishment of the confederation can be seen in Appendix 14.

What this shows is the Gambian leadership's desire to make sure that all the legal loopholes were carefully studied and that The Gambia was not imprisoned in a legal institution to which it was completely bound. The confederation has been described at best as untimely and at worst an impulsive decision to pre-empt Senegal from advancing its ambitions as a result of its intervention in The Gambia in 1981. The Gambian leadership demonstrated its resolve in the case of the latter by making sure that the country was not "signing its death warrant".⁹⁷

Nonetheless the treaty made provision for several organs, the first of which was the confederal parliament which was to meet twice a year comprising a sixty-member parliament indirectly represented by the national parliaments of Senegal and The Gambia in the ratio of 2:1.⁹⁸ Efforts were taken to obviate Gambian accusations of institutional imbalances and provision was made for The Gambia to be over-represented in terms of its demographic composition.⁹⁹ Macauley's suggestion of creating a "blocking mechanism" was heeded since a 75 per cent majority was necessary for a successful vote. This meant that even with a Senegalese majority, it would take at least 5 votes from The Gambia for a motion to be

⁹⁵ Ref. EP/C/4(2), Macaulay, to President of the Republic, dd. State House, 4 November 1981.

⁹⁶ 'Notes on specific problems raised by the proposal to create a Confederation of Senegambia', Macauley to President of the Republic of The Gambia, Source, dd. State House, 11 November 1981.

⁹⁷ On the other hand, Ebou Taal, avers that that during the first day of the Presidential tour in November 1981 at Basse, he was summoned by President Jawara, and in the presence of L.K. Jabang, the Minister of External Affairs and Lamin Saho, Attorney General, he was informed of the decision to set up the confederation. He was initially handed four principles and instructed to prepare a suitable draft, with specific emphasis on the 'maintenance of independence and sovereignty of each state'. Correspondence Taal 23 August 1997.

⁹⁸ For more information see 'Senegambia confederation, protocols on the institutions of the confederation', source: MEA, Banjul or see Hughes (1992), op. cit., cit., p 211; 'The Gambia, birth of the Senegambia ...' *Africa Contemporary Record*. (1982-83), op. cit., pp B444-5.

⁹⁹ Hughes (1992), op. cit., p 211.

passed.¹⁰⁰ Members of the Confederal Parliament were mainly from the ruling parties, i.e. the PPP (The Gambia) and the PS (Senegal). The Confederal Parliament had the power to initiate proposals, advise on the confederal budget and on proposed amendments to agreements.¹⁰¹ Another important function was the preparation of the budget in conformity with clauses stipulated in the financial regulations of the confederation. However the Senegambian confederation's budget soon turned out to be a problem and by 1987-88, deep cuts were having to be made to reflect the economic difficulties of the two countries.¹⁰²

The second important organ was the Council of Ministers, which convened for the first time in January 1983.¹⁰³ The Council of Ministers was to be composed of both the President and the Vice-President of the confederation, together with ministers appointed under Article 2 of the Confederal Treaty. The Council of Ministers was assigned matters submitted to it by the President of the Confederation and was to meet alternatively in each capital.

In addition, the treaty made provision for a General Secretariat under the authority of the President of the Confederation. This Secretariat was to be responsible for the implementation of any decisions reached by the President and the Vice-President of the confederation. The Secretariat's other duties were to review matters relating to the functioning and progress of the Confederation, including those issues submitted to the Secretariat by the President and Vice-President.

In the main the treaty seemed to confirm the supremacy of the President of the confederation who was to consult the Vice-President in most areas. However, the President of the Confederation was assigned responsibilities relating to defence and security and the Vice-President had a mere consultative role in these matters. Thus while the treaty emphasised the element of consultation with the Vice-President on defence, security and other matters, it did not go beyond the consultative stage. The President of the confederation was also the commander-in-chief of the armed and security forces of the confederation. This

¹⁰⁰ Loc. cit.

¹⁰¹ 'Senegambian confederation, protocol on the institutions of the confederation', op. cit., p 4.

¹⁰² Loc. cit.

¹⁰³ 'The Gambia, birth of the Senegambia confederation' *Africa Contemporary Record* op. cit., p B444

meant that the executive powers invested in the President gave him considerable leverage to the extent that he could take serious and far-reaching decisions on the appointment of personnel, the mobilisation of the armed forces, and on administrative and bureaucratic matters. It was clear that while the considerations of The Gambia were taken into account to avoid an asymmetrical union, dominated by Senegal, there were still signs, *albeit* from a legal standpoint, of Senegal's attempts to subordinate its partner.

In addition to these formal institutions, the two countries enjoyed certain informal networks. The Gambian Minister of External relations, L.K. Jabang, enjoyed a special and privileged relationship with his Senegalese counterpart Moustapha Niasse.¹⁰⁴ The friendship between the key figures was undoubted beneficial and enhanced Senegambian relations.¹⁰⁵ However, Jabang was subsequently regarded as pro-Senegal and his transfer to the less sensitive position of Minister of the Interior is indicative of the fact that the Gambian leadership no longer appreciated his warm relations with the Senegalese authorities. According to Janha, former Gambian Secretary-General, the Confederation subsequently meant the gradual erosion of loyalty on the part of Gambian ministers, whose allegiance to the Gambian state and the Gambian executive was becoming more and more elusive.¹⁰⁶

The institutional framework of the confederation came under increased criticism from opposition parties such as PDOIS and the NCP, who accused the Gambian leadership of weakness in accepting a Senegambian treaty that reduced The Gambia to a client state. The constant perceived need to assert himself might have influenced Jawara's decision to initiate a change in the institutional framework of the confederation. As commander-in-chief of the Confederal troops, the Senegalese President, was able to declare a state of emergency in The Gambia. Yet decisions such as these were supposed to be taken in conjunction with the confederal Vice President. Senegalese officials in Dakar occupied all the key posts in the

¹⁰⁴ Correspondence Ebou Taal 23 August 1997

¹⁰⁵ Correspondence, Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997

¹⁰⁶ Personal interview with Sara Janha, London., 13 October 1997, London. Janha referred to the resignation of the late Finance Minister Sheriff Sisay as a classic example. Sisay was confederal minister when he resigned on the grounds of ill health, instructing Janha, who went to pick up the letter at Ceesay's house to inform the Senegalese President Abdou Diouf of his resignation. According to Janha, Sisay's resignation as Finance Minister automatically meant that he was no longer in a position to assume the functions of a Confederal Minister in order words, the two went hand in hand. The need to inform

confederal executive including the post of Secretary General of Senegambia (Pierre Diouf, a Senegalese national).¹⁰⁷

Institutional imbalance was one of the factors that led to the death of the confederation.¹⁰⁸ Yet by signing the Kaur declaration which marked the birth of the confederation, The Gambia took full cognisance of the consequences since the leadership gave its endorsement. Nonetheless in a union of this nature, such imbalances tend to inhibit progress.

The issue of geographical representation in such institutions is usually a delicate one, and may easily polarise into a fully-fledged confrontation. The Mali Federation was partly affected by this. Senegambia, two decades later, was another example. The concepts of statehood and identity were still fragile and could not be integrated with the idea of a supranational state where Wolofs, Mandinka or Fulas become obsolete to the extent that the only viable identity is a Senegambian or an African one.

Sey believes that the fact of Senegalese determination to confederalise several Ministries in The Gambia greatly contributed to the cracks in Senegambian relations.¹⁰⁹ The Ministry of External Affairs was 'confederalised' and the Gambian Foreign Minister, automatically became "Ministre Délégué to the Senegalese Minister. As previously stated, Sey admits that as Minister of a sovereign state, he resented being a Ministre Délégué to another Minister, and was not disposed to playing second fiddle. He stated that the Senegalese decision to confederalise more ministries did not meet with Gambian approval but The Gambia proposed a technical committee of experts, to study the mechanisms. The Gambia was left with the responsibility of devising loan strategies for joint Senegambian projects such as the construction of the bridge barrage, since the Confederal Ministry of

Diouf according to Janha, was a further proof that the Gambian minister had 'divided loyalties' and the Senegalese sought Gambian ministers who were amenable as additional voices in their chorus.

¹⁰⁷ Interviews Mbai Mbengue, Salieu Cissé, and Foday Seck, op. cit.

¹⁰⁸ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara. Jawara in a personal interview underscored this point. His analogy was the European union in which small states such as Belgium and Luxembourg are not treated any differently from larger member states, and they enjoy several privileges, with Brussels acting as a host capital to one of the most sacred institutions. Jawara stressed that the Senegalese assumed an overbearing role as was demonstrated by the number of Senegalese assuming key roles in the different institutions. Personal interview with Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath.

Finance and Economic Planning was allocated to The Gambia. As Senegal was responsible for the Confederal Ministry of External Affairs, it meant that the two sides were to consult each other, and try to co-ordinate their external positions.

Sey argues that Senegal did not want The Gambia to have a vanguard role in anything, and would demur if Gambian policies differed from theirs, particularly regarding Liberia and the ECOMOG intervention in 1990. Sey adds that the decision to confederalise the Ministry of Defence presented difficulties. Contributions proved taxing for The Gambia, which, in spite of small numbers in the confederal army had to meet a financial obligation of 1/3 of the confederal expenditure. He concluded, Senegal would not let us default on a penny and would use veiled threats that non-payments could result in the re-appearance of rebel leader, Kukoi Samba Sanyang.¹¹⁰ The idea of 'confederalising' more ministries was unappealing to Gambian decision-makers because it meant increased federalism contrary to their perceptions of the confederal spirit. Thus the more the Senegalese pressed for 'federalism' under the guise of euphemistic expressions of unity and co-operation, the more Gambians became inhibited and in turn the more persuasive the Senegalese became in their resolve to achieve political, economic and cultural amalgamation.

Objectives of the confederation

Political considerations

The confederation was conceived with the view of realising certain key objectives of a political, security, economic, and to a lesser degree, cultural and populist nature.¹¹¹ By July 1982, three protocols had been signed. The first protocol covered the institutions of the confederation, the second was geared towards the co-ordination of foreign policy decisions, and the third was in connection with the financial regulations of the Confederation.¹¹² The motives were hardly consensual, each government considered the confederation as the solution to a problem. Although old priorities were still present, the confederation was

¹⁰⁹ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996.

¹¹⁰ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

¹¹¹ On political, security and economic issues, see Hughes (1992), *op. cit.*, pp 203-8.

¹¹² Robson, *Integration, Development and Equity* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1983), p 127.

greatly politicised. Indeed a careful examination of the events that led to the confederation reveals that it was born of a political problem and its reinforcement of the political factor was almost inescapable. The question was would political objectives bear economic fruits? Were both governments in 1982 “mature” enough to yield more sovereignty in the interest of potential gains than was the case in the early 1960s? It seemed that the die was now cast and both governments had to work towards their objectives.

Security considerations

The economic woes of The Gambia that cast doubts on its ability to survive alone without integration with Senegal in the early 1960s had now in 1982 traded places with security considerations.¹¹³ The security of The Gambia seemed top of the list of government priorities in the light of the July 1981 coup. Security integration between the two states would guarantee the security of the Gambian regime. Gambian officials were determined not to see a repetition of the July 1981 events. The mention of integrating the defence and security forces of both countries was quite ironic in that before the coup, the only security force in The Gambia was a 500 man Field force, as the question of armed forces was a luxury that Gambia could not afford.

The rapidity with which security goals were put in place reveals the enthusiasm of both governments to make security a prime objective. Details of protocol relating to security matters could be seen in Appendix 15. In The Gambia, not only was the Field Force disbanded, negotiations soon ensued to create a Gambian National Gendarmerie. Senegalese authorities were to help in the creation of this force, with the training of new recruits and providing facilities. According to Sey, the Senegalese were none too keen on The Gambia’s idea of creating an army, a move they saw as unnecessary since they themselves were quite willing to provide a security umbrella for The Gambia.¹¹⁴ Still on Sey’s authority, the Gambian government insisted that integration of security forces meant just that and for The Gambia to contribute effectively, it must build its own army.¹¹⁵ For The Gambia to dispense

¹¹³ Hughes (1992), op. cit., p 203.

¹¹⁴ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

¹¹⁵ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara, ‘Senegambia arrival’, *West Africa* 4 January 1992, p 11.

with the responsibility of creating a national army would overwrite the notion of “integrated forces” and their contribution towards the confederal budget would be towards paying Senegal for acting as gendarme in the interests of The Gambia. The presidential guard in the main was of Senegalese origin. The Gambian Maritime Brigade was also constituted mainly of Senegalese soldiers. Their mission was not dissimilar to the overall mission of Senegalese soldiers, i.e. surveillance. It was quite clear that The Gambia’s security was in the hands of Senegal and the use of Senegalese as presidential guards, may imply that the leadership had lost faith in its own men. Hughes contends: “The Gambian government, equally preoccupied with internal security, was prepared to accept military subordination to its more powerful neighbour in return for domestic stability”.¹¹⁶

Senegal on the other hand, by establishing a firm foothold in The Gambia, by offering security to the Gambian regime was not acting out of pure altruism. A base in The Gambia would enable the Senegalese to properly police the Casamance area and curb the flow of violence that is invariably the product of skirmishes between rebels and Senegalese soldiers. Fears that that The Gambia could serve as a security haven for Casamançais dissidents should be dispelled since The Gambia, as a democratic state could afford to entertain chaos in its own backyard.

However, according to Agence de Presse Sénégalaise, (APS) the Gambian government was ultimately responsible for allowing its territory to be used for the transit of arms supplied by the Iraqis destined for Mauritania and ultimately to Casamance.¹¹⁷ The Gambian government, prior to the failure of the confederation, was also accused of welcoming Casamançais rebels fleeing Senegalese justice. Accusations of this nature were quite prevalent in Senegambian relations, but the majority of decision-makers interviewed during the field trip admit that The Gambia lacked the financial and material resources to police its environment and prevent infiltration of Casamançais dissidents.¹¹⁸ Casamançais separatists were arrested by the Gambian government on the grounds of subversion and subsequently put on trial.

¹¹⁶ Hughes (1992), op. cit., p 205

¹¹⁷ O. Faye, ‘La crise casamançaise et les relations du Sénégal avec la Gambie et La Guinée Bissau’ (1980-1992)’ in *Diop*, op. cit., p 202.

¹¹⁸ Personal interview with Salieu Cissé 22 August 1996 Dakar.

Economic and monetary considerations

The third most important objective was the economic one. The confederation went further than any previous treaty since it envisaged a monetary and customs unions between the two states. Whilst these economic aspects were important, talks on a customs union in the 1960s remained still-born, since both parties could not agree on the nature of such a union. With the creation of the Confederation the perennial problem of smuggling resurfaced, and the idea of integrating the two economies became even more pressing. However, the general mood of co-operation did not efface the old suspicions and discrepancies of the economic philosophies of the two countries.¹¹⁹

The decision to allow The Gambia to join the franc zone was proposed by the Senegalese authorities. However, the Senegalese leadership wanted The Gambia to join under Senegambia rather than as a sovereign state in its own right.¹²⁰ Gambian technocrats' suspicions increased since the proposal implicitly meant a loss of sovereignty for The Gambia. A joint customs union would have put a huge responsibility on the Gambian government entailing readjustment of the economy and another compensatory mechanism best suited to The Gambia would have to be devised. Integration meant raising income duties in The Gambia.¹²¹ The Gambia's economic philosophy of liberalisation and its low import duties, allowed the business sector to import goods widely. Unlike Senegal, protectionist tariffs were not imposed on these goods and the government observed a "siphon off" policy as far as the business community was concerned. In Senegal, the reverse is true, where state intervention inhibits trade and sets prices very high.

Economic integration would curtail the flow of smuggling which Senegalese authorities saw as detrimental to the Senegalese economy. While Gambian decision-makers

¹¹⁹ For further details on economic considerations Robson (1983), op. cit., pp 125- 140. Robson was one of the advisers, whose services the Gambian government requested during the debate on monetary union with Senegal. Tom Senghore averred that the Gambian government did its homework and studied the issue thoroughly. Monetary union was crucial, it was our last plank, our survival depended on it. Tom Senghore, personal interview. Senghore argued that the knowledge on the issue of monetary matters of Gambian civil servants dealing with the issue compared unfavourable to that of the Senegalese. Bala Gaye, head of the delegation on monetary union agreed with this assertion.

¹²⁰ 'The Gambia, slow economic recovery, but Senegambia's future remains in doubt', *Africa Contemporary Record* XVIII, 1985-6, op. cit., p B28, Hughes(1992), op. cit., p 206-7.

¹²¹ See Robson, (1983), op. cit., pp 130-131.

in principle accepted monetary integration it was clear that they did not wish to concede to any agreement that would potentially undermine Gambian sovereignty and ultimately the country's national interest. By integrating its economy with that of The Gambia it could widen its market and also establish an opening with other countries within the region.¹²² Membership of the franc zone, meanwhile, would give The Gambia wider economic scope, given the international acceptability and the status of the CFA franc. Economic union would also mean that The Gambia could join such regional organisations as: the West African Monetary Union (UMOA), the francophone economic bloc CEAO and the Afro-Malagasy Common Organisation (OCAM).¹²³ The Gambia, however, adopted a policy of procrastination while it became more and more evident that it could not be part of monetary union under Senegalese terms.

Yet the issue of monetary union is perhaps the one that the Senegalese were most anxious to conclude. With the institutionalisation of Senegambia, the Confederation offered a golden opportunity for Senegal to resolve the smuggling problem that had been so prevalent in relations between The Gambia and Senegal. A customs union would take care of this irksome matter, in that smuggling would be made unprofitable for smugglers because tariffs would be standardised.

1989 proved to be a rather difficult year for Senegal. Faced with problems on its northern border with Mauritania, its relations with neighbouring Guinea-Bissau, also deteriorated over maritime boundary disputes. The skirmishes in Senegal's southern province of Casamance, between separatist rebels of the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC) and Senegalese soldiers, intensified. Meanwhile cracks in the Senegambian edifice were becoming more apparent, accentuated by a lack of progress regarding talks leading to monetary union, the Senegalese main bone of contention. Successive events proved even more burdensome when the perennial problem of Casamance intensified with further armed clashes between rebels and the Senegalese army in May 1990.¹²⁴ The Gambia was accused of hosting Casamançais dissidents and assisting the latter in their armed struggle against Senegal. Dakar imputed blame on Guinea-Bissau for openly

¹²² Hughes (1992), op. cit., p 207.

¹²³ Ibid, p 206.

¹²⁴ Faye, in Diop, pp189-207.

providing a safe haven for dissidents, and for arming them against the Senegalese forces.¹²⁵ The conflict in Casamance has never really subsided, occasional truces being quickly broken by skirmishes between the MFDC and the security forces of Senegal.

These factors came to a head in April 1989. Mauritanian herders and Senegalese farmers clashed on the ninth resulting in the death of two Senegalese in Ndounde-Khore, situated on the north-eastern border of Senegal. The incident intensified with the injury of three more Senegalese and the arrest by Mauritanian security guards of 13 other people.¹²⁶ It was during 1989, one of the most tumultuous years in Senegalese and Gambian foreign policy, that the Gambian President, Jawara sent a letter to his Senegalese colleague Diouf. Jawara requested that the Presidency of the confederation be rotated between the two Heads of State. This request was the final straw and Diouf reacted by declaring that he had now decided to “freeze” the confederation due to its lack of progress.

According to Jawara, he did not receive an acknowledgement, or better still a reply from Diouf.¹²⁷ What took place was just as hasty as the events leading up to the creation of the confederation. Diouf unilaterally decided to bring the nine-year marriage to a close and the confederation came to an end in September 1989.¹²⁸ By withdrawing the Senegalese forces stationed in The Gambia, Diouf stripped Jawara of his security, a deliberate attempt according to insiders, to disgrace the Gambian Head of State.¹²⁹ In an interview, Jawara revealed that he was surprised to notice that his Senegalese presidential guards, who normally escorted the Gambian Head of State to Friday prayers in Banjul, had unceremoniously backed their bags on the orders of the Senegalese Head of State.

¹²⁵ Loc. cit., see also Diop, in Diop, op.cit., p 15.

¹²⁶ ‘Senegal, A country in the eye of the storm’, *Africa Contemporary Record*. XXII, p. B129, see also Hughes (1992), op. cit., p 216.

¹²⁷ Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

¹²⁸ Loc. cit.

¹²⁹ Personal interview, Mbai Mbengue, 27 August 1996, Dakar.

The limitations of the confederation

Dakar saw Jawara's untimely request, as barely concealed Gambian support for Senegal's enemies. Diouf was already bitter at The Gambia's decision to act as a sanctuary for Mauritanian nationals fleeing persecution from Senegal and Casamançais dissidents using The Gambia as a refuge from reprisals by Senegalese security forces. The Gambia was clearly perceived to have joined the 'coalition' of Senegal's enemies. Jawara's letter was viewed by the Senegalese authorities as a calculated gesture to further escalate the 'cold war' between the two countries following the unsuccessful outcome of negotiations on monetary union.¹³⁰

The reasons for the failure of the confederation are many. Blame could be imputed to either the Senegalese or Gambian leadership, depending on whether it is a Senegalese or a Gambian national who is "stock-taking". What can be said, however, is that the failure of the confederation is a shared responsibility that should rest squarely on the shoulders of both sides.¹³¹ The failure, as has been stated previously, was not only in the procedure and implementation of the agreement, it was also in the foundations upon which the confederation was based. The confederation has often been referred as more of an agreement between the Heads of State of Senegal and The Gambia than a popular decision. As West Africa suggests:

No two states can settle anything with such sparks in the air. The peoples of the two countries have lived through the process oblivious of these because everything is couched in diplomatic speeches and pageantry. So essentially, as many Gambians now

¹³⁰ Certainly the Senegalese Press saw Jawara's attitude as a blatant sign of ingratitude and headlines of "La Gambie s'en mêle" (The Gambia interferes) proliferated in newspaper articles. According to Kader Diop, an Agence France Press journalist, the private press was perhaps the most virulent in its criticism, especially since Senegal was faced with problems from its immediate neighbours with the exception of Guinea and Mali, interpreted as a conspiratorial plan orchestrated by '3 Bs': Banjul (The Gambia), Bignona (Casamance) and Bissau (Guinea-Bissau). The official press according to Mr Diop "played the game", and its language was perhaps couched in all the requisite diplomatic subtleties that are required in international affairs. Privately owned papers such as Sub Hebdo did not mince their words and suggested that the failure of the confederation should be placed squarely on Jawara's shoulders. According to West Africa 18-24 September 1981, p 1551, Jawara cunningly manipulated the vulnerability of Senegal and his request for a rotation in the presidency of the confederation had the effect the Gambian leadership intended.

feel, the whole thing since 1981 has been totally personal power-play between Abdou Diouf and Dawda Jawara.¹³²

Prior to the Kaur declaration of November 1981, which marked the official signing of the confederation, Jawara toured the provinces to sell the idea of a confederation. Yet, the idea of a confederation was never really elucidated in layman's terms to the people and consequently a union that could have had a more popular dimension remained highly bureaucratic, elitist and institutional. Thus when the institutions and the politicians failed, there was an absence of popular support to back the idea of unity.¹³³

The people should be divided into two, urban and rural. The urban people, in the main, welcomed the arrival of Senegalese troops in the aftermath of the July 1981 insurrection. Yet while Gambians in general remained resigned to events subsequent to the Senegalese intervention of 1981, their attitude shifted gradually from resignation to hostility.¹³⁴ Some believed that the euphoria of the period gave confusing signals to the two Heads of State who interpreted it as a popular mandate for Senegambia. Conateh states: "The euphoria of the moment was misinterpreted by Jawara and Diouf and triggered the Kaur declaration, leading to a morning after feeling. Gambians felt "sold out".¹³⁵

As Senegalese troops proliferated in Banjul, Gambians soon perceived them as an army of occupation and their initial mission of imposing stability and order was lost. Foltz contends that lack of popular appeal contributed to the failure of the Mali Federation, but the Mali Federation was a colonial imposition, which served the convenience of the colonial power. The Senegambian union failed to served colonial wishes for reasons already

¹³¹ A. Hughes and J. Lewis, 'Beyond francophonie? The Senegambia confederation in retrospect' in Anthony Kirk-Greene and Daniel Bach (eds.) State and Society in Francophone Africa since Independence (London, St Martin's Press, 1995) p 239.

¹³² 'Unity that was', West Africa 18-24 September 1989, p 1634, Hughes (1992), op. cit., pp 215-8.

¹³³ Sall and Sallah, op. cit., p. 124, Hughes (1992), op. cit., p. 217.

¹³⁴ K.M.Bayo in a PhD thesis entitled 'Mass orientation and regional integration: environmental variations in Gambian orientations towards Senegambia' looks at integration from a populist perspective. See Table V, 1 p 162. (Unpublished PhD, Northwestern University, 1977). Omole's findings revealed an even deeper hostility for integration. While his findings conducted in 1975 reflected a much low percentage i.e. 13.3 per cent in comparison to a surprisingly high 89 per cent after a 10-year period. Sallah findings reveal similar results with 90.4 per cent of Gambians, stating that they would have voted against the confederation if a referendum was called. See E. Sallah, PhD thesis, op. cit., p 248.

¹³⁵ Personal interview with Swaebou Conateh, 14 August 1996 Serrekunda, The Gambia.

mentioned, however, its imposition did not result from colonial pressure, rather it was brought about by unexpected circumstances. Hicks contends that failure is inevitable when the establishment of the federation is forced and hurried.¹³⁶ Attempts to make confederation appear more natural and spontaneous, only served to emphasise its contrived façade.

Gradually, as negotiations ensued the urban people felt more and more alienated and felt in hindsight that the idea of a Confederation should have been put to the people in the form of a referendum. The opposition was in disarray in 1981. The NCP was in a state of limbo with the leadership accused of involvement in the coup. It was only with the advent of PDOIS that the Confederation was really challenged and its consequences fully evaluated. The rural people were not as politicised as the urban people. However, their lack of political maturity must not be overstated. It was these people with their close socio-economic ties across the Senegambian borders who had the most to gain from union.

Lack of popular urban support for Senegambian union gave the Gambian élite considerable leverage to act on behalf of the masses. Differences in perceptions have been a factor of division rather than a unifying force in the interaction of Senegambians. The legacy of colonial rule is often perceived to be the main divisive factor. Colonial legacy, though a considerable factor is not enough to explain the cleavage between the two élites. Indeed, it was at the level of the élite that differences were amplified. Each side resolutely trying to defend what it perceived as its national or "élite interest". There are cases when the two are indistinguishable. At the élite level Senegambian relations were ridden with entrenched stereotypes,¹³⁷ which were not helpful since they inhibited negotiations and re-enforced prejudices, especially when one side gave what the other perceived as the wrong signals. The history of Senegambia is to a large extent based on misunderstandings. The Gambia, remaining jealous and protective of its sovereignty, sees Senegal as imperialist. The Senegalese by using the occasional "big stick" policy, alienated Gambians further and made the road to unity more hazardous.

¹³⁶ Ursula K. Hicks, *Federalism: Failure and Successes* (London, Macmillan Press, 1978), p 178.

¹³⁷ The majority of Gambians interviewed, while not dismissing the importance of maintaining more than just a good neighbour policy, felt that Senegal had a hidden agenda. Personal interviews, Sey, Hydera, Senghore, op. cit.,

The other underlying difficulty in the Confederation was a question of orientation. Senegambian leaders had different interpretations of what the purpose and ultimate objectives of confederation were. Jawara emphasised the notion of sovereignty and independence of each state, yet Abdou Diouf saw it as a step towards federation, leading to a unitary Senegambian state.¹³⁸ Senegal's vision of a Senegambia was constructed on the achievement of this ultimate objective. The Gambia's objectives were consolidating its security structures as a primary objective and gradually to continue with functional co-operation. Yet security was an issue for Senegal too, particularly with the need to assert its authority in Casamance and curb any tendency for the peoples of the south to distance themselves from central government in Dakar.

For the Senegalese then, confederation addressed two priorities. From an economic standpoint, it would eliminate smuggling and from a security perspective it would give Senegal a much stronger foothold in its Southern province. At the conclusion of nine years of confederation with The Gambia, Senegal felt frustrated on both of these counts. Frustration turned to impatience, exacerbated by the fact that Senegal was pumping in CFA 1bn a year without reaping the desired results.¹³⁹

The Gambian leadership meanwhile, could not concede to compromises that would make it look weak in the eyes of the electorate. Thus it would appear that the foundations of the confederation from its very inception was rather shaky. Senegalese interpreted The Gambia's slow pace as foot-dragging, a testimony of Jawara's bad faith. Yet The Gambia's proclivity for procrastination and inconsistency portrayed a degree of confusion on the part of the leadership. This pattern of behaviour gave confusing signals to the Senegalese as they slowly came to the conclusion that : 'La Gambie veut une chose et son contraire.'¹⁴⁰

It would be erroneous to infer that The Gambia dragged its feet all the way. According to Sey, The Gambia deviated from its central policy regarding respect of human

¹³⁸ Personal interview with Mbai Mbengue, 27 August 1996, Dakar.

¹³⁹ 'Herculean tasks', *West Africa* 16-24 September 1989, p 15551.

¹⁴⁰ Personal interview with Fodé Seck, Senegalese Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, 19 August 1996, Dakar.

rights by colluding with the Senegalese authorities to use surveillance in ensuring that Casamance dissidents did not receive sustenance and shelter in The Gambia. He adds:

This was done to win Senegalese confidence. We succeeded in winning their confidence to a certain degree but not their full confidence since we did not comply fully with all the measures the Senegalese authorities wanted us to. This is the crack that is responsible for what is happening today. The Senegalese became very distrustful and hostile to our government and consequently put in place retaliatory measures like closure of border and, non-cooperation in a lot of matters, making The Gambia very vulnerable and giving the impression that they did not want us as a government¹⁴¹

The Mauritanian/Senegalese imbroglio was another thorny issue that hastened the demise of Senegambia. Former Foreign Minister Sey attests that the question of the rotating presidency, suggested by Jawara, might eventually have been accommodated by Diouf had it not been for The Gambia's reluctance to back the Senegalese position over Mauritania and its reception of Mauritanians fleeing from Senegal. Sey recalls how during a meeting, Diouf reminded him of his decision to send his troops to The Gambia without conferring with the Senegalese National Assembly. This acrimony is testament to how, in the absence of strong institutional networks, events in African politics often become highly personalised leading to polarised inter-state relations. The Senegalese perceived their assistance to The Gambia in 1981, not only in terms of a joint defence agreement, or simply from a security perspective, but saw it as a gesture of goodwill from one government to another. Jawara acknowledged this:

Of course we owe them our gratitude. You would be grateful if your neighbour came to your assistance, it does not mean you pledge your survival or your existence to them. It was not the first time that such interventions have taken place. It was the case of Uganda/Tanzania, Comoros/France, Haiti/US. This intervention was based

¹⁴¹ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

on an agreement of mutual assistance... if it had happened in the reverse we would have been under the obligation to assist militarily.¹⁴²

Diouf's decision to "freeze" the confederation was personal, the decision of a man whose impatience had been stretched to its full limit. Some Gambians and Senegalese have claimed that Diouf's decision to end the confederation was a misjudgement and a miscalculation.¹⁴³ Seydina Oumar Sy, former Executive Secretary of the Senegalo-Gambian confederation, and Foreign Minister to Senegal, believes that the decision to dissolve the confederation was an error:

*C'était le resultat d'un agacement. A Dakar, Jawara était perçu comme quelqu'un de mauvaise foi. L'éclatement de la confédération est une erreur politique... les intérêts de la Sénégalie dépassent les raisons personnelles des Chefs d'états.*¹⁴⁴

Camara intimated to Diouf that his decision to dissolve the confederation was without logic, since Senegal had established a strong foothold in The Gambia, especially from a security point of view.¹⁴⁵ Sara Janha, former Secretary General echoed the same sentiments, and believes that Diouf's decision to end the confederation was folly.¹⁴⁶ Janha suggests that Senegal enjoyed a privileged security situation where its troops were not only in a dominant position within the confederal army, but they also acted as presidential guards and as the backbone of the intelligence unit. In consideration of these factors, his troops could easily have absorbed The Gambia.

According to Foltz, a Federation between two members is problematic given the overbearing role of the executive, and since problems between the two states often become personalised.¹⁴⁷ Citing the Mali federation, Foltz explains how in the absence of political

¹⁴² Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

¹⁴³ Personal interview with Seydina Oumar Sey, 29 August 1996, Dakar.

¹⁴⁴ The break down of the confederation was the outcome of an annoyance in Dakar, Jawara was perceived to be acting in ill faith, the dissolution of the confederation was a political error, the interests of Senegambia go further than the personal reasons of Heads of states.

¹⁴⁵ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 14 July 1996 Banjul

¹⁴⁶ Personal interview with Sara Janha, 13 October 1996, London

¹⁴⁷ W.J. Foltz, *From French West Africa to the Mali Federation* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1965) p 187.

structures, every squabble between the leaders stirred up previous disagreements. The personalised nature of politics meant that problems within the federation irrespective of their source, were ultimately interpreted as having a bearing on the prestige of the leaders. By September 1989, observers had to conclude that unity between The Gambia and Senegal had only served to expose their disunity. Agreement on the dissolution of the confederation is enclosed in Appendix 13.

1989-1994 from retaliation to relative pacifism

In the aftermath of the confederation, relations between The Gambia and Senegal moved from diplomatic rhetoric to a sort of "cold war". The Senegalese government decided to tighten the border with The Gambia, installing more rigorous controls and harassing Gambian nationals at the border post of Barra and at Yoff airport in Dakar. Currency was seized from Gambian nationals and gas, bottled in Senegal, was stopped from entering The Gambia, thus exacerbating the chronic power supply position there. Joint bus services between the two countries were brought to an end. New prohibitions were imposed affecting The Gambia's valuable re-export trade. Following the trade war the Gambian government turned to Mauritania for assistance with bottled gas. According to Sey, the Mauritanian government was prepared to help The Gambia in every way necessary, but Jawara would not concede to anything that would antagonise Senegal.¹⁴⁸ The Senegambian Confederation was replaced by a Treaty of Friendship signed in 1991, which the Gambian Head of State tried to breathe life into and thus restore cordial relations with Senegal. Though emphasis rested on co-operation it was to be in a looser form. There were to be annual meetings between the two Heads of States and a new joint commission responsible for the handling of issues between the two states was set up under the new treaty.¹⁴⁹

In 1993, after a relatively peaceful period, Senegal effectively closed the Senegalo-Gambian border as a response to the smuggling issue, insisting that smuggling was asphyxiating the economy, forcing industries to close down. The official Senegalese government position that it had no objections to The Gambia's re-export trade but that goods

¹⁴⁸ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

¹⁴⁹ West Africa 10 June 1991, see also Africa Research Bulletin: political series, January 1981.

should be escorted right up to their destination in Guinea Bissau or Guinea to ensure that they did not end up in Senegalese markets. The border closure was very difficult to deal with, according to Jawara, because the Senegalese government did not readily admit to the closure, which violated ECOWAS protocols.¹⁵⁰

The two customs services met on several occasions but were unable to resolve what The Gambia perceived as unrealistic demands. It was in this atmosphere of cold war, border closure, and trade sanctions that the second military coup in The Gambia took place in 1994. Senegalese decision-makers had come to realise that for Senegambia to be realised it would have to be without Jawara. The reception of the military regime in The Gambia by the Senegalese government was indicative of Dakar's indifferent policy towards Jawara, and vis-à-vis The Gambia. The Senegalese leader Diouf, welcomed the coup plotters and expressed his intention of working with them. The visit of Jammeh, the coup leader, to Dakar was soon followed by Diouf's visit to The Gambia. Although Jawara was given sanctuary in Dakar, the Senegalese authorities effectively snubbed him, before he moved to Britain to seek political asylum.

CONCLUSION

Relations between The Gambia and Senegal have been difficult and yet predictable. The Gambia has always recognised the importance of its larger neighbour in its foreign relations. However, the *concept* of co-operation has never been in question, what divides both states is the *manner* in which co-operation must take place. The need to look at co-operation between the two states more positively is important for politicians, and the people of Senegambia. It seemed rather idealistic in the light of differences in colonial legacy and other patent disparities to expect the two states to speedily form a binding relationship. Such a project would take decades to realise, especially when the actors were new fragile states such as Senegal and The Gambia. In the absence of institutional strength, political commitment, and the mandate of the people, co-operation in any form between the two countries could not be founded on sporadic, impulsive and hurried initiatives. Neither could history be reinvented.

¹⁵⁰ Personal interview with Jawara, 14 March 1997, Haywards Heath, Sussex,

If there is any lesson to be learnt it is that a truly lasting Senegambian co-operation needs to take account of the legacy of history and must not attempt to efface history in order to build the future.

Consequently, in the pursuit of its national interest, the Senegalese government did not seem to gain from the experience of almost twenty years of interaction with The Gambia. It was somewhat naïve to assume that the customary Gambian procrastination was simply going to disappear overnight, especially since Senegal was already providing the crucial security blanket. The eagerness to conclude the deal on monetary union only served to alienate The Gambia from Senegal. From the Gambian angle, the Senegalese requirement for a rapid conclusion of agreement on monetary union re-opened the old debate over Senegalese domination, whilst from the Senegalese perspective, the matter simply could not be allowed to simmer on the back burner. The Gambian leadership cognisant of fact that it would lose its executive role in the event of a united Senegambia, in which the Banjul élite would loose their bargaining power and prestige, maintained a minimalist policy vis-à-vis Senegal.

For the Senegalese, Jawara had demonstrated his ingratitude by reneging on his 'promise' of unity. To some extent, certain policy blunders such as Jawara's move to personally visit Mauritanian camps in The Gambia in the aftermath of the Senegal/Mauritania imbroglio of 1989, did not help to mitigate Senegalese suspicions. The Gambia's relations with Senegal have taken different turns in the course of history. Senegambian relations will only be viable and durable when the 'masses' assume full responsibility for relations between the two states, and not the two leaders. Political, economic, and security problems between the two can only be properly assessed with the full participation of those principally concerned, i.e. the Senegambian people.

CHAPTER 8: The Gambia's Extra-African Relations, Foreign Economic Policy and the Strategy of Survival

A reconstruction of The Gambia's foreign policy must take cognisance of its extra-African relations. Foreign economic policies for developing states are perceived to be a survival tool, a means to an end. The prevalence of a weak domestic base in a country starved of natural resources has increased its dependency on foreign economic aid. The Gambia's dependence on external aid and foreign investment has been a colonial legacy, a post independent feature, since its attainment of self-rule in 1965. In over three decades since The Gambia joined the club of independent states, its crippling dependency on foreign aid has escalated. Indeed, by 1994 the contribution of external aid to the national budget accounted for 82 per cent.¹

The Gambia's economy, whilst highly dependent on the export of its primary cash crop, groundnuts, did however find another niche to augment government revenue. This was tax generated by the re-export trade, which was buoyant throughout the 1980s, but stagnated in 1989, following the collapse of the Senegambia Confederation. Following Senegalese irritation at The Gambia's slow progress towards monetary union, authorities in Dakar retaliated in 1993 by closing the frontiers to cross-border trade. This unexpected gesture seriously affected the business community and reduced government revenue from customs duties generated from the re-export trade by half.² Subsequently, the estimated GDP growth of 5 per cent for 1993/4 fell to nil.³ The re-export trade had accounted for 20 per cent of the government's national revenue.⁴ Devaluation of the CFA franc (the currency of neighbouring Senegal and most other francophone countries in West Africa) in 1994 by 50% had another telling effect on the re-export trade as Gambian businessmen saw their profits halved.

Industrialisation as noted in Chapter two is very limited, largely due to the smallness of the domestic market. Indeed, in 1985, manufacturing in The Gambia made only a negligible contribution to GDP.⁵ Since 1980 there has been consistent albeit modest growth in informal artisanal manufacturing. Yet the tiny Gambian manufacturing industry has in the main performed reasonably better than other

¹ Personal interview with Bakary Dabo, former Finance Minister, 6 February 1996, London.

² P.da Costa, 'The squeeze on The Gambia', *Africa Report* March/April 1994, p 17

³ Cooke and Hughes, op. cit., p 111.

⁴ Loc. cit..

⁵ Cooke, op. cit., p 158.

branches of industry, such as construction and public utilities.⁶ According to Cooke, there is a regional market for leather and food processing, made attractive due to relatively cheap labour.⁷

Tourism has in the past displayed some buoyancy, representing 12% of GDP in an average year.⁸ The trade collapsed after the travel advice given by the Foreign Office to dissuade British nationals from going to The Gambia in the volatile political climate after the November 11th counter coup. Before this up to 100,000 British had been estimated to be visiting The Gambia annually, assisted by a revival in the British economy the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Poorly performing macro-economic indicators, whilst serious in themselves, have to be set in context alongside The Gambia's soaring external debt, which in 1994 stood at an estimated \$380m. Dependence on primary exports has increased The Gambia's vulnerability and amplified its reliance on external aid in order to make up budgeted expenditure. The problem of size is not without its relevance, yet The Gambia has been able to use its small size advantageously to generate aid from donors. Moreover, positive internal features, outlined in the first half of the thesis, such as democracy and political stability, have made aid donors sympathetic to The Gambia's plight. Indeed such features have increased donor *largesse* and a desire to help what was perceived as one of the smallest democracies in Africa attain some form of economic stability.⁹

The Gambian leadership, cognisant of the country's endemic economic weakness and the ramifications of such weakness on the stability of the regime and the well being of the people, has lobbied actively to curry favour from around the world. Non-aligned in principle, the leadership did not hesitate to stifle the concept when it ran counter to the national interest. As mentioned initially, the concept of the national interest has always assumed an overriding importance in the external affairs of states. However, in small dependent states such as The Gambia, the success of foreign economic policy could hardly be divorced from the success of the regime. At its best foreign economic policy could help perpetuate regimes irrespective of poor domestic performance. The aim of this penultimate chapter then is principally to look at leadership strategies in attracting economic aid through a projection of the aforementioned national features

⁶ Ibid, p 159.

⁷ Loc. cit.

⁸ The Economic Intelligence Unit Limited 4th quarter 1994, p 22.

Relations between The Gambia and its former colonial overlord have been at the very centre of foreign economic policy. Dependency often creates a patron-client relationship. Thus, relations between former colonies and their colonial masters are rarely free from neo-colonial underpinnings. The question that must be asked is, has The Gambia relied on British aid with or without becoming overly acquiescent to British dictates? Another key point in this chapter is the use of foreign aid, not solely as a survival tool, but as a means of buttressing the existing economic structure of the state. It would seem that the bulk of The Gambia's foreign policy, whether from a bilateral or multilateral stance, has been designed to achieve one ultimate goal, the need to augment the country's economic security. However, The Gambia's need for continuous economic assistance has amplified its dependency, and extended its traditional bilateral choice of aid to a multilateral one in which the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) continue to play a dominant role.

The Gambia and Britain: from umbilical dependence to uncertain independence?

As indicated above, it is almost impossible to analyse Anglo-Gambian links without taking into account the economic equation, which is the backbone of the relationship between coloniser and colonised. Indeed, the disengagement of Britain generated an economic conundrum: could The Gambia survive on its own in the light of its size and its location, surrounded as it is save for a short coastal strip by Senegal? It was precisely due to The Gambia's precarious location, a country within a country, and its lack of resources that increased British scepticism about the chances of survival of a state so poorly endowed. Viability could only be attained it was thought, if The Gambia came to an agreement with Senegal, the neighbour it shared most affinities with, and therefore the most natural partner to align with.¹⁰

British policy towards The Gambia in the mid 1960s was one of economic pragmatism. Once the conclusion had been reached by the British colonial establishment that The Gambia's chances of survival as a sovereign state were virtually non-existent, it became urgent to dispense with British responsibility in The Gambia with the least possible expense. The prospect of perennially propping up a weak economy with continued British aid was not compatible with other British commitments. The British government saw the development of the River Gambia as a possible

⁹ Hughes, in Payne and Clarke, p 155.

instrument with which to persuade Gambian political leaders, to the idea of association with Senegal. However, the cost of preliminary surveys for such a scheme, was more than British magnanimity was willing to stretch to. There was also little prospect of the Americans and Germans sharing the cost of the survey. In the absence of German and American financial commitment it would mean that the burden of the survey would be placed firmly on the shoulders of the British and France. Britain could not afford such financial obligations in the light of its own balance of payments problems and the prospect of increasing expenditure in East Africa with British disengagement in the area.¹¹

The question of British aid to The Gambia, following the commitments to grant independence, remained a major preoccupation for Britain. While it was initially agreed to grant The Gambia a lump sum, the British colonial establishment hoped that in the prospect of a Senegambian union, French aid to Senegal would be extended to The Gambia. But France did not have much to gain from a Senegambian union and adopted a passive attitude during the period 1962-65, when negotiations between the two countries were at their height. Moreover, the French government felt that it was already pumping more than its fair share of external aid into Senegal. Subsequently, the British government realised that it would still be expected to provide considerable assistance to its former colony, as is implicit in this correspondence:

Senegal will be lucky if it goes on receiving assistance from France for itself on the same scale as at present. Senegal needs every franc that it can get from France for its own purposes. So far as I know there is not the slightest disposition on the part of Senegal to share with the Gambia the present scale of assistance that it receives from France, nor is there likely to be any inclination on the part of France to extend to the Gambia assistance on the scale at which it is at present afforded to Senegal.¹²

Conscious of The Gambia's need for aid, Britain sought to use this factor by exerting pressure on the leadership to seek alliance with Senegal, by making granting of aid conditional on association. Britain also harboured fears that their plans for a Senegambian union would be foiled if other donors satisfied Gambian aid needs. It was

¹⁰ See Chapter 7.

¹¹ PRO (London), FO371/161579, File JE 1061, C.G Eastwood to R. Stevens, dd. Dakar, 23 March 1962.

¹² PRO (London), FO371/1167335, File JE 1061/12, J. Peck to P.M. Forster, dd. Dakar, 9 February 1963.

with this in mind that the British government sought to dissuade potential Western donors from offering aid to The Gambia unless the latter became part of a Senegambian union.

We have a weapon of coercion in our hands if we make it clear to the Gambia that aid is more likely to be forthcoming if they are associated with Senegal than if they are not. This weapon is useless if the Gambians can get all the aid they want from the United States, Germany or elsewhere. It might be a wise precaution to make our views known to any government whom Jawara is likely to approach. I should have thought it unlikely that he would turn to the Russians or Egyptians at the moment.¹³

The British government, aware of The Gambia's limitations in manpower and skilled personnel, agreed to provide some technical assistance. The Gambia meanwhile, requested additional British assistance, particularly in the field of translation, seen as necessary in negotiations with Senegal.

Although the Britain managed to convince the American government to withhold aid to The Gambia until it became part of an integrated Senegambia, the British government felt obliged to shift its position from the hoped-for minimal expenditure.¹⁴ By 1964, it was becoming clear that if British hopes of Senegambian union were to be fulfilled, they would have to pledge considerable financial assistance to the Gambia. As Peck echoed: "I think if we want a Senegambia and not an independent Gambia, we must be prepared to pay heavily".¹⁵

Judging from further correspondence it would seem clear that the British government had used the deliberate ploy of offering aid as a lever to coerce the Gambian leadership to accept unity with Senegal.¹⁶ With dwindling prospects of using the development of the River Gambia as a plan to induce both the Gambians and the Senegalese, the British government now decided to allocate half a million pounds in aid to Senegal from the overall amount intended for The Gambia. The lack of confidence displayed by the British government in The Gambia's ability to become a viable post-independent state undermined the confidence of some Gambian decision-makers. It also

¹³ PRO (London), FO 371/176778, File JE1061/1, J. Peck to P.R.A. Mansfield, dd. Dakar, 10 January 1964.

¹⁴ Loc. cit.

¹⁵ Loc. cit.

¹⁶ PRO (London), FO371, File, JE1061/5, C.J Hayes to A.N Galsworthy, dd. Dakar, 13 January 1964.

underestimated the leadership's ability to provide a suitable political atmosphere, to ensure that The Gambia's needs could be met and that its territorial boundaries would not be threatened by neighbouring countries.

The possibility of The Gambia being left out of EEC negotiations due to Britain's exclusion was believed by the leadership to be disadvantageous. British exclusion from the EEC could have affected The Gambia's relations with Senegal, as the latter was already an associate member by virtue of its francophone heritage. An estimated 90 per cent of The Gambia's exports consisted of groundnuts, which entered the UK and the EEC duty free. However, it was predicted that difficulties would arise if the EEC went ahead with the establishment of a Common Agricultural Policy on oils and fats, in which countries within the EEC would be given preferential treatment over non-EEC producers.¹⁷ So if The Gambia adopted a measure whereby it crushed more of its own groundnuts and exported them in the form of oil, with a common EEC tariff estimated at 10 per cent, exports would be affected by non-association with the EEC.¹⁸ These problems though hypothetical, could have produced economic confusion if The Gambia and Senegal had indeed formed a union.

The British government's propensity to thwart Gambian independence meant that it was unwilling to invest in infrastructural development in the country. According to Camara, the British had expressed unwillingness to help the Gambian government construct an international airport.¹⁹ They would only agree to an airstrip because of prospective union with Senegal. However, the Gambian leadership's request did not completely fall on deaf ears. The matter was brought forward in a meeting at the Colonial office in London. Eastwood concluded that such proposals should not circumscribe impending British goals, but he stated that the absence of funds allocated to the project suggested loss of interest on the part of Britain. Consequently the British government would continue to use the Portuguese airfield at Sal in Cape Verde to meet its needs.²⁰

Cognisant of the Gambian leadership's desire to retain a British identity and to

¹⁷ PRO (London), FO 37/1167335, File, JE1061/20, Pettitt to Burgess-Watson, dd. .Dakar. 4 April 1963.

¹⁸ Loc. cit.

¹⁹ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 14 July 1996, Banjul.

²⁰ Meeting held at the Foreign office on 13 March 1962, on Sengambian relations. Present were, Governor Windley, G.E.Millard, C.G.Eastwood, et al, op. cit., Chapter 6. The meeting was convened to discuss recommendations made by the British ambassador in Dakar, and explore Governor Windley's proposals to take swift measures following the Gambian election in 1962, thereby hastening

maintain relations with Britain, the British government, was not certain how relations should be cultivated. Due to the uniqueness of the situation, the issue of membership of the Commonwealth in the event of a Senegambian amalgamation was raised, as this correspondence points out:

We consider that it is very doubtful whether retention of British nationality by Gambians and continued membership of the Commonwealth by the Gambia after association with Senegal would be practical. Moreover the two cannot be disassociated. The expressions "British subject" and "Commonwealth citizen" are synonymous.²¹

The Gambian leadership, whilst aware of the daunting task of state building also felt the pressure of the British government in portraying union with Senegal as the attractive option and thus the only route to economic prosperity. While the early speeches of the governor-general, Sir John Paul, repeatedly evoked the theme of Senegambia as an economic imperative, a solution to The Gambia's geographic isolation and a springboard for closer co-operation with Senegal, it was also clear that British policy regarding The Gambia was more pragmatic than idealistic. Although, the Gambian leadership echoed the sentiments expressed by the Governor-General it is clear that the leadership was not convinced that economic salvation lay with a closer union with Senegal.²²

British ambitions to bring about a Senegambian union were not openly expressed in The Gambia or indeed the international arena. This avoided criticism from countries such as Ghana who were likely to accuse Britain of refusing to grant full independence to The Gambia and handing the country over to Senegal, a "French stooge". Yet the behind-the-scenes tactics of the British government were not completely lost on the Gambian political class. Camara affirmed that Britain had a definite policy that was synonymous with "lumping" The Gambia with Senegal.²³ Darbo states that in no part of West Africa was independence conditional as was the case in The Gambia.²⁴ However, with The Gambia moving from a monarchical status to a republican one in 1970, coupled with increased confidence in international affairs, the

the process of union with Senegal.

²¹ PRO (London), FO 371/161579 File JE1061/39, H. Miller to R. J. O'Neil, dd. Foreign Office 20 September 1962.

²² 'Speech from the throne', *The Gambia National Bulletin* 19 February 1965, 'The Gambia goes it alone', *West Africa* 13 February 1965

²³ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 15 July 1996, Banjul.

Gambian government was able to carve out its foreign policy without taking cues or advice from Britain.

In addition, the preoccupation of the post-independence government was not concerned with bridging the gap between The Gambia and Senegal. Government concerns during the first five years of independence were more in line with pressing domestic needs, such as balancing the budget and attaining and securing some form of viability. Ironically the British, hitherto suspected of wanting to hive off The Gambia to Senegal, were now providing The Gambia with the economic assistance to make union with Senegal a needless option, at least from an economic standpoint. British aid and technical assistance boosted The Gambia's confidence so that the leadership started to count on the largesse of distant states rather than look to affinities with its immediate neighbour.

Gomez has discussed the Gambia's relative confidence in state building thanks to British aid.²⁵ He avers that because the British government financed The Gambia's second development programme, this eased the economic burden from the leadership's shoulders and made Senegambian union less of a priority. This was further demonstrated by the lack of enthusiasm displayed by Gambians during Senghor's visit to The Gambia.²⁶ The British government afforded to The Gambia a total sum of £3.2m in an interest free loan with a 25 year period period of grace. Grants-in-aid towards the balancing of the recurrent budget were further provided for consecutive years, £500,000 for 1967/8 and £450,000 for 1968/9, £370,000 for 1969/70 and £280,000 for 1970/71.²⁷ With this attractive financial package, Jawara's rhetoric during Senghor's visit took on a different note. He stated to his colleagues that one of The Gambia's highest priorities was to guarantee as speedily as possible the "improvement in the well-being of the Gambian people".²⁸ It was henceforth clear that The Gambia was determined to steer its own course without Senegalese assistance.

Although British aid has dwindled considerably in recent years, it is noteworthy that Britain still remains an important bilateral donor. Gambian leaders not only expected British aid, it was considered as an obligation. The absence of basic infrastructure in The Gambia, compared to other former British colonies such as Ghana

²⁴ Personal interview with Bakary Dabo. 6 February 1996, London.

²⁵ Gomez, *op. cit.*, pp 524-25.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p 524.

²⁷ *Loc. cit.*

²⁸ *Loc. cit.*

and Sierra Leone, was evident. Jawara mentioned in an interview the unique situation of The Gambia as opposed to countries such as Ghana where universities were already in operation.²⁹ Dabo stated that the British left The Gambia highly under-resourced, almost “raw”³⁰ This legacy of meagreness bequeathed by the British, not only increased The Gambia’s dependence on British aid but heightened the government’s anticipation of British assistance in the years following independence. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the domestic base in The Gambia was so weak that the latter had to rely on British aid to account for part of the recurrent budget. Nonetheless the two countries enjoyed cordial relations. The extent of the colonial legacy is often so pervasive that such a link cannot easily be severed as has been proved elsewhere in post-independence Africa. Jawara contends:

Relations with Britain continued to be good after independence. Relations with metropolitan powers are very pervasive. They established and developed the public service; the civil service is of the same tradition as the metropolitan power, our educational and legal system, even the parliamentary system. So really relations then become so comprehensive that there is no option but to have a reasonable *modus vivendi*.³¹

Positive growth in the Gambian economy following the first few years of independence, contrary to British and Gambian expectations, made the British question the relevance of continued aid. Indeed spreading the burden of dependence onto several donors became Gambia’s foreign economic strategy in the late 1970s. Following colonial disengagement in the 1960s, the bulk of The Gambia’s economic aid came from Britain, which also provided expatriates to assist in the civil service. The “Gambianization” of the civil service did not occur very rapidly, and Britain continued bilateral assistance by providing grants for Gambian students to study in the United Kingdom.³²

Over the years, relations between The Gambia and Britain have been devoid of the friction that is often present in such relationships. The cordiality of Anglo-Gambian relations explains why no formal treaty was signed between the two states. The feelings of amity between the two governments was expressed in this West Africa article: “And it should be remembered that in no country has feeling towards Britain been more cordial at the time of independence—a feeling exemplified by the invitation to Sir John Paul to

²⁹ Interview with Sir Dawda Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

³⁰ Interview with Bakary Darbo, 6 February 1996, London.

³¹ Personal interview with Sir Dawda Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

remain as Governor-General".³³

In relation to the special Anglo-Gambian relationship, Jawara echoes:

*"...Since we achieved independence, I cannot remember a single instance when any semblance of discord has cast a shadow over relations between our two countries, and I pray and hope that this abiding spirit of amity and complete understanding will continue and characterize our relations".*³⁴

A "memorandum of understanding" was reached between the British and Gambian Governments. The British government endeavoured to pay for the training fees of Gambian officials studying in the Britain.³⁵ This assistance was granted under the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan (SCAAP). It provided the opportunity for the Gambian government to ensure that eligible candidates could take advantage of training in Britain.³⁶ The British government, conscious of its moral obligations vis-à-vis The Gambia, consented to the remuneration of British expatriates.³⁷ However, this was considered as part of the development assistance afforded to The Gambia and as such it constituted part of the overall development package provided to The Gambian government.

However, despite this and other assistance from the British government, some Gambian MPs regarded British aid as inadequate.³⁸ One such member was Lamin Mboge, the member for Illiassa, who complained that British aid was "not enough" in the light of what other countries were receiving. He felt that the size of The Gambia was a British responsibility, and that their obligation to The Gambia should match their culpability in bequeathing such arbitrary features to the country.³⁹

By the late 1970s, in the era of declining British aid, The Gambia was well advanced in its extension of foreign economic ties to generate more aid. Aid was now being receiving aid from the EEC, the United States, China and Germany,⁴⁰ as well as from Libya which was already intensifying its bilateral co-operation through the

³² Figures cited by . Gomez, 1965-1975, op. cit., p 308.

³³ 'The Gambia goes it alone', *West Africa* 13 February 1965.

³⁴ *File on OSAS President's office, Quadrangle, Banjul, The Gambia.*

³⁵ Gomez, op. cit., p 302.

³⁶ Loc. cit.

³⁷ Ibid., p 203.

³⁸ *The Gambia National Bulletin* 9 January 1965.

³⁹ Loc. cit.

⁴⁰ The Gambia had been receiving aid from West Germany, although this had not reached the extent of British aid.; 'West Germany's independence gift to The Gambia', *The Gambia National News* 18

construction of schools. The Libyan government also sent a team of experts to conduct studies on the construction of the Soma-Basse and Essau-Kerewan roads in The Gambia.⁴¹ By the late 1970s The Gambia had earned itself a reputation of political stability coupled with a sound policy that aimed at greater economic development. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shridath Ramphal “commended The Gambia’s impressive record of achievement in its steady economic development and very stable and sound administration”.⁴²

By 1979, speculation on continued British assistance was rife within government circles. However, following the visit of Judith Hart, Overseas Development Minister, who assured the Gambian leadership that British assistance would continue in the form of grants, this speculation ceased.⁴³ The Gambia expressed gratitude to the British government for converting loans to grants but argued that “development assistance should not be tied to the import content of projects thereby distorting priorities in favour of import-intensive projects”.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, in 1975, on a visit to London, Jawara was able to secure a D4m loan towards the new 5-year development plan. Previously, Britain had granted D560,000 to The Gambia for the training of Gambians in the UK.⁴⁵ This training was in line with The Gambia’s need for skilled workers and expertise, particularly in certain professional disciplines like accountancy, and other technical areas. The British government had already made available D30-40 million outside the specified area of assistance for the period 1975-80.⁴⁶ This money helped finance projects such as the central abattoir, the purchase of the riverboat “Lady Chilel”, cattle landing craft, rural water supply and several self-help projects.⁴⁷ The British government was also expected to co-finance the bridge barrage project in conjunction with the EEC and West Germany.

The Gambia was now enjoying the success of its diplomatic efforts through assistance provided by countries like the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) and the EEC (which through the ACP/EEC connection has helped significantly in development

March 1965.

⁴¹ ‘Libyans to send a team of road experts to The Gambia’, The Gambia News Bulletin 13 March 1976.

⁴² The Gambia News Bulletin 3 February 1979.

⁴³ The Gambia News Bulletin 13 January 1979.

⁴⁴ The Gambia News Bulletin 13 January 1979, p 2.

⁴⁵ ‘Britain will grant D560,000 to The Gambia’, The Gambia News Bulletin 24 January 1976.

⁴⁶ Loc.cit.

projects and drought relief measures in The Gambia). The reason for the decline in British aid could be attributed to several factors, particularly world recession and lack of British enthusiasm in meeting further Gambian commitments. Sallah contends that the growing internal corruption in The Gambia by the late 1970s was not unknown to the British.⁴⁸ Subsequently, British magnanimity fell short of expectations as the EEC and the US helped filled the financial vacuum created by a reduction in British aid. However, between 1975 and 1979, from a total sum of \$113 million in foreign aid, the British government disbursed \$25 million, essentially in the form of grants.⁴⁹

In one of The Gambia's worst political crises, following the July 1981 insurrection, British assistance was again forthcoming and D3m was given to the Gambian government towards re-building the economy.⁵⁰ Both the public and private sectors suffered losses estimated at D42 million.⁵¹ The Gambia's grey economy (the informal sector) was also seriously affected by the 1981 coup. In the formal private sector, firms like Maurel and Prom (French entrepreneurs) had to lay off their employees due to heavy looting during the insurrection.⁵² In addition, due to shortages triggered by the events of 1981, the government needed an estimated 14,000 tonnes of food as part of a relief programme.⁵³ The tourism industry was doubly hit by world recession and the events of the July 1981 coup, which created an atmosphere of political instability and insecurity.⁵⁴ Earnings from the trade fell sharply.⁵⁵

In addition to its cash injections Britain also provided 700 tones of rice, medical supplies, a crane worth D520,000 for the Banjul port, and pallets estimated at D276,000.⁵⁶ According to Gomez, British aid to The Gambia from 1965 to 1975 has been estimated at D38million, whilst capital aid amounted to an annual sum of D4 million.⁵⁷ Technical assistance involving grants for Gambians and the employment of British expatriates within the public service reached D2 million.⁵⁸

⁴⁷ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 13 January 1979.

⁴⁸ Personal interview with Halifa Sallah, 8 August 1996, Serrekunda.

⁴⁹ Touray, op.cit., p 145.

⁵⁰ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 23 September 1981.

⁵¹ A.A Njie, 'The coup: how it affects the economy', *The Gambia News Bulletin* 2 August 1982, p 8.

⁵² Loc. cit.

⁵³ Loc. cit.

⁵⁴ Loc. cit.

⁵⁵ Loc. cit.

⁵⁶ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 23 September 1981.

⁵⁷ Gomez, op. cit., p 308.

British aid has continued throughout the 1980s and into the nineties, and was only cut off in 1994, subsequent to the 1994 coup. This aspect of foreign policy will be explored in a postscript chapter. Although the relationship between Britain and The Gambia should not be reduced to a donor/recipient relationship, it is quite evident that due to The Gambia's weak economy, British aid assumed a crucial role, particularly in the post-independence years. Nonetheless this should not undermine other areas of the Anglo-Gambian relationship, particularly from a cultural perspective. From a political standpoint, the relationship between the two states does not seem to have been premised on neo-colonialist principles.⁵⁹

Perhaps the most memorable source of discord was over British policy in Rhodesia.⁶⁰ The Gambia's stance was relatively accommodating since, unlike some other Commonwealth states, it maintained that links with the former colonial overlord should not be severed as this would stall negotiations and jeopardise talks between the Ian Smith government and Britain.⁶¹ However, with the sale of British arms to the Smith government, the Gambian government expressed its opposition in a correspondence. As if to make up for its initially feeble position towards the British government stance in Rhodesia, the government published its letter to Britain in the *Gambia News Bulletin*.⁶² Former Minister of External Affairs Camara maintained that, regarding the Rhodesian crisis, no pressure was exerted on The Gambia by Britain. Although he intimated that the British lobbied from time to time in order to get The Gambia to adopt a certain position; in the final analysis, the latter always adopted an independent stance.⁶³

In security terms Britain has contributed by its assistance in training the Gambian security forces, particularly in the wake of the July 1981 coup. During the pre-independence period, Gambian security was assured by the British in the form of an intercolonial defence force in West Africa, known as the Royal West African Field Force (RWAFF).⁶⁴ With the decolonisation of four separate colonies, the RWAFF was territorialized.⁶⁵ However, in the Gambian case the local battalion was disbanded in

⁵⁸ Loc. cit.

⁵⁹ Hughes, in Clarke and Payne, p 154.

⁶⁰ Gomez, op. cit., p 310.

⁶¹ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 14 July 1996, Banjul.

⁶² *The Gambia News Bulletin* 25 July 1970.

⁶³ Personal interview with Assan Musa Camara, 16 August 1996, Banjul.

⁶⁴ Hughes, in Payne and Clarke, p 152.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p 152.

1958 due to economic constraints.⁶⁶

Following the disengagement of Senegalese troops from The Gambia in 1989, the Gambian government solicited British assistance in its goal to toughen the army and secure the national regime. Prior to this three British SAS personnel assisted the Senegalese intervention team in rescuing Gambian civilians held hostage by the rebels during the 1981 coup d'état. In return the Gambian government allowed the Royal Air Force to use Yundum airport for refuelling purposes during the Falkland crisis.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, with the demise of the confederation, the British government assisted not only in training schemes but gave the Gambian security forces communications equipment to the value of £18, 000.⁶⁸ The Gambia had also requested defence assistance from several other countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, and China notwithstanding Senegalese assistance as part of the security and defence agreement between the two states following the signature of the confederation. Similar to its policy of multilateral dependency on economic aid, assistance in defence seems to bear similar features, whereby The Gambia's defence and security objectives are met by several donor countries⁶⁹

Britain's agreement to help in the training of the Gambian army, in the wake of Senegalese disengagement was however conditional. The British government would only allow its soldiers to be involved in light training.⁷⁰ Indeed unlike the French, the British government had always cautiously eschewed military interference in Africa and forming defence treaties such as those between France and its former colonies was never a British practice. The only former colony that Britain signed a post-independence defence treaty with was Nigeria but public opinion in Nigeria forced its abandonment. It was therefore understandable that Britain would only undertake such a task in The Gambia as a temporary basis and on a peripheral level. With the arrival of Nigerian soldiers and officers in 1992, these took over from the British as explained in Chapter 6. This was a sentimental gesture on the part of the Gambian government.⁷¹ Given the large size of the Nigerian training team, the British felt that their presence had become redundant⁷² and the decision to leave in the light of the arrival of the Nigerian

⁶⁶ Loc. cit.

⁶⁷ Hughes, in Payne and Clarke, pp 153-4

⁶⁸ Touray, op.cit., p 281.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p 154.

⁷⁰ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

⁷¹ Loc. cit.

⁷² Personal interview with Bunn Jack, former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs. He stated that the British withdrawal was as a result of the Nigerian presence a 5-man team outnumbered

detachment was perhaps indicative of British disapproval. It might however, be interpreted as part of a British policy of reducing expenditure.

The tendency to link The Gambia with Senegal has not been completely effaced in the changing tide of events. According to Omar Sey, both the Americans and the British saw The Gambia through the eyes of Senegal. He averred that the British, though desirous to keep the links and bonds of the Commonwealth, "*would not go all out when the chips are down*".⁷³ During the dispute between Senegal and The Gambia, a committee was charged with the responsibility of advising EU members on what attitude to adopt. Sey gives credit to the Thatcher government for understanding the Gambian situation and its distinctive identity as a sovereign state. He attributed the same understanding to the Overseas Development Minister, Baroness Chalker. Still on Sey's authority, The Gambia lost its privileged position with the departure of Margaret Thatcher. With the breakdown of the Senegambia confederation the Senegalese contemplated coercive measures against The Gambia, but Mrs Thatcher stood firmly behind The Gambia's position.

The relationship between metropoli and their former colonies tends to ebb and flow yet The Gambia's relations with its former colonial master have been less conflictual than customary. The Gambia's economic dependence on Britain, though heavy, became less so as the country changed its strategy to attracting aid from international institutions as well as from bilateral donors. Given the present circumstances regarding the revision of aid, The Gambia would lose more from the EU and the United States if they conjointly decided to withdraw aid, as was the case in 1994.

The Gambia and Western donors: the diplomacy of smallness and playing the democratic card.

The disadvantages of small size quite often outweigh the advantages. In most cases structural disadvantages relating to size are considered as an impediment to national development and economic prosperity. In the case of The Gambia however, severely affected by obvious size constraints, the leadership used its small size to attract sympathy from Western donors. Democracy and human rights are important indicators

by a 78-man Nigerian group (personal interview with Bunn Jack, 6 February 1996, London) Sey supported this claim and stated that the Nigerian team was too big. (personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara)

of worth for Western donors and The Gambia, as already mentioned, had adopted the British system of parliamentary democracy since 1965, when the majority of people in the African continent were grappling with military rule and one party states.

It would be speculative to assume that The Gambia's democratic and human rights principles were a charade, to attract Western donors. Imperfect though the democratic structure and system in The Gambia may have been, the leadership demonstrated a genuine commitment to democratic principles. However, given the primacy of these features in the politics of attracting aid, the Gambian leadership has used them in the national interest. Considerable aid was received in the late 1970s and subsequent to the 1981 coup.

The Gambia's decision to join the ACP states irrespective of Britain joining the EEC was another example of economic pragmatism. When the British government informed the Gambian leadership of its intention to join the EEC, it was left to The Gambia to judge whether it wanted to enjoy associate status, accorded to countries that had economic ties with EEC member states as this might prejudice existing trade links between and The Gambia. A meeting of Commonwealth states was convened to debate the advantages and disadvantages for countries whose future economic ties were affected by Britain's membership of the community.

Associate membership of the EEC would entitle The Gambia to some of the benefits enjoyed by older associates. For instance The Gambia would be eligible for material aid and technical assistance from the European Development Fund. Associate membership also meant that The Gambia could take advantage of The Stabilisation of Export Earning Scheme (STABEX) a scheme which regulates the EEC's purchases of primary products from developing states. Using this scheme the EEC would make up price differentials caused by a fall in world prices due to recession, or natural hazards such as climatic variation. In the event of fluctuating export earnings, the scheme would cover certain key primary products of The Gambia, specifically cotton, groundnuts, palm nuts and palm nut products, hides and skins, together responsible for 95% of The Gambia's export receipts.⁷⁴

In joining the ACP/EEC scheme, The Gambia was principally concerned with price support policies set out by the United States and the EEC. The level of future

⁷³ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

production of rapeseed and soya beans for oil was also a subject of concern. The EEC was to devise a special arrangement for the production of Gambian groundnut oil to ensure that Gambian farmers, whose incomes were much lower than their counterparts in Europe and America would not be at a greater disadvantage.⁷⁵ It was predictable given the benefits involved in such a scheme, that The Gambia would opt for the 'Yaoundé-type- association', similar to that enjoyed by Senegal.⁷⁶ In April 1972, at the meeting of Commonwealth officials in London, the Gambian delegation expressed its wish to strengthen co-operation in trade and monetary issues with Senegal and other West African countries, through the EEC/ACP scheme.⁷⁷

The Gambia's decision to join the EEC in April 1972 as an associate state was motivated by pragmatism, given its heavy dependence on the groundnut and its derivatives as the main source of national revenue. By 1975, talks between the EEC and Gambian officials extended to development infrastructure and agricultural schemes.⁷⁸ The EEC earmarked several projects, including upgrading over 200 miles of provincial roads.⁷⁹ The EEC programming mission to Banjul in 1975 mentioned the organisation's intention to finance a sewerage and drainage project in the capital city of Banjul.⁸⁰

The cost of these projects was estimated at \$37m and assistance was to be in the form of grants.⁸¹ 'Soft loans' for small farmers to be channelled through the Corporative Department, were also agreed to.⁸² Credit facilities were to be made available as well, for the Fisheries department, (including credit for inboard and outboard motors and fishing gear), poultry and horticultural development.⁸³ Finally, the EEC agreed to finance part of the construction of the bridge barrage.

By 1976, Robert Cohen, head of the EEC programming mission, announced the intention of the organisation to allocate \$12m of aid to The Gambia, of which the bulk was to be in the form of grants.⁸⁴ Mr Cohen spelt out the intention of the EEC to

⁷⁴ Gomez, op. cit., p 335.

⁷⁵ 'The Gambia and the E.E.C', The Gambia News Bulletin 25 April 1972.

⁷⁶ Gomez, op.cit., p 330. This type of association ensured free trade arrangements, technical and capital aid, including frequent consultations.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p 327.

⁷⁸ The Gambia News Bulletin 22 July 1975.

⁷⁹ Loc. cit.

⁸⁰ Loc. cit.

⁸¹ Loc. cit.

⁸² Loc. cit.

⁸³ Loc. cit.

⁸⁴ The Gambia News Bulletin 3 April 1976.

intervene in a “broad range of projects”.⁸⁵ He added: “Today, April 1, being the operative date of the Lomé Convention, marks the beginning of a new relationship between The Gambia and the EEC”.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, in spite of the EEC’s professed commitment to help The Gambia, implementation was slow. Two years after its signature of the Lomé Convention, The Gambia was still not benefiting from the numerous projects initially earmarked by the EEC. The Gambian Ambassador to Belgium and the EEC, Ebou Taal, blamed the non-commencement of the projects on EEC red tape.⁸⁷ He stated: “The problem is data: the ACP countries provide it, but the Commission wants more and more, and you get the feeling they are not speaking the same language”.⁸⁸ He added that a long delay would cause a rise in inflation, which in turn would diminish the value of grants by as much as 20%.⁸⁹ The Ambassador proposed that to improve efficiency, the EEC should concentrate on simple projects that would take a shorter time to realise.⁹⁰

Bureaucratic red tape in organisations like the EEC was very frustrating for small states which, due to the urgency of major projects, needed to implement them rapidly to satisfy the expectations of the electorate. Failure to do so jeopardised the leadership’s chances of being re-elected, since the realisation of national and key projects on the domestic arena would demonstrate the success of the leadership and its commitment to fulfil the wishes of the people. However, by 1978 the EEC had already committed D12.7 million under Lomé I for The Gambia’s national programme.⁹¹ Plans included the construction and equipment of the Brikama college estimated at D4 million, and the completion of a design study as part of the fisheries project estimated at D185, 000.⁹² By 1980, the EEC was singled out as The Gambia’s leading trade partner accounting for 68 per cent of its total exports and 51 per cent of its imports.⁹³

The 1980s ushered in a difficult period for The Gambia, both in economic and political terms leading to the request to the IFIs for assistance and the implementation of structural adjustment programmes. The country was severely hit by drought in the early part of the decade which, heightened by the insurrection of 1981, created an atmosphere of political chaos and economic mayhem. The STABEX scheme enabled

⁸⁵ Loc. cit.

⁸⁶ The Gambia News Bulletin 3 April 1976.

⁸⁷ The Gambia News Bulletin 23 April 1977.

⁸⁸ Loc. cit.

⁸⁹ Loc. cit.

⁹⁰ Loc. cit.

⁹¹ The Gambia News Bulletin 21 October 1978.

⁹² Loc. cit.

The Gambia to recover part of its export groundnut earnings, which had been lost as a result of the 1980 drought. In addition, EEC assistance helped supply clean water which benefited public health and horticultural production. In the rural area, the provision of water supply in the form of wells, elevated tanks, piped supplies, and hand pumps were put in place.

Meanwhile, throughout the duration of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), the EEC (later European Union, EU) continued aid to The Gambia. This included 20 m ECU under the STABEX scheme in 1986 and 700, 000 ECU from the European Development Fund (EDF) in 1988 to improve technical studies in The Gambia.⁹⁴ In the same year, The Gambia was allocated a further loan of 5 million ECU by the EDF to fund electrification programmes. The following year, the EDF provided a 2.95 million ECU grant to The Gambia for the installation of additional water supplies in rural areas.⁹⁵ The EEC's assistance to The Gambia continued uninterrupted until the 1994 military take-over, when its successor, the European Union (EU), withdrew aid to The Gambia, which was only re-established in 1996.

The EEC, through its trade links with ACP countries, had been considered by radical leaders such as Nkrumah, as a neo-colonialist ploy designed by France and its European partners to further entrench African dependency.⁹⁶ However, the importance and immediacy of national development for African leaders was such that even Nkrumah's radicalism and rhetoric did not match up to his action since Ghana subsequently became an associate member of the EEC. For African leaders, the gap between capability and intent, especially in foreign policy, is a difficult one to bridge. Domestic needs are so interwoven with those formulated on the external scene that it would be suicidal for governments to ignore compelling national interests in the name of a principle, however legitimate. The EEC was genuinely committed to come to the assistance of The Gambia. The myriad projects undertaken in The Gambia is a testimony to the Organisation's determination to provide assistance and co-operation to small, weak states to alleviate economic underdevelopment.

Independent Gambia's relations with the United States have remained mostly cordial. The US has provided different forms of assistance through Peace Corps

⁹³ TheGambia National Bulletin 19 July 1980.

⁹⁴ Africa Research Bulletin Economic series 30 September 1988, p 9275.

⁹⁵ Africa Research Bulletin Economic series 31 March 1989, p 9487.

⁹⁶ Gomez, op. cit., p 342. For more information see Kwame Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite (London, Heineman, 1963).

volunteers who have set up a multitude of educational and development programmes in The Gambia.⁹⁷ The Gambia was also able to benefit from \$500m given to Sahelian states by the US.⁹⁸ By the mid-1980s US aid to The Gambia was estimated at \$10 million, the bulk of this which was in the form of grants. Jawara's visit to the US in 1991 to encourage American businessmen to invest in The Gambia, was in line with The Gambia's foreign economic policy to sell its image of political stability and democracy abroad. In 1990, American aid to The Gambia increased by \$2m⁹⁹. The US government had expressed its intention to assist in the training and equipment of the Gambian army, and the Gambian government in return consented to allowing the United States Space Agency to set up an emergency landing site for US spacecraft at Yundum.¹⁰⁰ The apparent success of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) and the government's adoption of IMF programmes in their entirety boosted The Gambia's reputation in the international arena and further won it the confidence of the American government. Consequently, economic aid from the US was forthcoming until 1994 when aid was withdrawn in response to the coup.

Insofar as The Gambia's relations with Germany are concerned, bilateral relations between the two countries commenced in earnest when The Gambia attained independence in 1965. In 1970, the West German ambassador to The Gambia revealed that his country was to send a consignment of fertiliser to the country.¹⁰¹ The German government also made available a number of grants in different fields and expressed its intention to provide the services of a German football coach, a request initially put forward by The Gambia.¹⁰² West Germany increased its aid in the 1980s to \$7.7 million annually, according to OECD. In 1981, West Germany disbursed the sum of DM7m towards the cost of a 300 tonne hopper for the Gambia Ports Authority.¹⁰³ German aid has been used to sponsor the Jahali Patcharr rice development project for increased food sufficiency in The Gambia, the provision of buses to improve transportation facilities and the expansion of the electricity supply in Banjul and Kombo St Mary.¹⁰⁴

Although France pursues a more intensified foreign policy with its former colonies, and given the rather contentious relationship between The Gambia and

⁹⁷ The Gambia News Bulletin 21 March 1972.

⁹⁸ The Gambia News Bulletin 22 June 1978.

⁹⁹ Touray, op. cit., p 286. According to Touray, US aid to The Gambia increased from \$10 million in 1989 to \$12 million the following year.

¹⁰⁰ Loc. cit.

¹⁰¹ The Gambia News Bulletin 21 March 1970.

¹⁰² Loc. cit.

¹⁰³ The Gambia News Bulletin 4 March 1981.

Senegal, France has maintained good relations with The Gambia. It has continued to sponsor Gambian students to study in French universities. In the late 1980s the French government, through the Caisse Central de la Coopération Économique (CCCE), worked closely with the telecommunications service in The Gambia (GAMTEL), and updated the telephone system with aid worth FF55million,¹⁰⁵ providing an unrivalled position in the whole of West Africa.¹⁰⁶ In 1990, France made available an additional loan, estimated at FF42 million, for the continuation of the telecommunications project.¹⁰⁷

From a political standpoint, the annual Franco-African summit, a privileged forum for France's former colonies, extended invitations to some Anglophone countries including The Gambia (much to the frustration of conservative French-speaking countries who feared that France's economic assistance would now be shared with English-speaking countries). Given the time scale of this analysis space does not allow to examine the totality of The Gambia's economic aid. However, other countries such as Canada, Norway and Denmark have all co-operated with The Gambia and provided assistance in the form of grants and loans for development projects, and technical assistance

The Islamisation of foreign policy, The Gambia playing the Islamic card.

As stated previously, The Gambia is a predominantly Muslim society and its adherence to Organisation of the Islamic Conference should be seen principally in that light. The notion of Islamic solidarity is an important concept among Arab states that have witnessed an increase in their economic dividends due to the soaring price of oil on the global market.¹⁰⁸ The Gambia's relations with Israel, severed as a result of OAU pressure on African states, brought about an increased rapprochement with Arab states in the late 1970s. However, although the former Head of State attests that The Gambia's relations with Israel were minimal, the amount of aid received from Arab states was felt to be small.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Touray, *op. cit.*, p 260.

¹⁰⁵ Africa Research Bulletin Economic series, 31 August 1988, p 9243.

¹⁰⁶ Personal interview, Sir Dawda Jawara, 14 March 1996, Haywards Heath.

¹⁰⁷ Africa Research Bulletin Economic series, 16 December 1990, p 10424

¹⁰⁸ For more information on The Gambia's relations with the Middle East and Arab states, see Touray, *op. cit.*, 264-268.

¹⁰⁹ Personal interview with Tom Senghore, former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Governor of the Central Bank, claimed that Arab aid was low, commercial loans with high interest rates and short grace period. Mamour Jagne, former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, and

The role of Jawara in the mediation of the Iran/Iraq war increased the level of co-operation between the Gulf States and The Gambia. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait provided The Gambia with aid, especially after the 1981 insurrection. The building of mosques and Islamic centres are all part of an increased awareness in Arab states of the need to demonstrate the religious affinity that they share with other Islamic states. Although The Gambia continued to benefit from Israeli assistance, particularly in the field of agriculture and irrigation¹¹⁰ until the severance of ties, its position towards Israel became highly critical especially in the light of the invasion of The Lebanon by Israel.¹¹¹ The close ties between The Gambia and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and the visit of Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader, to The Gambia, was indicative of growing links between the two leaders.

In spite of its secularism the Gambian government also sought to develop a pro-Islamic policy. The teaching of Islamic studies from primary to secondary level was encouraged and promoted. By 1976, The Gambia's Islamic policies were beginning to pay off as it was nominated to the Permanent Council of the Islamic Solidarity Fund in Turkey where a conference of Muslim foreign ministers was convened in May.¹¹² With this came an even closer rapprochement between the Gambian leader, Jawara and his Muslim peers. In 1976 Jawara made several visits to the Middle East including a visit to Mecca where he performed the annual Muslim pilgrimage, the Hajj.¹¹³ Jawara's extended itinerary to Iran in 1976 was also part of his policy of strengthening ties with Middle Eastern countries. In the course of this visit, promises of financial assistance and the funding of rural projects were made by Arab states to The Gambia.

Benefits from Gulf States proliferated in the mid-1980s and The Gambia received assistance from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA). The majority of Arab aid was concentrated in agricultural and development schemes, with Iraq providing a loan of \$10m. By 1981, following a visit by L.K. Jabang, the former Minister of External Affairs to Iraq, a further \$10 million was made available to The Gambia for the Jahali Pacharr rice

Governor of Central Bank averred the contrary. (Personal interview with Mamour Jagne 11 August 1996, Fajara.) Mr Jagne is currently the General Manager of the Islamic Development Bank.

¹¹⁰ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 14 April 1970.

¹¹¹ *The Gambia News Bulletin* 9 July 1982, pp 1-2.

¹¹² Touray, op.cit., p 160.

¹¹³ Loc. cit.

project.¹¹⁴

Nonetheless, at the height of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, The Gambia not only condemned the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait, the Foreign Minister actually flew to Saudi Arabia to express the Gambian government's solidarity in the Gulf war.¹¹⁵ According to Jagne, The Gambia considered Kuwait a natural ally since Senegal could liken the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq to a probable annexation of The Gambia.¹¹⁶ Previously, Kuwait had come to The Gambia's assistance by providing loans amounting to D217m from the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development.¹¹⁷

The Structural Adjustment Programme in The Gambia was also alleviated by Saudi assistance of \$3.2m in 1987.¹¹⁸ Arab states have likewise contributed to alleviating drought relief programmes in The Gambia. On its part, The Gambia has sought to play the Islamic card as basic currency in its dealings with Arab states. As Camara states: "you cannot talk to the Arabs without bringing in the Islamic factor". Conscious of this element, Gambian decision-makers have advanced the Islamic features of the state to encourage Arab states to help in the country's development schemes. In summary, in spite of accusations of Saudi Arabian stinginess by a former Gambian MP,¹¹⁹ Arab aid was significant and helped in rural development and other areas within the public sector.

By using its Islamic connections and stressing Islamic affinities with Muslim states in the Middle East, The Gambia was using one of its natural attributes perceived by decision-makers as being potentially beneficial in realising The Gambia's economic aims.¹²⁰ The quest for economic survival was buttressed by the Islamic "Ummah" which unites Arab states in a spirit of munificence towards other, less well endowed Muslim states. Nonetheless Dabo asserts that the Gambian leadership had always been genuine to its principle of secularism in The Gambia, and in that light sought to downplay the Islamic factor within the domestic arena.¹²¹

¹¹⁴ Loc. cit.

¹¹⁵ Personal interview with Omar Sey, 9 September 1996, Fajara.

¹¹⁶ Personal interview with Mamour Jagne, 11 August 1996, Fajara.

¹¹⁷ *The Gambia Weekly* 23 March 1990.

¹¹⁸ Touray, op. cit., p 287.

¹¹⁹ Gomez, op.cit. p 379.

¹²⁰ Correspondence, Ousman Sallah 1 September 1997, correspondence with Ebou Taal, 23 August 1997.

¹²¹ Personal interview with Bakary Darbo, 6 February 1996, London. Mamour Jagne subscribed to this view. He mentioned that religion is not a major determinant in the internal affairs of the Gambian state, personal interview, 11 August 1996, Fajara.

The Gambia and East Asia.

The two Chinas policy pursued by The Gambia in the mid-1970s has already been discussed earlier in this study and therefore does not require elaboration.¹²² The Gambia was able to benefit both from Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) until forced to recognise just one of them. Again, dictated by pragmatism, The Gambia chose the PRC due to its superior economic potential and also by virtue of support of Western powers particularly Britain. It was best to go along with the British preference and be assured of a reliable friend in the Security Council rather than provoke the former colonial overlord by adopting a defiant counter-position. According to Camara, if The Gambia needed Britain's support in the UN, that support would be more forthcoming if their foreign policy positions were not radically different.¹²³ Dabo averred that The Gambia had simply adopted a pragmatic position by recognising Beijing:

From 1972, greater consultation with other African countries did not see it that way, there was no room for all of them, The Gambia did not seek to exploit the situation in a crude way for the benefit of economic interest. The Gambia went along with the general position of the UN. Taiwan has been after The Gambia many years to recognise them.¹²⁴

Chinese aid has remained consistent and substantial throughout the years. In February 1975, the Gambian and Beijing governments signed an agreement of economic and technical co-operation.¹²⁵ The PRC immediately pledged a loan of D25 million, payment of which was expected over a fifteen year period either in convertible currency or Gambian export commodities.¹²⁶ A PRC delegation arrived during the same year and played an active role in rice projects in rural Gambia introducing new methods of cultivation to farmers. The Health service also benefited considerably from Chinese assistance as was testified in February 1975 by the visit of the PRC Deputy Minister of Health to The Gambia.¹²⁷ During the same year, Jawara sought through personal diplomacy to solidify Sino-Gambian relations. His visit in June 1975 to Beijing was a step in that direction.¹²⁸ The distribution of Chinese aid in other areas not exclusive to agriculture, e.g., hospital construction and the construction of the Independence

¹²² Touray op.cit., pp 162-164 and Gomez, op.cit., pp 386-393.

¹²³ Personal interview with Mr Camara, 16 July 1996, Banjul.

¹²⁴ [sic] Personal interview with Bakary Dabo, 6 August 1996, London.

¹²⁵ Africa Contemporary Record 1974-75, p B636.

¹²⁶ Touray, op.cit., p 163.

¹²⁷ The Gambia News Bulletin 25 February 1975, p 1.

¹²⁸ The Gambia News Bulletin 25 February 1975

Stadium, gave more legitimacy to the government's choice of the PRC over Taiwan. Chinese aid to The Gambia continued and it was not until 1994, when the new Gambian military government recognised Taiwan, that the PRC abandoned The Gambia.

Similarly The Gambia maintained a two Koreas policy on the basis of its principle of non-alignment. While pressure was not exerted by either North or South Korea to choose one over the other, the Gambian government sought to clarify its position, so that relations with one would not affect relations with the other. In their quest for aid, Gambian delegations have visited North and South Korea. However, the North Koreans were found to be overly enthusiastic about introducing Gambian officials to ideological indoctrination, which the latter found "tiring"!¹²⁹

In the development of the health services, South Korea sent several medical doctors to The Gambia in the form of technical assistance.¹³⁰ In addition a 20 horse power tiller plough was donated to the Ministry of Agriculture by the South Korean embassy in Banjul.¹³¹ The government also received a contribution from both Koreas towards drought relief.¹³² Advocacy of the principle of Korean unification proved to be favourable for The Gambia since South Korea assisted The Gambia in the aftermath of the 1981 coup, with donations of medical supplies and emergency vehicles.¹³³ The South Korean government also responded to the government's more general appeal for aid at this time by contributing to the Health Ministry. A further \$10,000 was granted to the drought relief fund in the mid-1980s.¹³⁴ During a visit by President Jawara to Seoul in 1982, the Korean government was solicited by the Gambian President to provide technical assistance in the agricultural sector. Exploration for mineral resources in The Gambia by Korean companies and assistance for The Gambia National Trading Corporation (NTC) were also explored. Following this request, the Korean government gave the NTC a credit of \$1 million.¹³⁵

Aid from Japan has also been significant, reaching an estimated \$20.3 million by

¹²⁹ Gomez, op. cit., p 402. Dabo stated that during the 1970s, the Koreans were always encouraging Gambian officials to visit Seoul as part of their itinerary. However, he felt that overall Korean aid to the Gambian state was, like Israel's, insignificant. Personal interview with Bakary Dabo, 6 February 1996.

¹³⁰ Gomez, op.cit., pp 404-5.

¹³¹ Touray, op.cit., p 166.

¹³² Loc. cit.

¹³³ The Gambia News Bulletin 27 August 1982.

¹³⁴ Touray, op.cit., p 271.

¹³⁵ Loc. cit.

1987, thus becoming the second biggest Asian donor during the 1980s.¹³⁶ From 1976-1984, total Japanese aid to The Gambia was estimated at D102,000 million.¹³⁷ Japan assisted for example in the funding of agricultural machinery and pesticides, with a loan estimated at 160 million yen in 1986 and a further 150 million yen in 1988.¹³⁸

The Gambia's policy of non-alignment has been consistent. However, given the propensity for countries such as China, Taiwan and the two Koreas to use developing states in their ideological battles, external assistance tended to pour into those governments and regimes that were prepared to buy into one or the other's political ideologies. While African countries emphasised the need for non-alignment, it was clear that in economic terms, most were ready to accept assistance from the highest bidder. The Gambia, conscious of its limitations as a small agrarian economy and dependent for most of its exports on groundnut production, sought to use Asian expertise to develop its agricultural and health sectors. The infrastructure that was developed as a result of Chinese assistance is an indication that small developing countries like The Gambia are seen to be relatively inexpensive in terms of aid assistance. In addition the absence of basic amenities gave The Gambia an appeal that most Asian donor countries could hardly resist. As Bakary Dabo puts it "The Gambia is a small state in terms of our needs for aid and it is easily affordable for the donor country to provide 100 per cent of our requirements, when you translate it in absolute terms it doesn't amount to much".¹³⁹

The Gambia and the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP)

A great deal has already been said elsewhere about the policies of the IMF the World Bank and structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in Africa.¹⁴⁰ The economic situation in The Gambia reached crisis point in the mid-1980s. The bleak economic situation could be attributed to several factors. By 1987, groundnut production had declined to 45,000 tons per annum, a dismal picture in comparison to groundnut production figures in post-independence years.¹⁴¹ Reduced rainfall and drought diminished agricultural output and this had serious implications. Farmers' incomes dropped due to a fall in exports. An over-valued Gambian currency triggered demands

¹³⁶ OECD, *Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows* 1987, p 127, cited by O.Touray, op.cit. p 269.

¹³⁷ Figure provided by the Japanese Ambassador to The Gambia, *The Gambia News Bulletin* 11 July 1984.

¹³⁸ Touray, op. cit., p 289.

¹³⁹ Personal interview with Bakary Dabo, 6 February 1996, London.

¹⁴⁰ Cooke, Ph.D. thesis, op.cit., Radelet, op.cit., pp 1087-1099, Touray, op. cit, pp 272-80.

for imports whilst further inhibiting exports, worsening an already serious balance of payments deficit.¹⁴² Consequently foreign exchange reserves became seriously depleted and this led to heavy government borrowing.¹⁴³ The maintenance of an overpriced currency created a 'black' or 'parallel' currency market. Although problems were mitigated by large capital in-flows from external donors, and partial adjustment in the 1980s, by 1985 the situation had reached crisis level.¹⁴⁴ In addition, the state had become an active player in the economy creating an expansion of central government and of the civil service. It was this growth in government expenditure that amplified existing fiscal imbalances created by poor levels of tax collection.¹⁴⁵

Consequently, gross official reserves fell to an alarming level, the equivalent of less than a week's imports, while external public debt rose to 113 per cent of GDP.¹⁴⁶ However, The Gambia's economic woes were even more serious, with external payment arrears soaring to (Special Drawing Rights) SDR 88.2 million (nearly one and half times the value of the 1985/86 export earnings, including travel and net receipts).¹⁴⁷

With the prospect of further exchange depletion, rising debt service, low export earnings and shortages of imported goods due to the dearth of foreign exchange, the Gambian government requested British assistance but the latter refused.¹⁴⁸ In a similar vein, other donors supported the British government position that no further loans would be disbursed unless the government was willing to introduce reform.¹⁴⁹ The Gambia had reneged on its financial obligations and payments to the African Development Bank, Saudi Fund and Islamic Development Bank, leading to the suspension of further aid-flow from donors.¹⁵⁰ So dismal was the situation that the government had no choice but to agree to a comprehensive adjustment programme with the World Bank in order to release loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) initiated in 1985 can be seen as a joint response on the part of The Gambian government and the twin international

¹⁴¹ Touray, op. cit., p 252.

¹⁴² Hadjmichael, op. cit., p 1.

¹⁴³ Touray, op. cit., p 252.

¹⁴⁴ M.T.Hadjmichael et al, 'The Gambia: economic adjustment in a small open economy'. *Occasional Papers* October 1992, International Monetary Fund, Washington, p 1.

¹⁴⁵ Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁶ Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁷ Loc.cit.

¹⁴⁸ Radelet, op. cit, p 1091.

¹⁴⁹ Loc. cit..

¹⁵⁰ Touray, op. cit., p 273.

financial institutions (IFIs) of the World Bank and the IMF to the deteriorating economic situation in The Gambia in the mid-1980s. Remedial economic policies were to take effect in two stages. Firstly stabilisation measures were introduced in 1985 to correct macro-economic imbalances caused by such difficulties as the parallel currency market. Other measures were designed to quickly put an end to balance of payments deficits and spiralling inflation. Secondly, what were commonly termed structural adjustment loan facilities (SALs) were made available to the government of The Gambia by the IMF in 1986/87 to assist in external debt repayment and import purchase.

These loan facilities were subject to certain conditionalities imposed by the World Bank. The main thrust of these were trade liberation measures, such as the removal of import quotas and tariffs, designed to free up imports and promote exports. Other measures included the termination of import substitution policies, promotion of primary products for export and, particularly relevant to The Gambia's case, the cutting back of the state machine in terms of its active participation in the economy, including substantial cuts in expenditure on bureaucracy. Together these measures were designed to kick start economic growth back into life.

By 1986, the stabilisation programme had had some success. The floating of the Dalasi led to a 120% depreciation over six months,¹⁵¹ and succeeded in reducing the deleterious effect of the 'black' currency market. The government retrenched 20% of its workforce and froze the wages of remaining workers.¹⁵² A crackdown on customs fraud yielded a 32% increase in customs revenues.¹⁵³

The IMF then made provision for two successive arrangements under a structural adjustment facility in 1986/87 and 1987/88 followed by three year arrangement under the enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF), between 1988–91. In addition, the government was granted a stand-by arrangement under the compensatory facility of 1986/87.¹⁵⁴ In 1990, five years after the inception of the ERP, the Programme for Sustained Development (PSD), was launched. With the expiration of the ESAF in 1991, the government accepted from the fund a closer monitoring, firstly to keep up the good relations with the Fund, and secondly to ensure that it had not deviated from the good financial policies that had been adopted since the implementation of SAP.

¹⁵¹ Radelet, *op. cit.*, p. 1088.

¹⁵² *Loc. cit.*

¹⁵³ *Loc. cit.*

The prescriptive measures of the IMF triggered new faith in The Gambia as provision for more financial assistance was made. The Standard Bank disbursed a \$12 million loan to clear government arrears to the IMF, and the IMF provided a \$412 million loan whilst its sister organisation the World Bank provided an additional \$15 million to initiate reforms, especially in the agricultural sector.¹⁵⁵ The British government also provided £6 million as an advance for the implementation of ERP reform and towards the purchase of petroleum products.¹⁵⁶ In 1987 the IDA provided a soft loan of \$45.6 million to The Gambia towards health service development projects. The loan was granted on an interest free basis with repayments due over a period of 50 years with a ten-year grace period.¹⁵⁷ The Central Bank small business scheme was granted a \$10 million loan by the IDA.¹⁵⁸

With a heavy in-flow of external assistance, GDP rose by 4.9 per cent per year between 1985 and 1989. Per capita incomes rose 12 per cent in three years in the rural areas and inflation plummeted to less than 10 per cent.¹⁵⁹ Current and fiscal deficits were lessened, and outstanding arrears on foreign loans were entirely repaid. A steady growth in foreign exchange reserves was observed. The Gambia had implemented reform programmes in a comprehensive and successful manner in spite of unpopular measures such as retrenchments in the public sector. These retrenchments were conducted over two years, 1985-1986, beginning with 26,000 casual and lower grade workers.¹⁶⁰ In addition, some 291 established and un-established posts were removed.¹⁶¹ Public sector salaries were also frozen until 1989.¹⁶²

The main reason for the success of the implementation of the ERP could be found in the attitude of the Gambian government.¹⁶³ The need to adopt a no-nonsense approach was necessitated by the bleakness of the economic situation and the implications it represented. The leadership's role is essential in small states such as The Gambia, where a benign form of patrimonialism, aided by the strong rural base of the

¹⁵⁴ Hadjmichael, *op. cit.*, p 1.

¹⁵⁵ Omar Touray, *op. cit.*, p 276.

¹⁵⁶ Touray, *op. cit.*, p 277.

¹⁵⁷ Africa Research Bulletin Economic series, 28 February 1989, p 8606.

¹⁵⁸ Touray, *op. cit.*, p 279.

¹⁵⁹ Radelet, *op. cit.*, p 1088.

¹⁶⁰ Cooke, *op. cit.*, p 120.

¹⁶¹ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁶² *Loc. cit.*

¹⁶³ Personal interviews Mamour Jagne 11 August 1996, Fajara, Personal interview with Bakary Bakary Darbo, 6 February 1996..

PPP, facilitated the reforms.¹⁶⁴ The fact that the government adopted measures in their entirety meant that results were forthcoming. The lack of a public backlash could be attributed to several factors, redundancy packages, a degree of fatalism among the farmers, the principally affected group, sensitisation campaigns and speedy economic growth are all valid reasons.¹⁶⁵

Though the goals of the IMF were reached in The Gambia, it must be emphasised that SAPs come with a price. It would be naive to assume that the social effects of SAPs did not affect the Gambian people, especially farmers in the rural area. According to Sall and Sallah the social costs of adjustments have been severe with the majority of Gambians worse off as a result of structural adjustment programmes. SAPs in The Gambia created imbalances in the agricultural input supply and marketing arrangement which were neither addressed nor replaced with alternative measures.¹⁶⁶ Although this assertion is backed by little empirical evidence, Sall and Sallah point out that the World Bank's adoption of "Social Dimension of Adjustment" and "Poverty Alleviation Programmes" is an implicit acknowledgement of the limitations of its policies especially given its social implications.¹⁶⁷ Nonetheless The Gambia has borne the brunt of cut-backs in health and education, two essential areas.¹⁶⁸ Cooke makes mention of the fact that farmers in a village near Mansakonko, 75 miles up river from Banjul were no worse off than they were before social service cuts.¹⁶⁹ However, these people were never beneficiaries of government sponsored welfare anyway and the empirical findings of one village and its inhabitants, however densely populated, are not a reflection on the country as a whole.¹⁷⁰ It would be interesting to analyse the results of empirical investigation into the effects of structural adjustment programmes on the urban dwellers around Banjul, as these are the people most likely to have been benefiting from social welfare provision before the cuts were introduced.

¹⁶⁴ Cooke, op. cit., p 229.

¹⁶⁵ Both Jagne and Darbo averred that the President toured farms in order to sensitise the people and help to allay their fear. Darbo stated that national languages do not lend very easily to explaining concepts such as SAP, but that Jawara tried using comparisons that were familiar. However, Cooke notes that enthusiasm at such public relations exercise should be tempered with realism, since presidential tours in rural areas were probably insufficient to put the lid on farmers' fears. Personal interview with Bakary Darbo 6 February 1996, London, Personal interview With Mamour Jagne, 11 August 1996, Fajara. Cooke, op.cit., p 227

¹⁶⁶ Sall and Sallah, 'The Military and the crisis of governance: the Gambian case', (Codesria, 8 General Assembly, 26 June -2 July 1995), pp 1-2.

¹⁶⁷ Loc. cit.

¹⁶⁸ Cooke, p 172. According to Cooke, these cuts were made in the early stages of ERP.

¹⁶⁹ Cooke, op. cit., p 171.

¹⁷⁰ Loc. cit., For more importation on the social implications of SAPs in The Gambia, Hadjimichael, op.cit., p 37

In essence though, the Gambian leadership had no option but to adopt the policies prescribed by the IFIs or possibly face political suicide.¹⁷¹ Yet the role of the IFIs in small dependent states has not been entirely beneficent the inability of the World Bank and IMF to address problems of spatial inequalities of social conditions although this was never in their original remit.¹⁷² In attempting to explain the lack of success for SAPs in Africa, the World Bank has a tendency to condemn governments for failing to fully implement its prescriptions yet fails to perceive the danger to local governments of unpopular cuts in social provision. The IFIs need to shoulder responsibility for their failure to foresee the continuing decline in terms of trade in developing states, while recommending continued reliance on and expansion of production for export of traditional and primary exports.

The real social implications of SAP programmes could only be measured in the light of thorough investigative empirical research throughout the rural and urban areas in The Gambia. Cooke mentions the Gambian government's lack of interest and failure to recognise the implications of SAP in their social context, yet this does not excuse a lack of consideration for this issue on the part of the IFIs who did not have an electorate to answer to.¹⁷³ However, the legitimacy of this argument is irrelevant to the fact that the anticipated trickle-down effect of the positive aspects of SAPs has not taken place, neither within the time frame nor the form that IFI specialists predicted in the 1980s. While it is difficult to quantify to what extent adjustment policies are responsible for declining indicators, the introduction of health and education fees and removal of subsidies have contributed to a worrying situation, accentuated by the emergence of increased spatial inequalities of wealth. Nonetheless, it is of course very easy to make value judgements on the success or failure of measures taken in very difficult circumstances, and even the World Bank has admitted that some of its prescriptions were not the right ones.

In the mid-1980s, The Gambian economic crisis forced the government to embark on draconian measures to address the weakness of the economy. The crisis of the 1980s serves to explain the fragile economies of small weak states, especially when economic diversification is low, domestic policies inappropriate, the vagaries of the weather unpredictable, and governments only source of salvation is through continuous external capital-in-flow and heavy borrowing. As Darbo adds: it wasn't a case of a

¹⁷¹ Cooke, *op. cit.*, pp 226-39.

¹⁷² Cooke, *op. cit.*, pp 115-9.

¹⁷³ Cooke, *op. cit.*, p 176.

casual paracetamol, it needed something fundamental, a complete surgery.¹⁷⁴

The role of the World Bank and IMF in the foreign economic policies of small state is crucial, it reflects the element of survival that regulates the activities of governments in many developing states. While the IMF and the World Bank may be accused of interference, their activities in these states are that of a double-edged sword. Their intervention can inject renewed faith in the government to achieve macro-economic goals, stimulate growth, regulate internal distortions and boost public confidence. Their activity can also expose government weakness in adopting economic and financial decisions that have amplified the gulf between the narrow band of urban rich and the mass of urban and rural poor, while ensuring that elite interest remained intact.

What is clear is that countries such as The Gambia have one principal overriding concern, that of survival. Economic survival is the backbone of its foreign policy since it ensures the credibility of the ruling élite both from a domestic and international standpoint. That credibility is enhanced if the state is seen to be making progress in national development even if the resource base is weak and externally supported. With few economic choices, and continued government reliance on foreign largesse, economic vulnerability is affected if external capital, which is the mainstay of government domestic policy, is denied, squandered, or unavailable.

The stability and survival mechanism assured by the donor community to small weak states can result in rampant corruption within all levels of the bureaucracy. Thus foreign aid can be attributed a multidimensional role. By augmenting domestic security, it ensures the survival of a regime that uses external credibility and support to evade domestic responsibility by becoming unaccountable.¹⁷⁵ The subject of corruption within the Gambian civil service has been a worrying trend especially in the late 1980s, when legal battles such as the Manneh/Sabally affair exposed corruption at ministerial level and other levels.¹⁷⁶ Indeed an IMF investigative team was reported to have revealed widespread corruption within institutions such as the Gambia Commercial and Development Bank, the Gambia Cooperative Union and the Gambia Utilities

¹⁷⁴ Personal interview with Bakary Darbo, 6 February 1996, London. Mamour Jagne endorsed this view and stated that bad government policies created internal distortion and this was reflected in the total output of the country (personal interview with Mamour Jagne, 11 August 1996, Fajara).

¹⁷⁵ Clapham (1996), op. cit., p 272.

¹⁷⁶ Sanna Manneh, editor of *The Torch* was sued for libel by Saihou Sabally, the former Finance and Minister, after he accused him of corruption. Subsequently, in a bitter legal battle, the case was won by Manneh.

Cooperation. Serious irregularities in the form of unpaid duties and other forms of corruption, amounting to almost D30million was revealed in the Customs and Excise department alone.¹⁷⁷ The success of foreign aid should be measured in the light of its implementation. Foreign economic assistance becomes far too costly if by guaranteeing the survival of one group, this alienates and impoverish those needs it was initially meant to serve.

CONCLUSION

Pragmatism and the need to secure the appropriate resources to alleviate economic difficulties have largely dictated the Gambia's foreign economic policies. However, the Gambian leadership conscious of its weakness, in terms of size and the absence of a strong domestic base, set about devising strategies that would induce donor countries to contribute towards The Gambia's economic prosperity.

At the height of the Cold War, developing countries were lobbied from all sides. The Gambia, like many developing states exploited this opportunity in a skilful manner. Although being a pro-West, moderate and progressive state, it encouraged assistance from oil-rich Arab countries, Taiwan, North and South Korea and Communist China. The principle of non-alignment was strongly emphasised to back The Gambia's increasing multilateral dependence. Communist countries such as China, enthusiastic to accumulate support from developing states for their political ideologies, invested greatly in countries such as The Gambia. So the latter's decision to recognise the PRC had positive outcomes and the scope of Chinese aid in various development fields underlines the importance of keeping options open in foreign policy. However, The Gambia's external policies cannot be accused of having been two-faced. It was simply a case of economic survival. With its liberal economic policies The Gambia sought however to underline certain similarities with Western powers.

Nonetheless, the Islamic card was one that The Gambia felt it ought to take advantage of, especially in the light of the aforementioned Ummah. Arab countries, in assisting The Gambia, are also in the name of solidarity, enhancing their image. Yet again, the predominance of Muslims in The Gambia should not detract from the fact that The Gambia remains a secular state where affinities with other religious groups in a

¹⁷⁷ Africa Contemporary Record XX1, 1988-89, p B41.

small personalised society are seen as an imperative. The need to play the democratic and Islamic cards at the same time are all means of cultivating the country's external image.

One can easily affirm that The Gambia has used foreign policy as an instrument in state building. The projects sponsored in agriculture and in other areas are indicative of the limitations of a small developing state. The choices available in the domestic sector are so few that foreign aid becomes a crucial tool. The small size of The Gambia has contributed to the considerable economic assistance the country enjoys since independence in 1965. Due to The Gambia's small aid requirements, bilateral and indeed other international financial institutions have increased their aid commitments to The Gambia since donors could in the same vein improve their aid record at a relatively minimal economic price.¹⁷⁸ For instance, in 1986/7 while Germany's aid to The Gambia was 48% of the total bilateral aid provided, in a list showing the top recipient of German aid, there was no mention of The Gambia.¹⁷⁹

The proportionately high capital inflow into the Gambian economy has reduced The Gambia to a culture of dependence in which the mentality of aid dependency has become institutionalised within the bureaucracy. Nonetheless, the need for aid is geared towards addressing structural deficiencies, given the inability of government to support its recurrent budget system, rather than an attitudinal approach based on the concept: *"Let's keep the money rolling in"*.¹⁸⁰ It is true that the climate of aid has greatly altered following the dislocation of the Soviet bloc with Eastern European countries competing with developing countries for a slice of the aid budget. However, countries like The Gambia are still eligible for aid assistance given their endemic structural and economic weakness.

Yet how can one assess the impact of foreign aid in a society that is often criticised for its rampant corruption? Foreign policy is pursued on the grounds of national interest, however, the policies undertaken by the leadership, have directly or indirectly afforded the government a licence to govern. This is because in The Gambia, the line between foreign and domestic policy is easily blurred. The leadership, in pursuing an active foreign economic card, has simply been engaged in a sophisticated form of survival, both of the regime and the state. Indeed the survival of the state and

¹⁷⁸ Cooke, op. cit., p 240.

¹⁷⁹ Loc. cit.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p 247.

that of the regime is invariably linked, one feeding on the other; one simply ceases to exist without the other. The question of principle, though inconsistent, becomes highly circumscribed when it menaces the security of the regime. Economic security in a country like The Gambia is of vital importance and in the final analysis the government will pursue every avenue to maximise this imperative since its very existence is dependent on it.

CHAPTER 9: Conclusion

There have now been over three decades of self-rule for most African states. Leaders and diplomats alike have been given opportunities to rehearse the daunting roles of diplomacy and statecraft with sufficient expertise. The swift passage from colonial rule to independence left little time for practising the magnified functions awaiting African leaders. African leaders were untested in modern diplomacy. The absence of diplomatic culture in its contemporary sense triggered serious structural weaknesses. Diplomatic deficiency reflected a lack of diplomatic weight. Invariably, paucity of resources in most African countries has confined the role of African leaders soliciting financial existence on the international scene. Thus the ability of African states to initiate policies on the international system whilst not unheard remains a rarity.

The economic growth of industrialised nations, the tiger economies of Asia, and the oil-rich Arab states have confirmed the adage, “*he who pays the piper calls the tune*” into an economic and political given. In the contemporary configuration of the international system, the power of states is constantly measured in terms of their economic strength. The need for African states to define their existence in terms of superpower bipolarity has also lost its *raison d’etre* in the New World order.

However, to imprison the totality of African relations in foreign economic terms alone would be unfair. Certainly geopolitical and other factors have not lost their cogency. Nonetheless, domestic economic obstacles are far too obtrusive. Leaders of small weak states have come to look on foreign policy as a public relations exercise, in which domestic institutions tend to organise a promotional campaign to ensure the co-ordination of foreign policies, augmenting enhancing and providing much needed economic security. Consequently, on the international arena, the leader aligns himself to the proclivities of the highest bidder in terms of foreign aid, and adopts a *beggar thy neighbour* policy.

Nonetheless economic security becomes a semantic nonsense, if it contributes to the security of the ruling government by assuring its survival, without uplifting the ‘masses’. Capital flight and corruption of state resources continue unhindered by governments whose external credibility has continued to solidify their domestic base and perpetuate regime and state power. The external credibility of leaders has served to provide the leader with the necessary economic tools, and thus enhanced his image on

the domestic scene. The ruling élite tends to appropriate the benefits and fruits of development projects realised through foreign *largesse*. In the civil administration, the concept of foreign aid has been institutionalised and has instilled inertia in a society that looks to donor states to fulfil its needs.

States in Africa were created by the dividing up of the continent in the late nineteenth century by European powers in their search for new sources of raw materials to stoke the industrial revolution in Europe and new markets for the manufactured products of that industry. By this process African states were subsumed into the dependent periphery of the world economy for the primary purpose of enriching the metropolis. The granting of independence was usually conditional on an ex-colony remaining in the dependent periphery of the metropolis. This meant providing a pretence of democracy whilst the reins of power were handed to an indigenous élite group trained by the colonial administration, whose allegiance was owed more to the metropolis than to the people. The ability of that élite to stay in power, (precisely because the ex-colony had been made hopelessly dependent and had neither the resources nor institutional infrastructure to look after itself), was premised on the largesse and good offices of the metropolis.

The whole dependency syndrome is based on the fact that African countries and their people were co-opted into a club in which they have never been allowed to be anything other than junior members. One might imagine the world today as a kind of global city in which countries such as The Gambia are the “docile street-beggars” trying to find the most propitious corner on which to wait for handouts from “altruistic” middle-class passers-by to survive. They can hardly escape their predicament because nobody is prepared to give them a job. This in turn is mainly due to the fact that the “beggars” themselves have little to offer except for the aforementioned docility and their vote. This makes The Gambia very different from small states such as Botswana and Namibia whose dependency is at least mediated by the presence of large deposits of minerals considered of value by the core members of the world economy. Thus foreign economic policy is not a choice it is the only option.

Thus these states, irrespective of their size tend to have few options to compensate for the declining terms of trade, poor agricultural output, low economic diversification, unaccountable governments and dysfunctional political systems. Foreign policy guarantees their economic priorities. From a political perspective foreign policy

is debated and rehearsed in terms of world peace, geopolitics, good neighbourliness, democracy, peaceful coexistence, non-interference and international friendship.

The concept of pragmatism in any analysis or reconstruction of The Gambia's foreign policy cannot be overlooked. The immediacy of The Gambia's foreign economic policies as well as the intensity and scope of its diplomatic involvement are measured by a profound need to fulfil domestic priorities. As a small state with virtually nothing to trade off, The Gambia has exploited certain intangible domestic factors, i.e. domestic stability, principles of democracy and human rights, coupled with internal cohesion to induce aid-flow. Its small size, endemic weakness and absence of basic infrastructure have relegated The Gambia to the category of deserving states with needy economies.

The distinctiveness of The Gambia resides in its ability to create an image that most donor states are comfortable with, thus generating aid from a wide pool of countries. Even Islamic states from Middle Eastern countries felt attracted to the idea of a small Muslim state promoting the principles of Islam through the construction of Mosques and Islamic institutions. In real terms secularism was encouraged and promoted in spite of the predominance of Muslims in The Gambia, some 85 per cent of the overall population.

Likewise The Gambia's West African foreign policy cannot be divorced from the pragmatic element. Expectations of greater economic gains through the numerical strength of regionalism were not lost on the government. Moreover Jawara's increased involvement in international and regional diplomacy by virtue of the key positions held (chairman of ECOWAS, CILSS, Islamic Conference Organisation, Vice President of OAU), increased The Gambia's awareness on the importance and benefits of international summitry. Thus although Jawara was able to garner greater credibility and experience due to his multifunctional role, The Gambia's needs were not at variance with those defended by the leadership on the international scene.

Eager to contribute to the stability of the region by its own unique example of peace, democracy and stability, The Gambia also demonstrated the need to pursue idealistic foreign policy in the African and regional arena. The Gambia's active role in the OAU, CILSS and ECOWAS, testify to leadership efforts to indulge in "big time" politics, demonstrating the fact that its small size cannot be equated with its ability to participate actively and positively in continental and regional fora.

Relations with Senegal can also be seen from a pragmatic standpoint. Co-operation with Senegal was not triggered by the ideals of African unity *per se* but necessitated by the inevitable links imposed by history, geography and ethnicity to initiate closer ties. The failure of Senegambia is a lesson for all the protagonists. To the British it is a clear testimony of the strength of colonial legacy. Having on the one hand divided the two states and created a geographical and historical absurdity, unity cannot be ordained by the very actors at the drop of a hat. French and British dominance in the region had left indelible ramifications on the lives, culture and institutions.

While historical, religious, ethnic and cultural affinities have been fostered by the peoples of Senegambia, these factors in spite of their legitimacy are not strong enough to break the biases and perceptions of the privileged élite, the real policy makers. For the Senegalese, the failure of Senegambia is a testimony that unity can only be nurtured in a political context where political will is allowed to blossom. The problem that The Gambia poses to Senegal, either from an economic or security perspective will only diminish if yesterday's mistakes are used as a premise towards understanding of current realities.

Thus the question is not whether the Gambia continues to be seen as an economic liability or even a geographical absurdity. The fact is The Gambia is a geographical absurdity that has been allowed to exist. Its existence, mandate, and sovereignty have been recruited by the international system and formal recognition granted in the same way as other new states. Thus the notion of juridical statehood ensures the principle of equality however nominal of all states. Furthermore the failure of a political and economic Senegambia is an indication of the fragility of new states and the sanctity of national identities. Thus the process of state-building is not sufficiently advanced to expect new states to give up their "newly" found roles in the name of oneness or unity whatever its benefits. Moreover, the imperatives of Senegambia union were not compatible with the needs of the ruling élite in Bathurst/Banjul. The fears of the urban people of Senegalese domination matched those of the leadership in The Gambia. The rest of the people were demonstrably unpoliticised. Although it would be wrong to qualify The Gambia's experience of democracy as futile, (especially in the light of the continent's tendency to authoritarianism and one party state as a preferred choice) however, there were serious limitations to the continuity of participatory politics in The Gambia. Towards the end of the late 1980s, The Gambia was beginning to look like a *de facto* one party state due to the lack of effective opposition. Thus the Senegambia confederation was a classic case of a showdown of African big men with the

people acting as observers.

The role and importance of the leader is crucial both in domestic and foreign policies of small weak states. Due to the longevity of Jawara's rule, from 1965-1994, it is undeniable that he has left his mark on the legacy of foreign policy in The Gambia. Belonging to the category of first generation rulers, as one of the oldest African statesmen, he ruled not only through the powers vested in him by the state or by the constitution but also by his shrewdness combined with his ability to harness the ability and knowledge of others. Jawara's success in foreign economic policy was enhanced by his ability to use his external credibility to gain the assistance and sympathy of donor states. While it would be erroneous to attribute the groundwork conducted by able decision-makers in subordinate positions, the overbearing nature of the leader in small weak states meant that policies were professed, defended, upheld and appropriated by the leader.

His choice of personal diplomacy, compensated for structural deficiency and institutional weakness triggered by the absence of diplomatic culture in The Gambia. Jawara was able to personify the state with his own personal traits and was widely perceived as a moderate, democratic, progressive, pacifist and conservative leader. His leadership was devoid of grosser forms of patrimonialism, and his distinctive benign form of personal rule stood in opposition to the norm observed across the African continent.

Nonetheless the structural deficiencies permeating the civil administration did not incapacitate relevant ministries such as the MEA, and other key Ministries from pursuing effective foreign policy. Nor has the absence of functional competence, and skilled personnel negated the efforts of seasoned diplomats civil servants and ministers to initiate positive foreign policy guidelines. Notwithstanding, structural incapacity and leadership idiosyncrasies characteristic in a small state such as The Gambia are deeply entrenched and difficult to overcome. The concept of African "big men" acting either to promote the needs of the general populace or solidify their own personal or particularistic interests remains one of the many intangibles of African politics. Jawara and his team were able to sell a positive image of The Gambia. An African continent riddled with civil strife, ethnic divisions and political unrest facilitated The Gambia's image-making.

The Gambia was able to take advantage of international assistance without abandoning its principles defended in the domestic arena. Thus in maintaining close ties with Britain and appealing to British *largesse* it was able to avoid subjection to British neo-colonialism unlike its francophone neighbours with regard to France. Yet neo-colonialism cannot be divorced from relations between small weak states and donor countries. Likewise, in soliciting aid from Islamic states in the Middle East, The Gambia was able to use its Islamic affinity based on a predominantly Muslim society, without falling prey to the proclivities of fundamentalist and radical states such as Libya. Libya's efforts to subordinate smaller more malleable state to further its own pro-Islamic aspirations of anti-Western and anti-imperialist dictates have borne little fruit in Africa, and in The Gambia in particular. Thus by keeping its options open and adopting a policy of 'multilateral dependency', The Gambia has been to compensate for domestic constraints.

Likewise, the defiant attitude demonstrated in The Gambia's unwillingness to sign up to Senegambian union in a federal sense could partly be attributed to a strong leadership. Thus while the benefits of functional co-operation between the two states was reiterated by the leadership, it did not wish to translate bilateralism to federalism. Jawara's success in resisting Senegalese territorial ambitions in a united Senegambia not only displayed his political expediency, it also emphasised that The Gambia's right to self-determination was not qualitatively different from that of larger states enjoying the privileges of statehood.

However, the refusal to be subsumed by Senegal was partly encouraged by Senegal's status as another underdeveloped Sahel state with economic needs not dissimilar to those demonstrated by its lesser endowed neighbour. One cannot help but ask, albeit hypothetically, whether The Gambia's position of resistance would have been equally tenable if it had been in the position of Swaziland whose potential and economic survival is defined in terms of its relations with South Africa. Conversely if The Gambia was rich in mineral resources, like Western Sahara is rich in phosphates, Senegal like Morocco would probably have adopted a more belligerent attitude to impose its will on The Gambia.

Nonetheless criticism of Senegalese imperialism should be tempered in the light of effort made by successive Senegalese governments to maintain a policy of peaceful coexistence with The Gambia. The 1981 coup offered a unique opportunity for the Senegalese government to state its claims on The Gambia. Given Jawara's vulnerability

and his enthusiasm to restore normality to the domestic arena, Diouf's assistance could have been conditional to certain agreements which the Gambian leadership would have been forced to accept. Yet no conditions were imposed and even the proposal of a Senegambia confederation was initiated by Jawara.

Nonetheless, the Gambian leadership together with its diplomatic and other institutions should be commended for putting the country on the map, and avoiding any scenario that would further expose the vulnerability of The Gambia, or circumscribe its ability to survive as sovereign state. Thus while the question of viability no longer generates polemical debates, the vulnerability factor, a colonial legacy, has been accentuated by The Gambia's increasing aid requirements and its inability to generate resources through domestically inspired solutions to underdevelopment. To a large extent The Gambia's economic security would be seriously compromised without external assistance.

Therefore whatever the idiosyncrasies of the leader, he would be forced to look outside his national borders to generate assistance. The Gambia has been able to use external aid as a step towards state-building by providing infrastructural projects necessary to win votes and garner popularity amongst the electorate. Paucity of resources and endemic weakness of the civil administration permeate civil society whose ability to influence government policy is considerable only if the needs of civil society are not at variance with those of the ruling élite. The problem of size and paucity of resources increased the government's dependency on external capital, they also circumscribed the ability of civil society to function as a viable counter force to vertical linkages.

Foreign policy has served as a useful accessory enabling The Gambia to define its image and principles. Similarly, it has been able to compete with small countries in the sub-region, by virtue of assistance garnered by the leadership as a result of successful foreign economic policies. Economic needs continue to be a crucial element of Gambian foreign policy. Even its national and territorial security is premised on foreign policy principles, i.e., on the tacit understanding that the putative enemy, Senegal refrains from any coercive and belligerent moves against The Gambia. Thus the boundaries between domestic and foreign policies will continue to be blurred as domestic needs translate into foreign policy goals and objectives.

However as donor priorities extend to include the less-developed states in Eastern Europe and newly-democratised South Africa and as the volume of aid to sub-Saharan Africa dwindles, The Gambia will have to count on the resourcefulness of the people to come up with other solutions and gradually reduce its dependency. In spite of considerable capital in-flow, The Gambia continues to be among the least developed states in sub-Sahara Africa. The provision of external assistance can act as a two-edged sword. On the one hand it can guarantee the survival of the leader and the regime, whilst on the other it can trigger their downfall. The fall of Jawara is interpreted by the populace of The Gambia as the demise of a government that had lost touch with its electorate.

How far the new leader Jammeh will go in pursuing foreign policy avenues once shunned as pro-West is anyone's guess. The truth is that given The Gambia's national attributes, the institutionalisation of foreign aid remains deeply embedded in the civil administration. Foreign policy decision-making in The Gambia cannot afford the alienation of aid donors since this would be akin to "cutting off one's nose to spite one's face". While the style of foreign policy may differ from one leader to another, the main thrust of The Gambia's foreign policy is not likely to deviate from the priority of generating economic aid, representing a clear case of *"plus ça change plus c'est la même chose"*.

Appendix 1

List of Interviews-

(Gambia)

Politicians

Sir Dawda Jawara – Former Head of State

Sheriff Dibba – Former Vice-President, Leader of the Banned Opposition Party NCP.

Assan Musa Camara – Former Vice-President and Minister of External Affairs

Omar Sey- Former Minister of External Affairs

Bakary Darbo – Former Vice President, Minister of Education and Finance

**Sir Alieu Sulayman Jack – Former Minister of Works and Speaker of the House of
Representatives**

Civil Servants

Bolong Sonko – Former Permanent Secretary (MEA) and Minister of External Affairs

**Omar Njie – Former Deputy Permanent Secretary, Permanent Secretary and Minister
of External Affairs**

Galandou Goree Njie – Former Official Minister of External Affairs.

Ebou Ndure – Former Chief of Protocol

Bunn Jack – Former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs

**Tom Senghore – Former Permanent Secretary Ministry of Finance and Governor of the
Central Bank**

**Mamour Jagne – Former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Governor of
the Central Bank, Actual Managing Director of IDB**

**Abdou Njie - Former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Governor of
Central Bank**

Bala Gaye – Former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance

**Francis Mboge - Former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Water
Resources and Secretary General**

Fafa Mbai- Former Minister of Justice

**Sara Janha – Former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Secretary
General**

Momodou Bobb – Former Chief of Protocol
Abdoulaye Mboob – Former High Commissioner

Journalists

Halifa Sallah (Foroyaa)
Ebrima Ceesay (The Daily Observer)
Deyda Hydara (The Point)
Baboucarr Gaye (Citizen FM Radio Station)
D.A Jawo (The Daily Observer)

Scholars

Jeggan Senghor (Director of IDEP –Dakar)
Ebrima Sall (CODESRIA- Dakar)

(Senegal)

Civil Servants

Fodé Seck (Senior Official)
Mankeur Ndiaye (Conseiller Technique)
Sheriff Diaté (Senior Official)

High Commissioners

Salieu Cissé (Former Senegalese High Commissioner to The Gambia)
Mbai Mbengue (Former Senegalese High Commissioner to The Gambia)
Seydina Oumar Sy ((Former Senegalese High Commissioner to The Gambia)

Executive Secretaries

Nassirou Diallo (Executive Secretary of the OMVG)

Journalists

Kader Diop (Agence France Presse)
Ibrahima Gaye (Director of Le Soleil)
Ababacar Camara (Wal Fildiri)

Correspondences

Civil Servants

Ebou Taal 1st Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and former Ambassador to Brussels and Benelux Countries

Ousman Sallah Former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and Former Gambian Ambassador to the United States

Housanou Njie – Former Managing Director of the Gambia Commercial Bank and President of the Chamber of Commerce

Ousman Othman – Former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of External Affairs

Trade Unionists

Pa Modou Faal (Leader of The Gambia's Workers Confederation)

Religious leaders

Imam Jallow (Imam of Bakau)

Appendix 2: Statistical survey of The Gambia (Africa South of the Sahara 1998)

THE GAMBIA

Statistical Survey

Statistical Survey

Source (unless otherwise stated): the former Directorate of Information and Broadcasting, 14 Hagan St, Banjul; tel. 227230.

Area and Population

AREA, POPULATION AND DENSITY

Area (sq km)	11,295*
Population (census results)	
15 April 1983	
Total	687,817
15 April 1993†	
Males	514,530
Females	511,337
Total	1,025,867
Density (per sq km) at census of 1993	90.8

* 4,361 sq miles. † Provisional

PRINCIPAL TOWNS (population at 1983 census)

Banjul (capital)	44,188	Farafenni	10,168
Serrekunda	65,433	Sukuta	7,227
Brikama	19,584	Gunjur	7,115
Bakau	19,309		

BIRTHS AND DEATHS (UN estimates, annual averages)

	1980-85	1985-90	1990-95
Birth rate (per 1,000)	48.2	46.5	43.7
Death rate (per 1,000)	23.1	20.7	18.8

Expectation of life (UN estimates, years at birth, 1990-95): 45.0 (males 43.4; females 46.6).

Source: UN, *World Population Prospects: The 1994 Revision*.

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION*

(persons aged 10 years and over, 1983 census)

	Total
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	239,940
Quarrying	66
Manufacturing	8,144
Electricity, gas and water	1,233
Construction	4,373
Trade, restaurants and hotels	16,551
Transport, storage and communications	8,014
Public administration and defence	8,295
Education	4,737
Medical services	2,668
Personal and domestic services	6,553
Activities not adequately defined	25,044
Total	325,618†

* Figures exclude persons seeking work for the first time.

† Males 174,856; females 150,762.

Mid-1995 (estimates in '000): Agriculture, etc. 450; Total 499 (Source: FAO, *Production Yearbook*).

Agriculture

PRINCIPAL CROPS ('000 metric tons)

	1993	1994	1995
Millet and sorghum	61	62	66
Rice (paddy)	12	20	20
Maize	24	13	22
Cassava (Manioc)*	6	6	6
Pulses*	4	4	4
Palm kernels*	2	2	2
Groundnuts (in shell)	77	81	84
Vegetables*	8	8	8
Fruits*	4	4	4
Seed (unginned) cotton*	5	5	10

* FAO estimates.

Source: FAO, *Production Yearbook*.

LIVESTOCK (FAO estimates, '000 head, year ending September)

	1993	1994	1995
Cattle	400	400	400
Goats	150	150	150
Sheep	121	121	121
Pigs	11	11	11
Asses	30	30	30
Horses	15	16	16

Poultry (FAO estimates, million): 1 in 1993; 1 in 1994; 1 in 1995.

Source: FAO, *Production Yearbook*.

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS (FAO estimates, '000 metric tons)

	1993	1994	1995
Beef and veal	6	6	6
Poultry meat	1	1	1
Other meat	2	2	2
Cows' milk	7	7	7
Poultry eggs	0.9	0.9	0.9

Source: FAO, *Production Yearbook*.

Forestry

ROUNDWOOD REMOVALS

('000 cubic metres, excluding bark)

	1992*	1993	1994
Sawlogs, veneer logs and logs for sleepers	90	103	106
Other industrial wood	7	7	7
Fuel wood	1,016	1,078	1,096
Total	1,113	1,188	1,209

* FAO estimates.

Source: FAO, *Yearbook of Forest Products*.

Fishing

000 metric tons, live weight)

	1993	1994	1995
ilapias	1.1	1.0	1.1
ther freshwater fishes	1.4	1.4	1.5
nguefishes	0.2	0.2	0.9
a catfishes	0.4	0.3	0.8
roakers and drums	1.2	0.5	1.4
onga shad	14.1	16.9	13.9
ther marine fishes (incl. unspecified)	1.5	1.3	2.6
otal fish	19.8	21.7	22.2
uthern pink shrimp	0.5	0.6	0.4
ther crustaceans and molluscs	0.1	0.1	0.5
otal catch	20.5	22.3	23.1
land waters	2.4	2.4	2.5
lantic Ocean	18.1	19.9	20.6

Source: FAO, *Yearbook of Fishery Statistics*.

Industry

ELECTED PRODUCTS

	1990	1991	1992
alted, dried or smoked fish ('000 metric tons)*	0.7	0.5	0.5
vegetable oils—unrefined ('000 metric tons)†	3	3	n.a.
lectric energy (million kWh)‡	70	70	71

Electric energy (million kWh): 73 in 1993; 75 in 1994.

Data from the FAO. * Provisional or estimated figures.

Source: UN, *Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook*.

Finance

CURRENCY AND EXCHANGE RATES

Monetary Units

1,000 butut = 1 dalasi (D).

Sterling and Dollar Equivalents (28 February 1997)

£1 sterling = 16.28 dalasi;

US \$1 = 9.98 dalasi;

1,000 dalasi = £61.42 = \$100.20.

Average Exchange Rate (dalasi per US \$)

1994	9.576
1995	9.546
1996	9.781

BUDGET (million dalasi, year ending 30 June)

Revenue*	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95‡
Tax revenue	704.4	682.9	599.9
Direct taxes	122.9	126.0	135.8
Taxes on personal incomes	40.4	36.4	55.3
Taxes on corporate profits	76.6	80.6	73.7
Indirect taxes	581.5	556.9	464.1
Domestic taxes on goods and services	47.9	57.1	48.7
Domestic sales tax	46.5	54.7	36.8
Taxes on international trade	374.2	306.5	256.2
Customs duties	196.1	156.9	144.7
Sales tax on imports	178.1	149.1	109.8
Petroleum taxes	159.4	193.3	159.2
Duty	136.8	166.8	137.8
Sales tax	22.6	26.5	21.4
Other current revenue	61.9	84.2	65.7
Government services and charges	18.8	22.8	27.0
Interest on property	19.8	10.3	10.0
Central Bank profit	17.7	28.0	25.0
Capital revenue	0.6	4.0	3.7
Total	766.9	771.1	669.3

Expenditure†	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95‡
Current expenditure	570.7	613.3	613.4
Expenditure on goods and services	369.4	414.3	432.5
Personal emoluments, allowances and pensions	161.0	198.6	206.0
Other charges	208.4	215.7	226.5
Goods and services	128.3	133.5	142.5
Maintenance and equipment	49.0	65.0	45.2
Interest payments	117.9	133.9	128.6
Internal	72.7	84.9	77.3
External	45.2	49.2	51.3
Subsidies and current transfers	83.4	65.1	52.4
To non-profit institutions	54.4	44.9	29.7
Development expenditure	253.2	248.6	266.3
Unallocated expenditure	3.4	5.8	22.4
Total	827.3	867.7	902.2

* Excluding grants received (million dalasi): 123.3 in 1992/93; 126.5 in 1993/94; 67.8 in 1994/95.

† Excluding lending minus repayments (million dalasi): 12.1 in 1992/93; -5.7 in 1993/94; -14.7 in 1994/95.

‡ Estimates.

Source: IMF, *The Gambia—Recent Economic Developments* (December 1995).

INTERNATIONAL RESERVES (US \$ million at 31 December)

	1994*	1995	1996
IMF special drawing rights	0.26	0.13	0.29
Reserve position in IMF	2.17	2.21	2.14
Foreign exchange	95.59	103.81	99.37
Total	98.02	106.15	101.79

* 1993 (US \$ million): IMF special drawing rights 0.31; Reserve position in IMF 2.04. Complete figures for 1993 are not available.

Source: IMF, *International Financial Statistics*.

MONEY SUPPLY (million dalasi at 31 December)

	1994	1995	1996
Currency outside banks	207.36	247.97	255.03
Demand deposits at commercial banks	200.17	223.50	198.46
Total money	407.53	471.47	453.49

Source: IMF, *International Financial Statistics*.

THE GAMBIA

Statistical Survey

COST OF LIVING

(Consumer Price Index for Banjul and Kombo St Mary; base: 1990 = 100)

	1992	1993	1994
Food	117.6	127.7	126.2
Fuel and light	116.2	119.9	160.1
Clothing*	124.5	122.5	130.9
Rent	198.0	209.2	219.1
All items (incl. others)	118.9	126.6	128.8

* Including household linen.

1995: Food 137.1; All items 137.8 (Source: UN, *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*).

Source: ILO, *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*.

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

(million dalasi at current prices, year ending 30 June)

Expenditure on the Gross Domestic Product

	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95*
Government final consumption expenditure	576.1	613.9	615.5
Private final consumption expenditure	2,427.7	2,605.8	2,708.6
Increase in stocks	677.9	626.6	557.1
Gross fixed capital formation			
Total domestic expenditure	3,681.7	3,846.3	3,881.2
Exports of goods and services	1,973.0	1,916.9	1,505.6
Less Imports of goods and services	2,426.0	2,352.1	1,949.7
GDP in purchasers' values	3,228.6	3,411.2	3,438.5†
GDP at constant 1976/77 prices	572.2	579.8	556.8

* Estimates.

† Including adjustment.

Gross Domestic Product by Economic Activity

	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94†
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	663.0	641.9	762.5
Manufacturing	166.4	188.3	191.7
Electricity and water	25.6	31.4	35.7
Construction	148.9	166.1	186.0
Trade, restaurants and hotels	647.0	738.4	635.2
Transport and communications	280.8	335.2	378.6
Business services and housing	171.8	194.9	228.1
Government services	196.9	227.3	262.3
Other services*	110.5	123.5	174.1
GDP at factor cost	2,410.9	2,647.1	2,854.3
Indirect taxes, Less Subsidies	536.7	581.5	556.9
GDP in purchasers' values	2,947.6	3,228.6	3,411.2

* Including banking and insurance, net of imputed bank service charges.

† Estimates.

Source: IMF, *The Gambia—Recent Economic Developments* (December 1995).

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS (US \$ million, year ending 30 June).

	1993	1994	1995
Exports of goods f.o.b.	157.03	124.97	122.96
Imports of goods f.o.b.	-214.46	-181.62	-162.53
Trade balance	-57.43	-56.65	-39.57
Exports of services	79.57	90.47	53.71
Imports of services	-74.56	-67.04	-69.25
Balance on goods and services	-52.42	-33.22	-55.11
Other income received	5.82	4.87	4.37
Other income paid	-5.11	-5.14	-9.58
Balance on goods, services and income	-51.71	-33.50	-60.32
Current transfers received	49.99	45.85	55.81
Current transfers paid	-3.60	-4.18	-3.68
Current balance	-5.32	8.17	-8.19
Direct investment from abroad	11.07	9.81	7.78
Other investment assets	1.40	3.79	-3.66
Investment liabilities	26.92	19.54	20.65
Net errors and omissions	-22.72	-35.12	-15.63
Overall balance	11.35	6.19	0.95

Source: IMF, *International Financial Statistics*.

External Trade

PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES (SDR '000, year ending 30 June)

	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94
Imports c.i.f.			
Food and live animals	50,838	45,688	39,594
Beverages and tobacco	7,748	6,527	8,175
Raw materials	1,273	2,117	1,443
Mineral fuels, lubricants, etc.	19,223	14,641	9,618
Animal and vegetable oils	3,456	5,292	3,687
Chemicals	9,400	8,820	8,175
Manufactured goods classified by material	31,018	37,220	40,716
Machinery and transport equipment	26,457	41,101	37,671
Miscellaneous manufactured articles	12,385	13,585	10,099
Total (incl. others)	163,901	176,400	160,300

	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95†
Exports f.o.b.*			
Groundnuts and groundnut products	8,300	7,579	7,571
Fish and fish products	2,233	1,500	1,633
Cotton products	95	2,800	3,853
Total (incl. others)	13,695	13,962	14,900

* Excluding re-exports (SDR '000): 97,000 in 1992/93; 75,232 in 1993/94; 67,332 in 1994/95.

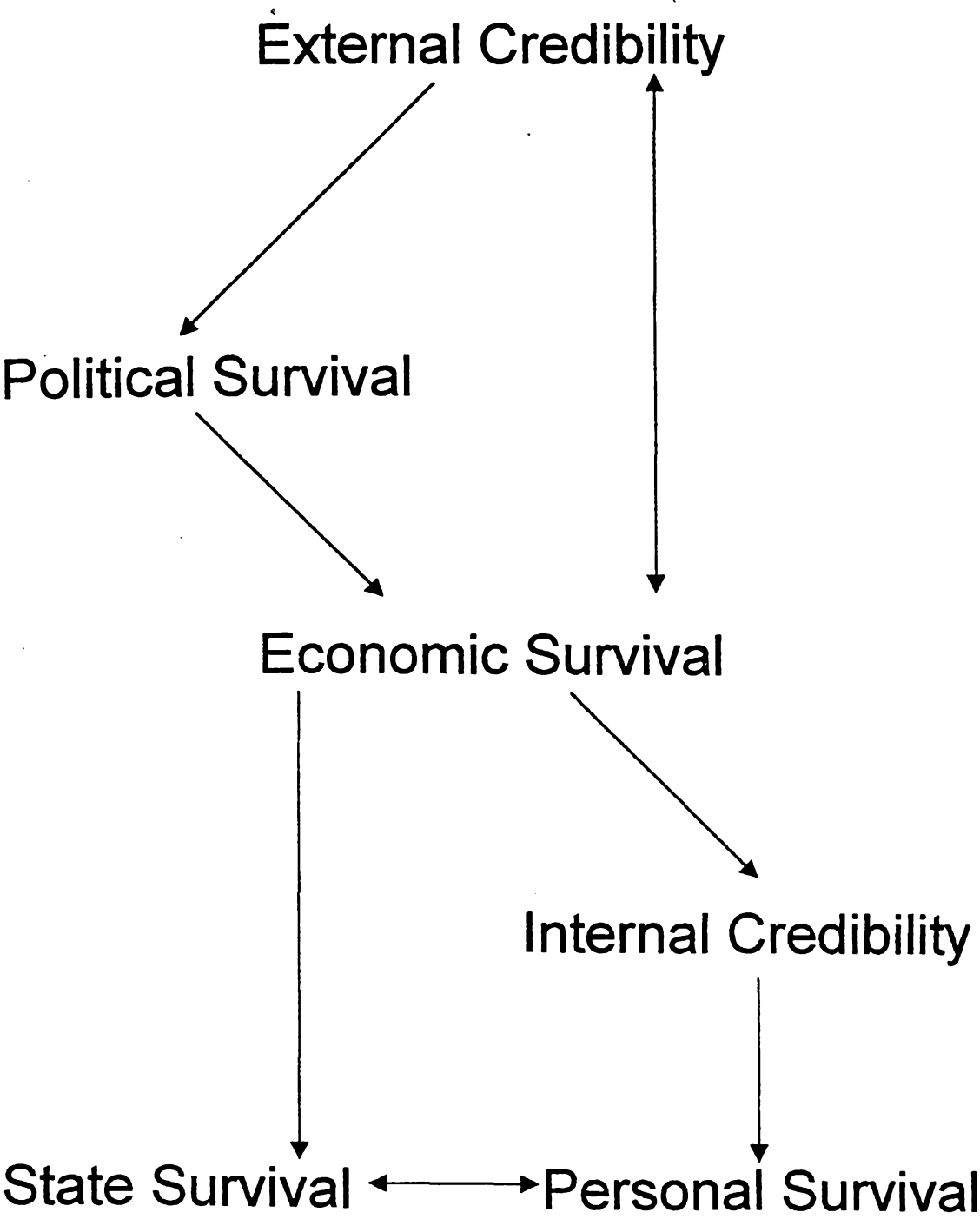
† Estimates.

Source: IMF, *The Gambia—Recent Economic Developments* (December 1995).

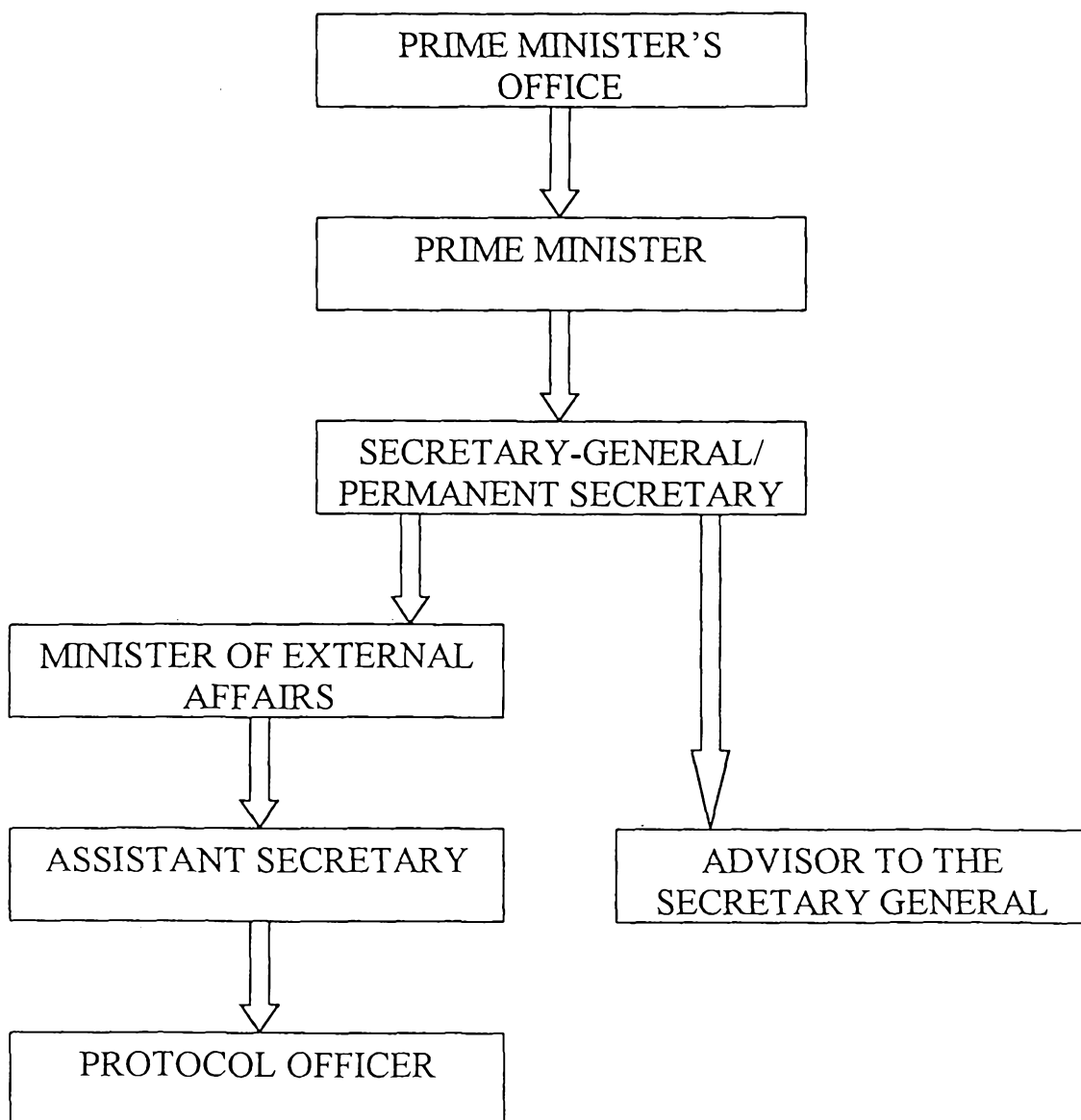
PRINCIPAL TRADING PARTNERS (percentage of trade)

	1992	1993	1994*
Imports c.i.f.			
Belgium-Luxembourg	5.7	7.9	10.1
China, People's Repub.	14.8	20.3	24.7
France (incl. Monaco)	6.2	7.9	4.2
Germany	4.2	3.9	4.6
Hong Kong	16.0	11.1	7.7
Italy	7.0	3.2	2.2
Japan	3.1	3.7	2.1
Netherlands	4.7	5.8	4.3
Senegal	1.9	2.9	5.4
Spain	1.6	1.1	0.8
Thailand	4.5	4.2	4.9
United Kingdom	10.1	10.3	8.5
USA	2.9	2.9	1.3

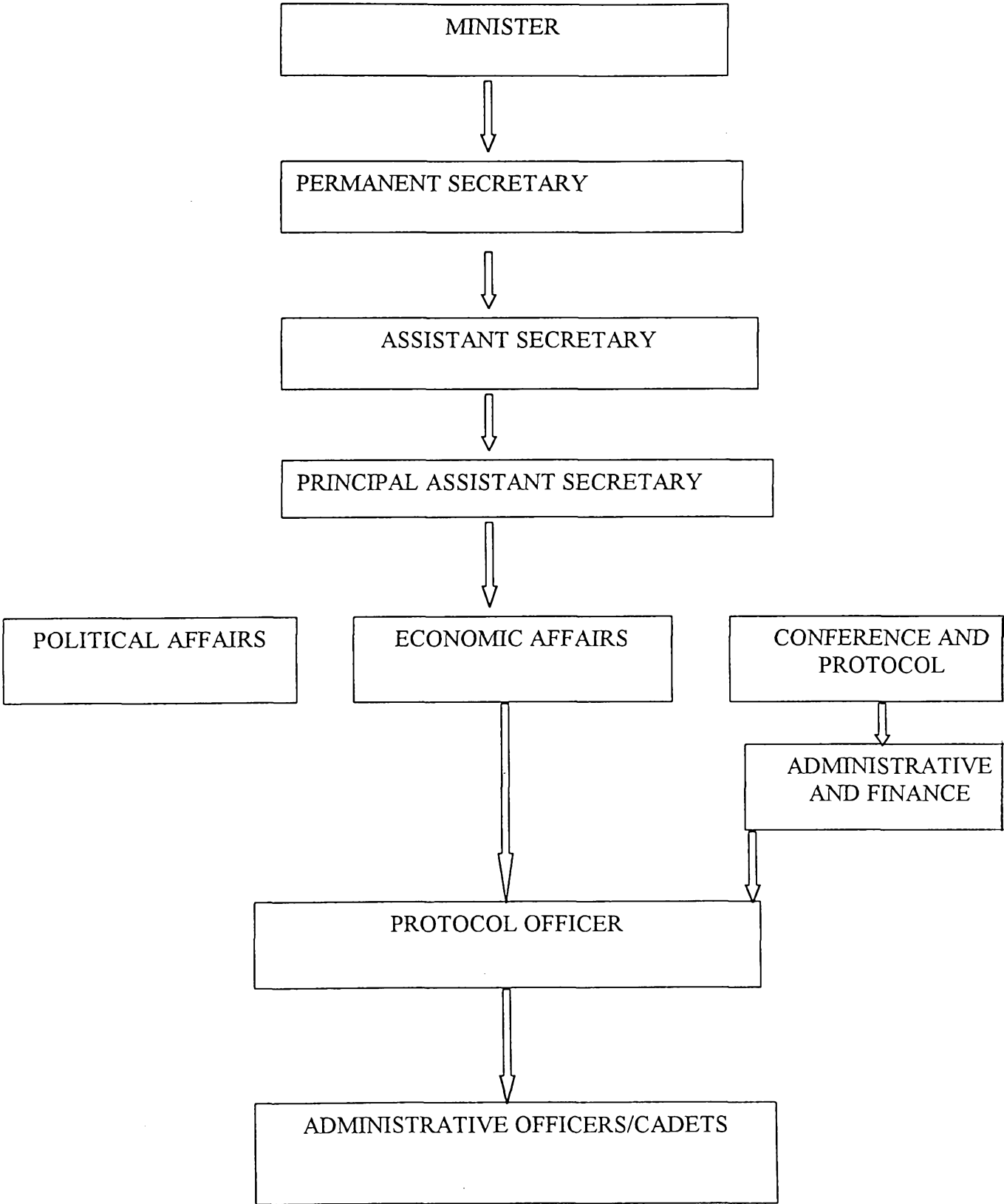
Appendix 3: Diagram showing linkage between state survival and leadershipal survival



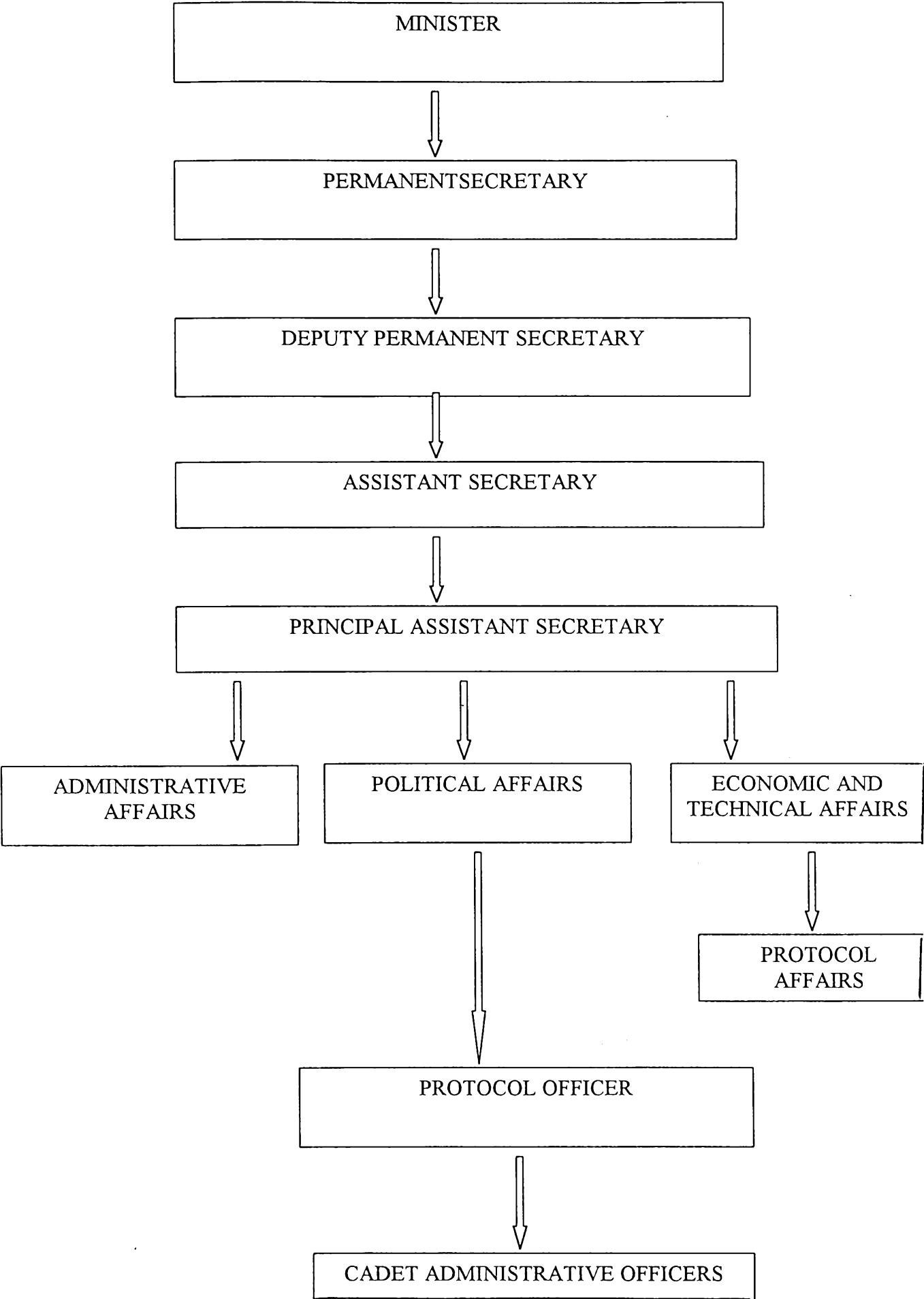
DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURAL UNIT – 1965



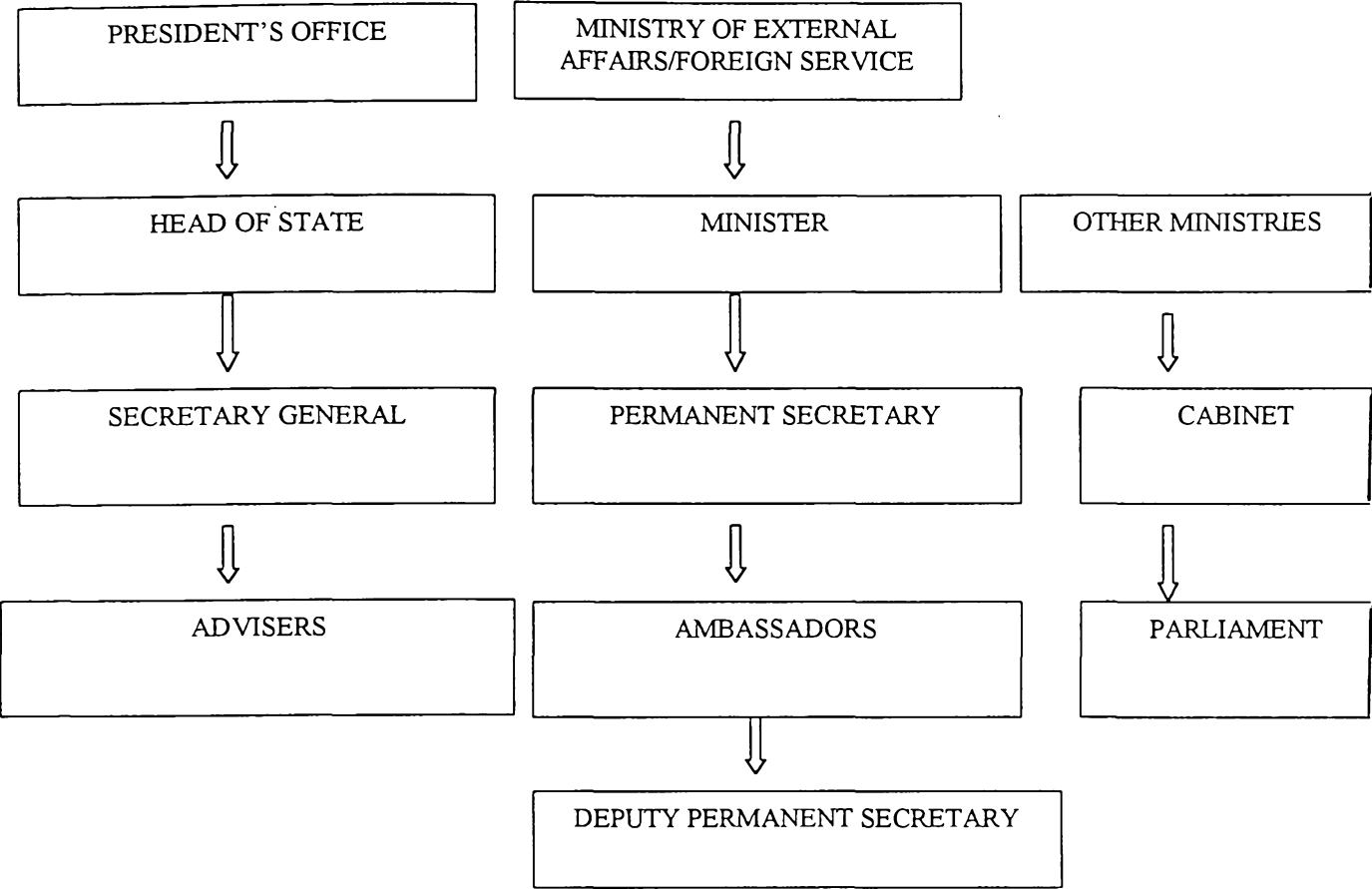
Decision-making Unit – Ministry of External Affairs – 1977
(Schematic Diagram)



Decision-making Unit – Ministry of External Affairs – 1987
(Schematic Diagram)



Global Structural Unit- Decision-making – 1990 (Schematic Diagram)



Diplomatic Missions in the Gambia

Embassies

Embassy of China Chancery: 6A Marina Parade Banjul Telephone: 227351/228385 Office: 17th Street, West Booster Extension, Fajara Telephone: 295380/295622	Office of the Ambassador of Germany Independence Drive P.O. Box 833, Banjul Telephone: 227783	Embassy of Palestine Kairaba Avenue, Serrekunda Telephone: 393394
Office of the Ambassador of the Russian Federation 7 Buckle Street, Banjul Telephone: 228282	Embassy of the United States of America White House Kairaba Avenue, Fajara P.O. Box 596, Banjul Telephone: 392358/392856 Fax: 392475	

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High Commissions

High Commission of Nigeria Garba Jahumpa Avenue Bakau Newtown P.O. Box 630, Banjul Telephone: 95803/4	High Commission of Senegal IOA Cameroon Street, Banjul Telephone: 27469/27680	High Commission of Sierra Leone 67 Hagan Street, Banjul Telephone: 28206/28462
High Commission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 48 Atlantic Road, Fajara P.O. Box 507, Banjul Telephone: 95113/95134/95578		

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Consulates

Consulate of Austria c/o Shyben A. Madi & Sons Ltd. 3A Russel Street, Banjul P.O. Box 184, Banjul Telephone: 27436/28303	Consulate of Belgium 14 Wellington Street, Banjul Telephone: 27473	Consulate of Côte d'Ivoire 1A Hill Street, Banjul Telephone: 28446
Consulate of Denmark 14 Wellington Street, Banjul Telephone: 27473	Consulate of France 14 Wellington Street, Banjul Telephone: 27473	Consulate of Ghana 18 Mosque Rd., Latrikunda Telephone: 91599
Consulate of Guinea-Bissau 1 Hill Street, Banjul Telephone: 28134	Consulate of the Republic of Korea 11/12 Buckle Street, Banjul Telephone: 28276	Consulate of Liberia 9 Cameroon Street, Banjul Telephone: 27463
Consulate of Mali 26 Grant Street, Banjul Telephone: 28433	Consulate of Mauritania Fajara A Section, P.O. Box 2592 Serrekunda Telephone: 91153	Consulate of the Netherlands c/o Shell Company Dobston Street, Banjul Telephone: 27437

Consulate of Norway Wing Afric, Kanifing Private Mail Bag, Banjul Telephone: 92505	Consulate of Pakistan Picton Street, Banjul	Consulate of Spain Sunwing Hotel, Cape Point Telephone: 95428
Consulate of Sweden Wing Afric, Kanifing Private Mail Bag, Banjul Telephone: 92505		

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International organizations in the Gambia

Delegation of the Commission of the European Economic Communities 10 Cameroon Street, Banjul Telephone: 227777/228769	United Nations Development Programme* Ave. Anne Marie Javouhey P.O. Box 553, Banjul Telephone: 228493/228494; 228782/228783 Fax: 228921 Cable: UNDEVPRO Banjul	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations The Quadrangle, Banjul Telephone: 228824/228477/227881/227882 Telex: 2256 FAO GV; Fax: 228634 Cable: FOODAGRI Banjul
World Health Organization 18 OAU Boulevard P.O. Box 941, Banjul Telephone: 227229/229548/229891 Telex: 2263 UNISANTE GV Fax: 229889	United Nations Children's Fund 10 Nelson Mandela Street, Banjul Telephone: 226652/228964/228988 Telex: 2356 UNICEF GV Fax: 228964 Cable: UNICEF Banjul	

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The Gambia Missions abroad

Embassies/High Commissions/Permanent Missions

Belgium Embassy of the Gambia 126 Ave. Franklin Roosevelt 1050 Brussels Telephone: (32-2) 640 10 49 Telex: (046) 24344 GAMEX B Fax: 646 3277	France Embassy of the Gambia 117 Rue Saint Lazare 75008, Paris Telephone: 42 94 09 30 Fax: 42 94 11 91	Nigeria Gambia High Commission 162 Awolowo Road P.O. Box 873 S.W. Ikoyi, Lagos Telephone: 682192 Telex: (0905) 21319
Saudi Arabia The Gambia Embassy P.O. Box 94322 Riyadh 11693 Telephone: 465 9996 Telex: 406767 GAMEXT SJ Fax: 0495 (966-1) 456 5958	Senegal Gambia High Commission 11 Rue de Thiong, Dakar Telephone: 21 14 40/21 44 76 Telex: (0906) 51617 BANEX DK	Sierra Leone Gambia High Commission 6 Wilberforce Street, Freetown Telephone: 225191/2 Telex: (0998) 3210/3286
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	United States of America	United Nations

and Northern Ireland Gambia High Commission 57 Kensington Court London W8 5DH Telephone: (071) 937 6316/7/8 and 937 9095 Telex: (051) 911857 GAMEXT G Fax: 376 0531	Embassy of the Gambia 1155 15th Street N.W., Suite 1000 Washington, D.C. 20005-2076 Telephone: (202) 785-1399 Fax: 785 1430	Permanent Mission of the Gambia 820 2nd Ave., No. 900C New York, NY 10017 Telephone: (1-212) 949 6640 Telex: (023) 147289 GAMEXT NYK Fax: 808 4975

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Consular representations abroad

Austria Consul P.O. Box 98 Laroche Gasse 30, A 1130 Vienna Telephone: (0222) 826245 Telex: 131616	Bahamas Consul General P.O. Box 8851 Devonshire Rd. New Providence, Nassau Telephone: (809) 326 1145	Canada Consul General 102 Bloor Street West, Suite 510 Toronto, Ontario M5S 1N1 Telephone: (416) 923 2935 Fax: (416) 923 2526
Denmark Consul General Hoffdingsvej 22 2500 Kobenhavn, Valby Telephone: (01) 173444 Telex: 16527 PHKH DK Cable: KJAERHO Copenhagen	France Consul 57 Rue de Villiers 9200 Neuilly-sur-Seine, Paris	Germany Consul Kurfurstendamm 103 1000 Berlin 31 Telephone: (030) 892 3121/22 Fax: (030) 891 1401
Consul Koenigstrasse 9 4000 Dusseldorf Telephone: (0211) 32 65 37; Telex: 8881083; Fax: (0221) 4009683/131502	Consul Pienzenaurstrasse 5 D-8000 Munchen 80, Odenplatz 3 Telephone: (089) 219 2208 Telex: 5-24540 BYMDI D	Guinea-Bissau 146 Ave. 14 Novembro P.O. Box 529-1037 (by codex), Bissau Telephone: (245) 213088/251099 Telex: 116 GAMB.C.B.1
Hong Kong Consul Apt. 0791, 7 F Tower 17 Hong Kong Parkview 88 Tai Tam Reservoir Rd., Hong Kong Telephone: (852) 812 991 1; Fax: (852) 812 91 1 1 Mobile: (852) 9081 1177	Italy Consul General Via Fontana 4 20122 Milan Telephone: (02) 545 5219/545 5385 Telex: 315243 CRILAW 1 Fax: (02) 55180514 Mobile: (0333) 771004	Consul La Selva, Monteloro 34 50060 Sieci, Florence Telephone: (055) 832 9297 Fax: (055) 836 7312
Japan Consul General Hyana Building 504 3-14, 1-Chome Hiroo Shibuya-Ku, Tokyo Telephone: (03) 444 7806/449 7721 Fax: (03) 3444 8609	Lebanon Consul Isfico, Emir Bechir Street P.O. Box 7821, Beirut	Mexico Consul General Bosque de Olicos No. 107 Bosque de las Lomas, Mexico 10, D.F. Telephone: 587 1911
Consul	Netherlands	Norway

Ignacio Comonfort 20, Edificio Gilt Zona Rio Tijuana C.P. 22000 Tijuana, Baja California Telephone: 849868/849869 Fax: Tijuana 341215	Consul Network Holding B.V. 723 Weena P.O. Box 29064, 3001 GB Rotterdam Telephone: (10) 411 47 20 Telex: 25363	Consul Bygdoy Alle 64 0265 Oslo 2 Telephone: (02) 430910; Telex: 19936
Republic of Korea Consul 252-7 Jung Gok Dong Sung Dong Ku, Seoul Telephone: (02) 755 3788	Spain Consul General Loro Parque 38400 Puerto de la Cruz, Teneriffe Telephone: (922) 383090/383012 Telex: 92498 LORO E Fax: 387321	Consul C/Aribau 280, First floor, No. 2 08006 Barcelona Telephone: (93) 200 9665/414 3056 Fax: 414 3116
Sweden Consul S-27200, Sniirishamn Telephone: (0414) 21210, Telex: 32340	Switzerland Consul General Via al Poggio 6 CH 6392 Breganzona/Lugano Telephone: (091) 563292 Fax: (091) 571824	Consul Rutistr. 13, CH 8952 Schlieren-Zurich Telephone: (01) 731 1010 Fax: (01) 731 1051
Thailand Consul 610/5-6 Songwand Rd. Samphantwongse, Bangkok 10100 Telex: 20283 LTR TH (office) 87463 KOSIN TH (residence) Fax: (662) 2246212	Turkey Consul Barbaros Bulvari, Yildiz Sarayi, Seyir Kosku Besiktas, Istanbul Telephone: 160 5988/9 Telex: 26 484 ISAM TR Fax: 158 4365	Consul Kulmuglu Sokak 31 Daire 5, Cankaya, 06690 Ankara Telephone: 90(4) 140 6100 Telex: 46300 MIN TR Fax: 90(4) 140 5790
Consul Resit Galip Caddesi 101 Daire 7, Gariosmanpasa, 06700 Ankara Telephone: 90(4) 137 7040 Fax: (4) 137 7427		U.S.A. Consul 10777 Bellagio Road Los Angeles, CA, 90027 Tel: 301-476-0532 Fax 310-471-7424

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Appendix 6: Estimates for The Gambia's London's Mission - Ministry of External Affairs

Details of Expenditure – London Mission (Amount valued in Dalasis)

Gambia High Commission /London	1993/4	1994/5 Approved Estimates	1995/6 Estimates
Salaries	1,233,569	878,640	1,069,870
Allowances	85,226	83,500	217,250
Leave/Emergency Relief	57, 879		
Medical Services to Personnel	298,547	100,000	100,000
Travelling Expenses	1,040, 494	200,000	200,000
Postage Telephone and Telex	549,746	200,000	150,000
Electricity, Water Gas	300,000	400,000	360,000
Rent and Rates	253,611	200,000	200,000
Insurance		200,000	200,000
National Day Reception		100	100
Miscellaneous Office Expenses	203, 970	150,000	100,000
Operation and Maintenance Vehicle (Fuel)	396, 716	150,000	100,000
Operation and Maintenance of Vehicles (Maint)		100,000	100,000
Maintenance of Buildings	112, 106	75, 000	75,000
Renovation of Buildings	771,887	150,000	100,000
Purchase of Additional Furniture	202, 666	50,000	15,000
Welfare of Gambians	8, 567	25,000	15,000
Total	5, 521,998	2,962,240	3,027,220

Appendix 7: List of agreements, conventions and protocols signed between The Gambia and Senegal 1965-1990

List of Agreements, Conventions and Protocols Signed between The Gambia and Senegal 1965-1991

NUMBER	SUBJECT	DATE OF SIGNATURE	OBSERVATIONS
1	Agreement of Co-operation on foreign policy	18 February 1965	
2	Agreement of Co-operation on matters of security and defence	18 February 1965	Protocol of Implementation was negotiated and concluded
3	Agreement on road transport	9 April 1965	Revised on 26 June 1980
4	Protocol on Health Matters	11 December 1965	
5	Agreement on the Movement of Persons	15 February 1966	
6	Treaty of Association	19 April 1967	
7	Agreement of Co-operation in the field of Information	10 June 1967	
8	Agreement in the field of Maritime Fishing		Suspended by the decision of the 2 Heads of States in December 1975
9	Protocol on the Setting up of the Senegambian Inter-State Ministerial Committee	10 June 1967	
10	Cultural Agreement	10 June 1967	
11	Agreement on Rescue Operation	22 June 1968	
12	Agreement on Co-operation on Agriculture	31 July 1968	
13	Agreement for Mutual Administration Assistance between the Customs Department	6 February 1970	
14	Trade Agreement	31 July 1968	
15	Agreement for Mutual Administration Assistance between the Customs Department	6 February 1970	
16	Trade Agreement	26 June 1970	
17	Protocol of Consular Assistance	21 March 1973	

List of Agreements, Conventions and Protocols Signed between The Gambia and Senegal 1965-1991

NUMBER	SUBJECT	DATE OF SIGNATURE	OBSERVATIONS
18	Judicial Convention	28 April 1973	
19	Agreement of Co-operation on the Protection of Wild Life and Vegetation	31 May 1973	
20	Agreement on Forestry Matters Between the Government of the Republic of Senegal and the Government of the Republic of The Gambia	31 May 1975	
21	Treaty on the Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries	4 June 1975	
22	Convention on the Establishment of the Co-ordinating Committee for the Development of The Gambia River Basin	16 April 1976	
21	Treaty on delimitation of Land Boundary at Kantora	30 June 1978	
22	Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance between the Customs Department of The Gambia, Senegal and Guinea Bissau	20 September 1978	Revised on 20 April 1979. Revision came into force on 1 July 1979.
23	Interim Agreement on Air Transport	6 March 1979	
24	Biennial Protocol on Exchanges and the Arts, Youths, Sports, Information, Community Development and Social Welfare	7 November 1980	
25	Agreements between the Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Senegal Concerning the Establishment of a Senegambia Confederation	17 December 1981	Confederation was dissolved by 1989.
26	Protocol Relating to the Confederal Security and the Integration of Security Forces for the Establishment of the Senegambia Confederal Security	12 January 1983	
27	Protocol on Defence and the Integration of Armed Forces of the Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Senegal for the Establishment of a Senegambian Confederal Armed Forces	12 January 1983	

List of Agreements, Conventions and Protocols Signed between The Gambia and Senegal 1965-1991

[illegible]

**Appendix 8: Protocol of Consular Assistance between the Republic
of The Gambia and The Republic of Senegal**

PROTOCOL OF CONSULAR ASSISTANCE

Between the Republic of The Gambia

And the Republic of Senegal

The Government of the Republic of Senegal and the
Government of the Republic of The Gambia,

- Having regard to Article 8 of the Vienna Convention
on Consular Relations,
- In application of the provisions of Article 2 of
the Agreement on Cooperation in matters of foreign
policy concluded between the two countries on
18 February 1965

have agreed as follows:

Article 1: The Government of the Republic of Senegal shall
ensure consular representation for the Republic of The Gambia
at this latter's request in the following cases:

- 1) In non-Commonwealth countries where The Gambia
has no consular representation.
- 2) In the absence of the Gambian consular official.
- 3) If, for reasons notably of distance, the competent
Gambian consular official cannot effectively
intervene.

Article 2: 1. By an appropriate notification the consular
mandate assumed by Senegal on behalf of the Republic of The
Gambia shall be brought to the attention of the competent
authorities of third states involved.

2. The provisions of the present Protocol shall
be applied subject to the approval of these states.

Article 3: 1. The Senegalese consular officials, acting as
Deputy Registrars may register and deliver certificates and
documents on condition that they obtain prior authority to
so do from the Government of the Republic of The Gambia through
the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2. The registration of certificates mentioned at
paragraph 1 of the present Article will be entered in bilingual
(English & French) registers placed at the disposal of
Senegalese consular officials by the Ministry of External
Affairs of The Gambia.

3. In case of need Senegalese consular officials may lend their good offices to nationals of The Gambia in order to facilitate the registration of births, deaths etc. with local authorities.

Article 4: Senegalese consular officials shall have power to register and deliver registration certificates or identity cards to requesting Gambian nationals

- living in their district
- and able to prove their Gambian nationality by producing valid passports, or any other documentary evidence.

Article 5: All applications submitted and appropriate fees deposited with the Senegalese consular officials for the issue of a Gambian passport shall be forwarded by such officials to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Senegal which shall in turn transmit them to the Principal Immigration Officer of The Gambia.

2. The passport issued shall be addressed to the consular official from whom the application had come. Where the application is rejected an appropriate notification shall be made to the said consular official.

3. Senegalese consular officials shall be empowered to extend the validity of passports held by Gambian nationals after satisfying themselves as to the identity and nationality of the applicants.

4. In emergency cases Senegalese consular officials shall be empowered to issue to Gambian nationals one-way emergency passports to The Gambia.

5. Senegalese consular officials may issue visas to applicants in accordance with the written instructions of the Principal Immigration Officer of The Gambia.

6. Before extending the geographical validity of a Gambian passport Senegalese consular officials shall refer the matter to the Principal Immigration Officer of The Gambia for direction.

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Article 6: Unless prevented by legal or other difficulties, Senegalese consular officials may, at the request of Gambian nationals, issue all kinds of certificates testifying facts or qualities of which they have personal knowledge or are recognised to be so resulting from an examination of documents or events.

Article 7: 1. Senegalese consular officials may legalise signatures on documents that come from authorities or public agents in their district where these documents are to be produced in The Gambia.

2. They shall mention the status of the authority or agent who issued the document and verify that this authority or agent was entitled at the time the document was made, to appear on it.

3. Documents under private seal shall not be legalised unless they have been legalised beforehand by a public authority of the State of residence of the applicant.

4. Decrees judgements or certificates made in The Gambia cannot be legalised by Senegalese consular officials unless they bear legalisation of the Ministry of External Affairs of The Gambia.

Article 8: Senegalese consular officials shall assist Gambian nationals by interceding on their behalf with local authorities:

- in matters affecting their private and commercial interest
- in actions before judicial authorities.

Article 9. 1. Upon request from the Gambian Ministry of External Affairs through the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs welfare assistance may be given by Senegalese consular officials to Gambian nationals who become needy as a result of circumstances beyond their control.

2. In the same conditions, Senegalese consular officials may ensure the repatriation of Gambian nationals.

Article 10: Acting in accordance with the provisions of Article 2 of the present Protocol, Senegalese consular officials shall observe the provisions of Article 12, concerning the collection of dues and taxes.

Article 11: Instructions and other forms of correspondence shall be forwarded through the medium of the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Article 12: 1. Dues and taxes collected in connection with the issue of documents quoted in the present Protocol shall be paid for by means of Senegalese stamps in conformity with the Senegalese tariff in force. The total amount of these dues and taxes shall be paid into Senegalese Treasury.

2. The Gambia Government shall refund the Senegalese Government at the end of every year the advances made and expenses incurred by Senegalese consular officials in the exclusive interest of the Gambia or of its nationals.

Article 13: Either Government may suspend, in special cases, the application of certain provisions of this Protocol. Notification therefore shall immediately be made to the other Government.

2. In cases affected by paragraph 1. of this article, the Government of the Republic of The Gambia is free to ensure the protection and the defense of its consular interests by other means.

Article 14: In case of dispute in the application or the interpretation of this Protocol, the two Governments shall seek for an amicable solution through diplomatic channel.

Article 15: Either of the contracting parties may at any time by giving six months notice in advance, denounce the present protocol by notification addressed to the other party.

/.....

Article 16: The present protocol shall come into effect on the first day of the third month subsequent to an exchange of notes confirming the agreement of the two Governments.

Done at this day of
1973 in English & French versions, both
 texts being equally authentic.

For The Republic
 Of Senegal

For The Republic
 The Gambia

1
SENEGAMBIA

CONFEDERATION

PROTOCOL ON CO-ORDINATION OF POLICY IN THE

FIELD OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS

THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL;

RECALLING the Agreement between the Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Senegal establishing the Senegambia Confederation, signed at Dakar, on 17th December, 1982;

CONSIDERING the provisions of Clause 2 of the Agreement, namely that the Confederation shall be based on co-ordination of policy in the field of external relations; and

REFERRING to the provisions of Clauses 5, 15, 17 and 22 of the Agreement;

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

ARTICLE 1 : CO-ORDINATION OF FOREIGN POLICY

1. For the purpose of achieving the objectives specified in Clause 2 of the Agreement, namely the co-ordination of the external policies of the Confederated States, the President of the Republic of The Gambia and the President of the Republic of Senegal shall, from time to time, consult each other and exchange information on matters relating to foreign policy.
2. The President of the Republic of The Gambia and the President of the Republic of Senegal shall endeavour to adopt a common position in the field of external relations.
3. In pursuance of the objectives in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, the Ministers of External Affairs of the two Confederated States shall meet, from time to time, to review matters relating to the co-ordination of policy in the field of external relations.

ARTICLE 2 : DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR REPRESENTATION

Each Confederated State shall undertake, on behalf of the other, diplomatic and consular representation in such state organisation where the requesting state has not established diplomatic or consular missions.

2. Any Confederated State representing the other shall act in accordance with the instructions given by the requesting state.

3. Where one of the Confederated States is represented by the other, officers of the requesting state may be attached to the Mission of the representing state.

ARTICLE 3 : REPRESENTATION AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

1. Subject to the rules of procedure governing international conferences, any one of the Confederated States shall, at the request of the other, represent that other State at any international conference.

2. The delegation of the representing state shall, while acting in a representative capacity, comply with the instructions given by the requesting State.

3. Where both Confederated States are represented at any international conference, the delegation of the two States shall endeavour to adopt a common position.

4. Information exchanged by the two delegates shall be treated as confidential.

ARTICLE 4: TRAINING OF DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR PERSONNEL

The Government of the Republic of The Gambia and the Government of the Republic of Senegal shall assist each other in the training of diplomatic personnel.

In this regard, the nationals of the Republic of The Gambia and the nationals of the Republic of Senegal shall be admitted in the specialised institutions of either State, at the request of either Government.

ARTICLE 5 : FINANCIAL OBLIGATION

Costs relating to the training of personnel and the rendering of services as provided in this Protocol shall be borne by the beneficiary state.

ARTICLE 6 : RATIFICATION

This Protocol shall be ratified in accordance with the Constitution of each Confederated State.

ARTICLE 7 : ENTRY INTO FORCE

This Protocol shall come into force as soon as the instruments of ratification are exchanged.

ARTICLE 8 : AMENDMENT

Proposals for amendments to this Protocol may be submitted to the depositories of the Protocol.

Such amendments shall come into force upon agreement of the parties.

ARTICLE 9 : ORIGINALS AND REGISTRATION

The original of the Protocol, done in the English and French languages, both texts being equally authentic, shall be communicated to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for registration.

.../...

Appendix 9: Treaty of Association 1967

7.

TREATY OF ASSOCIATION

The Government of The Gambia and the Government of the Republic of Senegal.

CONSIDERING the close historical, political, economic and social ties between the two countries;

WISHING to consolidate those bonds of friendship and fraternity, congratulating themselves for the steps already taken in the area of cooperation, following the agreements signed between the two countries;

DETERMINED to further the fruitful cooperation within the framework of a policy of close association;

HAVE RESOLVED to sign the present treaty entitled "Treaty of Association" and

HAVE AGREED TO THE FOLLOWING TERMS:

Article 1. The purpose of the treaty of association between The Gambia and Senegal is to promote and expand the coordination and cooperation between the two countries in all areas.

Article 2. The two Heads of Government shall meet once a year, alternately in Bathurst or Dakar, for the purpose of a broad examination of the different aspects of the cooperation between The Gambia and Senegal.

The annual meeting of Heads of Government shall take place on the second Tuesday in January.

Article 3. A Senegalo-Gambian inter-state ministerial committee shall be created. This committee shall study all measures tending to strengthen the cooperation and solidarity between the two countries and shall submit its findings to the two Governments for approval.

Article 4. The inter-state ministerial committee shall include the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and those Ministers concerned with the matters to be discussed.

These ministers may be assisted by officials,

Article 5. The inter-state ministerial committee shall meet at least once a year, alternately in Senegal or The Gambia.

/...

Article 6. The inter-state ministerial committee shall exercise supervision over all committees established under former agreements between The Gambia and Senegal.

Article 7. The inter-state ministerial committee shall be assisted by an Executive Secretary appointed by joint decision of the two Governments.

A separate protocol will cover the organisation of the secretariat.

Article 8. This treaty shall enter into force as soon as the instruments of ratification are exchanged between the two countries.

Article 9. Both Governments shall send a copy of the present treaty to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity.

DONE AT BATHURST ON THE 19 APRIL 1961

IN ENGLISH AND IN FRENCH, THE TWO TEXTS BEING EQUALLY AUTHENTIC.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE GAMBIA

FOR THE GOVERNMENT
OF SENEGAL.

NEGALO-GAMBIA PERMANENT

NYFR/GB/4/80

SECRETARIAT

B A N J U L

M E M O R A N D U M

O N

L A N D B O U N D A R Y M A T T E R S

31st M A R C H 1980

II. THE BOUNDARY IN THE BARIA AREA

The problem of delimiting the boundary in this area still has to be resolved.

At the same meeting held in Banjul in March 1979, the experts made an attempt to elaborate a joint PROGRAMME OF ACTION to implement the ministerial directive given during the 13th Ordinary Session. For ease of reference the directive read thus:

"Regarding the frontier in the Baria area, situated at the Northern part of The Gambia the principle has been agreed upon to carry out, with the active participation of an Inter-Governmental team of experts, a survey-exercise of the area concerned and an identification of boundary pillars which had been implanted in this zone between 1889 and 1902 in conformity with the provisions of the Treaty which had been concluded at the time by the former administrative powers".

The experts' first move was to define the work to be done with due reference to the above directive and unanimously agreed that by the 'area concerned' is meant the area from DJINAK to MBAYEN - a distance of 116 kilometres approximately.

They also agreed that the work required involve a survey exercise of the area concerned and an identification of the boundary pillars along the boundary line from DJINAK to MBAYEN.

Unfortunately the experts disagreed on the question of the PROGRAMME OF ACTION. From the long discussions that ensued, it became evident that the main problem stemmed from the interpretation of "SURVEY EXERCISE" as used in the ministerial directive.

.../...

The Executive Secretary of the Secretariat who was Chairman of the meeting, intervened to appeal to the two delegations to work on the directives of the 13th Session which were later endorsed by the Heads of State in February 1979 in order to elaborate a joint programme of action that would bring about positive results.

Regrettably all efforts made by the Executive Secretary did not succeed in effecting a compromise. At the end, each delegation was again requested to register its position which would be presented to the appropriate authorities. The positions thus formulated were as follows:-

(A) THE GAMBIAN POSITION

"Having been unable to reach an agreement on a joint programme of action for the Baria area as directed in the Joint Communique issued at the end of the 13th Inter-State Ministerial Committee Meeting, namely to carry out:-

- (1) A survey exercise of the area concerned;
- (2) An identification of boundary pillars which had been implanted in this zone between 1889 - 1902 in conformity with the provisions of the Treaty which had been concluded at the time by the former administrative powers.

The Gambian side holds the view that to execute this directive the sub-mentioned course of action should be adopted:-

- (i) The first stage should be to comb the area starting from the Atlantic coast to Ebayen - the point at which this straight line takes a curve northward, in order to identify the remaining pillars established in this boundary between 1889 and 1902 as delimited by the 1889 Convention.

.../...

- (ii) To prepare a draft estimate of the cost of connecting any boundary pillars found to the traversed points established in this area during the survey of the connection to the 12th Parallel survey so as to determine their latitudes as was done for Boundary Pillar 4 and Boundary Pillar 5"

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(B) THE SENEGALESE POSITION

"- According to the Senegalese position regarding the Senegalo-Gambian frontier in the Baria area which was specified during the Dakar meeting of experts from the two countries on 11th May 1978,

- According to the Joint Communique of the 13th Ordinary Session of the Senegalo-Gambian Inter-State Ministerial Committee held in Banjul from 14th - 16th December 1978,

the following should be done:-

- 1) A survey of the details of the boundary stretch north of The Gambia should be carried out along the entire distance of 116 kilometres approximately.
- 2) The respective positions of all existing boundary pillars found on the boundary line should be determined with reference to Parallel 13°35'36".

It is for this reason that the programme of action to be elaborated by the experts of the two countries should consist of:-

.../...

- (i) Carrying out, using the various methods practised, a survey of this boundary zone and making proposals regarding the width of the zone to be surveyed and the details to be represented in describing the terrain.
- (ii) Defining in this regard a method of transport of co-ordinates which will enable a direct connection of all boundary pillars.
- (iii) Outlining all the aspects in a TECHNICAL DOCUMENT for decision of the higher authorities.
- (iv) Outlining also the future erection of special pillars for the final boundary between the two countries."

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The above positions were promptly brought to the attention of the competent authorities of the two countries and were later examined and discussed during the 14th Ordinary Session of the Senegalo-Gambian Inter-State Ministerial Committee.

It was agreed during this session that the correct interpretation of the 1978 directive would be given by the competent ministers to enable the two countries to elaborate a joint programme of action for the delimitation exercise.

We hope this matter will be resolved during this working visit.

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Danjul, 31st March 1980

Appendix II: Protocol for the Implementation of the Agreement on
Co-operation in the Area of Security and Defence between
the Republic of The Gambia and Senegal.

SENEGALO-GAMBIAN PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

B A N J U L

PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON CO-OPERATION
IN THE AREA OF SECURITY AND DEFENCE BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL
AND THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA SIGNED IN BANJUL ON 18 FEBRUARY 1965

The Government of the Republic of Senegal on the one hand and the Government of the Republic of The Gambia on the other hand
Recalling the Provisions of Article 2 of the Agreement on Co-operation in the area of Security and Defence between the two countries, signed in Banjul on 18 February, 1965, which recommends the establishment of a Joint Commission and the creation of a Permanent Secretariat for external security and defence

Have agreed upon the following:-

Chapter I - The Joint Commission

Article 1

A Joint Commission, called a "Defence Commission" responsible for examining and periodically discussing all matters relating to and affecting defence in the event of external threat, is hereby created.

The Joint Commission, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the present article, studies and approves plans and defence measures that are necessary for the protection of the two countries.

The Commission shall meet at least twice yearly, alternately in each of the two countries.

Article 2

The Defence Commission shall meet in an extraordinary session at the request of either side, or in the event of an external threat or aggression of one of the States, in order to study the situation and to make recommendations to the Heads of State on measures to be undertaken.

Article 3

The Defence Commission shall primarily be composed of Ministers of Defence and may eventually include all other concerned authorities.

It shall of necessity include the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the two countries.

The Members of the Defence Commission may be assisted by experts.

Article 4

In the event of external aggression against one of the States and the military support and assistance of the other State is considered necessary, the request for such support and assistance shall

be submitted to the two Heads of State.

Article 11

The present Protocol may be modified by common accord at the request of one of the parties.

Article 12

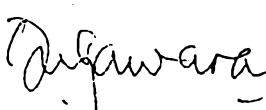
Any dispute arising from the implementation or the interpretation of the present Protocol shall be settled amicably by the two sides.

Article 13

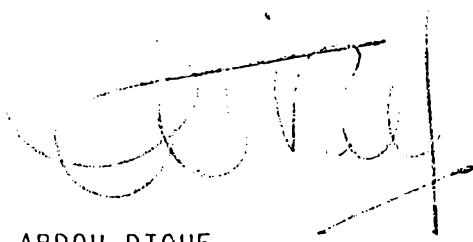
The present Protocol shall enter into force following its signature.

Done in BANJUL on 5 June, 1981 in the French and English Languages both texts being equally authentic.

For the Government of the
Republic of The Gambia


SIR DAWDA KAIRABA JAWARA

For the Government of the
Republic of Senegal


ABDOU DIOUF

**Appendix 12 : Agreement between the Republic of The Gambia and
the Republic of Senegal concerning the Establishment of the
Confederation**



SEN E G A M B I A C O N F E D E R A T I O N

PROTOCOL ON THE INSTITUTIONS
OF THE CONFEDERATION

[Handwritten signature]

L. R. J.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL;

RECALLING the Agreement between the Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Senegal establishing the Senegambia Confederation, signed at Dakar, on 17th December, 1981;

AWARE of the need to provide the Confederation with appropriate institutional organs and structures necessary for the implementation of the Agreement;

CONSIDERING the importance of the co-ordinating role of the President and the Vice-President of the Confederation;

AWARE of the importance to the Confederation of the institutions referred to in Clause 3 of the Agreement;

REFERRING, in particular, to Clauses 3, 5, 13, 15, 17 and 22 of the Agreement;

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

PART I

THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE-PRESIDENT

ARTICLE 1: GENERAL POWERS

The President of the Confederation shall be responsible for the Defence and Security of the Confederation.

On these matters, he shall determine, in agreement with the Vice-President, the policy of the Confederation.

The President of the Confederation shall command the Armed Forces and the Security Forces of the Confederation.

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ARTICLE 2: APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS AND PERSONNEL OF THE
CONFEDERATION

In agreement with the Vice-President, the President shall appoint the Ministers responsible for strictly confederal matters.

In agreement with the Vice-President, the President shall make appointments to confederal offices.

ARTICLE 3: NEGOTIATION OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

In agreement with the Vice-President, the President shall negotiate, on behalf of the Confederation, all international agreements.

Subject to the provisions of Article 16 of the Agreement, the President shall ratify all international agreements so negotiated.

ARTICLE 4: CO-ORDINATION OF POLICIES ON COMMON MATTERS

For the purpose of co-ordinating the policies of the Confederal States on matters referred to in Clause 2 of the Agreement, namely external relations, communications and such other areas as the two Confederal States may agree, the President and the Vice-President shall, from time to time, consult with each other and exchange information on such matters.

The President and the Vice-President shall, at all times, ensure that the policies of the Confederation are complementary to the policies of the Confederal States.

ARTICLE 5: DELEGATION OF POWERS

The President of the Confederation may
delegate any of the powers conferred on him by the Agreement to the Vice-President.

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ARTICLE 6: SPECIAL POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT

When the functioning of the Administration of the Confederation is disrupted, or the existence of the Confederation be threatened the President of the Confederation shall, in agreement with the Vice-President, take any such measures as are necessary to restore the normal functioning of the Administration of the Confederation and to ensure the safeguard of the Confederation.

ARTICLE 7: THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

There shall be a General Secretariat to the President of the Confederation.

The General Secretariat, which is under the authority of the President, shall be responsible for the implementation of all decisions taken by the President or the Vice-President.

It shall prepare the meetings of the Council of Ministers, participate in such meetings and shall act as the Secretariat of the Council.

It shall study matters relating to the functioning of the Confederation, as well as all matters submitted to it by the President or the Vice-President.

The President, in agreement with the Vice-President, shall by Act establish the organisation and prescribe rules for the functioning of the General Secretariat.

PART II
THE CONFEDERAL PARLIAMENT

ARTICLE 8: COMPOSITION

The Confederal Parliament shall consist of 60 members of whom one third shall be selected from amongst the members of the House of Representatives of the Republic of The Gambia and two thirds from amongst the members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Senegal.

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ARTICLE 9: TENURE OF OFFICE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CONFEDERAL PARLIAMENT

Subject to the provisions of this Article, a person selected by a Confederal State of the Confederal Parliament shall hold office until the legislature of the Confederal Parliament that selected him first meets after it is dissolved.

A member of the Confederal Parliament shall vacate his seat:

- (a) upon the delivery of his resignation in writing to the President of the Confederal Parliament;
- (b) upon ceasing to be a member of the legislature of the Confederal State that selected him;
- (c) upon his being withdrawn by the Confederal State Parliament that selected him in accordance with its constitution.

ARTICLE 10: VOTING AT THE CONFEDERAL PARLIAMENT

Three quarters of the members of the Confederal Parliament shall constitute a quorum.

Where there is no quorum at the beginning of a session, the sitting shall be adjourned until the following third day.

The Confederal Parliament shall decide any matter of common interest submitted to it by a majority of three quarters of its members. The Confederal Parliament may, by the same majority, decide any matter relating to social, economic or financial importance, submitted to it by the President or the Vice-President.

ARTICLE 11: POWERS OF THE CONFEDERAL PARLIAMENT

The Confederal Parliament shall have the following powers:

- (a) to initiate proposals;
- (b) to advise on the Confederal Budget;
- (c) to advise on proposed amendments to the Agreement.

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The Confederal Parliament shall submit to the President, every two years, a report on the activities of the Confederation.

The Confederal Parliament shall determine its own Standing Orders.

It shall also elect its Speaker and other persons to hold office in the Confederal Parliament.

The Confederal Parliament shall draw up its budget in conformity with the regulations laid down in the Protocol on the Financial Regulations of the Confederation.

In accordance with Article 16, Clause 2 of the Agreement, the Confederal Parliament shall authorise the ratification of international confederal agreements.

ARTICLE 12: SESSIONS OF THE CONFEDERAL PARLIAMENT

The Confederal Parliament shall hold two ordinary sessions a year.

Rules governing the opening, duration and the adjournment of such session shall be determined by its Standing Orders.

The duration of each session shall not exceed one month.

The Confederal Parliament shall hold extraordinary sessions at the request of the President, the Vice-President or one third of its members.

An Act of the President of the Confederation shall fix the dates and determine the agenda of any extraordinary session. The session shall be closed upon completion of the agenda and shall not exceed 15 days.

Sessions of the Confederal Parliament shall be held either in Banjul or in Dakar.

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ARTICLE 13: SITTINGS OF THE CONFEDERAL PARLIAMENT

Sittings of the Confederal Parliament shall be public, unless otherwise decided by the Parliament.

The full record of the proceedings shall be published in the official gazette of the Confederation.

Voting by the members of the Confederal Parliament shall be personal.

Except as otherwise provided by the Standing Orders, there shall be no voting by proxy.

Where voting by proxy is permitted under Standing Orders, no member may receive more than one mandate.

Imperative Mandates shall be null.

PART III
THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

ARTICLE 14: COMPOSITION

The Council of Ministers, as provided for in Article 10 of the Agreement, shall be composed of:

- the President and the Vice-President of the Confederation;
- Ministers appointed under Article 2 of this Protocol.

In agreement with the Vice-President, the President may invite any Minister of a Confederal State responsible for matters referred to in Article 2 of the Agreement, to participate in the meeting of the Council of Ministers.

ARTICLE 15: POWERS

The Council of Ministers shall deal with matters submitted to it by the President of the Confederation. .../...

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ARTICLE 16: MEETINGS

The President shall, after consultation with the Vice-President, convene meetings of the Council of Ministers.

The agenda of the meetings of the Council of Ministers shall be determined by the President, in agreement with the Vice-President.

The Council of Ministers shall meet either in Banjul or in Dakar.

PART IV

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE CONFEDERATION

ARTICLE 17: SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS TO THE CONFEDERAL PARLIAMENT

Proposals shall be submitted to the Confederal Parliament by the President, the Vice-President or Members of the Confederal Parliament.

ARTICLE 18: AGENDA OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CONFEDERAL PARLIAMENT

Any proposal submitted to the Confederal Parliament by the President shall have priority over all other proposals on the agenda of the Confederal Parliament, if so requested by the President of the Confederation.

ARTICLE 19: SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONFEDERAL PARLIAMENT TO THE PRESIDENT

Once adopted by the Confederal Parliament, a resolution or a proposal shall be transmitted forthwith to the President of the Confederation.

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Amendments proposed by the President of the Confederation or by the Vice-President shall be introduced by a member of the Council of Ministers.

PART V
GENERAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 24: COMMON MATTERS

In this Protocol, the term "Common Matters" shall include matters referred to in Clause 2 of the Agreement in which the Confederation and the Confederated States exercise their rights concurrently.

The Confederal States and the Confederation may conclude agreements for the harmonization and co-ordination of their policies on common matters.

Common matters may become matters falling under the exclusive competence of the Confederation and may not revert to the field of competence specific to the Confederated States.

ARTICLE 25: DESIGNATION OF THE ACTS OF THE CONFEDERAL INSTITUTIONS

Acts by the President of the Confederation shall be referred to as "Acts by the President of the Confederation".

Acts by the Confederal Parliament shall be referred to as "Resolutions when referring to:

- authorisation to ratify or approve,
- bi-annual report,
- the election of its President and of the Members of its office,
- the adoption of its budget,
- the adoption of its Standing Orders.

In all other cases, the Acts of the Confederal Parliament shall be referred to as "Recommendations".

✓ Acts by Ministers, on behalf of the Confederation, shall be referred to as "Decisions".

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ARTICLE 26: SETTLEMENT OF DIFFERENCES ARISING FROM THE INTERPRETATION
OR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROTOCOL

Differences arising from the interpretation or the implementation of this Protocol shall be settled in accordance with Clause 15 of the Agreement and as provided for in Clause 22 of the Agreement.

PART VI
FINAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 27: RATIFICATION

This Protocol shall be ratified by the parties, in accordance with their constitutional requirements.

ARTICLE 28: ENTRY INTO FORCE

This Protocol shall come into force as soon as the instruments of ratification are exchanged.

ARTICLE 29: AMENDMENTS

Each State may submit amendments to the depositories of the Protocol.

Any amendment shall come into force upon agreement between the two Confederate States.

ARTICLE 30: ORIGINALS AND REGISTRATION

The original of the Protocol, done in the English and French languages, both texts being equally authentic, shall be communicated to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for registration.

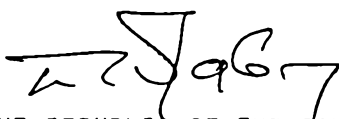
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ARTICLE 31: DEPOSITORIES

The President and the Vice-President of the Confederation shall be the depositories of this Protocol and any amendments made hereto.

DONE AT BANJUL ON 2ND JULY 19 82.



FOR THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA
ALHAJI LAMIN KITI JABANG
MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA



FOR THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL
MUSTAPHA NIASSE
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL.

Appendix 13. Agreement on the Dissolution of the Confederation, the
Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Senegal



AGREEMENT ON THE DISSOLUTION OF THE
SENEGAMBIA CONFEDERATION

THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

AND

THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL

- Considering the differences in the perception of the objectives of the Confederation;
- Taking into account the common decision of the two States to dissolve the Confederation
- Aware of the need to develop and to reinforce other forms of privileged co-operation;

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS

ARTICLE 1:

The Agreement between the Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Senegal establishing the Senegambia Confederation and its related Protocols are hereby terminated.

Consequently the Confederation of the Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Senegal constituted in the name of the Senegambia Confederation is hereby dissolved.

ARTICLE 2:

All Acts, Resolutions, Recommendations and Decisions made in the implementation of the Agreement and the

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said Protocols are hereby revoked.

ARTICLE 3:

All measures necessary for winding up the institutions of the Confederation shall be stipulated in a Protocol of Implementation which shall be signed together with this Agreement.

ARTICLE 4:

Any dispute arising from the interpretation or implementation of the present Agreement and its Protocol shall be submitted to the President of the Republic of The Gambia and the President of the Republic of Senegal.

ARTICLE 5:

This Agreement shall come into force upon signature.

ARTICLE 6:

The President of the Republic of The Gambia and the President of the Republic of Senegal shall be the depositories of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 7:

This Agreement done in the English and French languages, both texts being equally authentic, shall be communicated to the Secretary General of the United Nations for the purpose of registration.

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12/9

DONE in Banjul this 21st day of September, 1989.

D. Jawara

.....
DAWDA KAIRABA JAWARA
President of the Republic of
The Gambia

ABDIOU

.....
ABDOU DIOUF
President of the Republic of
Senegal

MEMORANDUM

From: The Special Adviser
To: His Excellency The President.
Ref: EP/C/4/(8) Date: 14th December, 1981.

RELATIONS WITH SENEGAL

I refer to the information you gave to me last Saturday with regard to the Draft Treaty which myself and my staff prepared in accordance with your instructions.

2. On reflection over the week-end, I thought I should advise you against the marrying of the Draft Senegalese Treaty with The Gambian Draft Treaty which was drafted in order to reflect the executive policy of Your Excellency's Government. I do so for the following reasons:-

- (1) The Senegalese Government had expected that you will sign their Treaty. Your Excellency gave the Treaty to me to study because Your Excellency was not satisfied over certain matters in that Treaty.
- (2) Your Excellency reviewed the Draft Treaty which I and my personal staff produced and gave me further instructions as to matters which could be deleted from the draft.
- (3) Our Draft Treaty took into account some parts of the Senegalese Draft Treaty. We did so because we thought that it might narrow the area of negotiation when the final treaty is prepared.
- (4) This brings me to the advice I wish to give. A marrying of the two Treaties in these circumstances subsumes two things:-
 - (a) that the executive policy decisions taken by Your Excellency will have to be modified, and therefore
 - (b) that the policy taken by Your Excellency has been revoked.
- (5) To enter into negotiations in that state of affairs will give the Senegalese Government an advantage.

3. The normal procedure in these matters of entering into treaties is to exchange each other's proposals and then either at the technical or ministerial level, these proposals are discussed and recommendations are made to the Heads of State. After that, the final policy details will be dealt with by the Heads of State. On this occasion, the Senegalese Government has chosen to present Your Excellency with a treaty instead of stating their proposals. Therefore, if their treaty is treated as a proposal, our treaty also should be treated as a proposal and then these could be negotiated but not married. Any marrying should take place at the conference table

Berthan Macaulay, Q.C.
SPECIAL ADVISER.

Since dictating this memorandum to you, we have had a discussion on this matter and I confirm and further advise the following:-

4. I and my personal assistants have examined, studied and analysed the supposed marrying of the Treaty drafted on your instructions in accordance with the policy decisions you conveyed to me. We have come to the conclusion that it is not in the best interests of The Gambia to have discussions on the basis of the new draft treaty. We have tried without success, to see what can be done about this unhappy marriage and we have come to the conclusion that the marriage cannot be saved.

5. However, as counsellors to the Government, we wish to indicate certain matters in marriage agreement which may assist Your Excellency and his ministerial colleagues in an attempt to redraft the position which had already been decided in accordance with your directions to us. (Permit me to say on behalf of myself and my personal assistants, who are specialists in international law, that we regard the Marriage Treaty as an inept inefficient demonstration of draftmanship).

/the

6. As a demonstration of our opinion on the quality of the new draft, we will refer briefly to the Notes in relation to the Draft Marriage Treaty. Clause 1 of the notes is directly inconsistent with the instructions which you gave to me and equally inconsistent with the decision which you sought to maintain, that is to say, that the Senegambian Confederation does not have an international status in the international community. (Please refer to the Notes on the Agreement page 4, Clause 16, second paragraph and second sentence). It was not my understanding that Senegambia should be a state in the minds of the international community, but in the new Draft Marriage Treaty, it is such that if one wants to interpret Clause 1 having regard to the word "constituted", such an impression will be created. It is true that the word "constituted" was used in the Joint Communiqué. However,

I feel that in that context, it was used merely as a political statement. The word "constitute" in both international and constitutional law has a different and more organic meaning.

7. Article 4 of the Draft Treaty in accordance with your instructions has been reproduced in Clause 22 of the Draft Marriage Treaty, but Article 5 of the draft treaty in accordance with your instructions has been taken out completely. The importance of this is that the rules for the exercise and operation of the confederal jurisdiction conferred in the protocols will have to be subject to a further negotiation and will not form part of the treaty itself.

8. I now come to the more fundamental matters on which I should advise, that is to say, the powers of the President in relation to the Armed Forces of The Gambia and in the negotiation of treaties. In accordance with your instructions, we drafted Article 15 which gave President of the Confederation the power only to negotiate international obligations and limited it to obligations subsequent to the signing of the treaty. In the Draft Marriage Treaty the President of the Confederation is given power to ratify all agreements. Such a power may create constitutional problems in The Gambia since it only the President who has power to conclude international agreements affecting The Gambia.

9. I discussed with you today, the implications of the new draft dealing with the Armed Forces. I pointed out to you that Clause 2 and Clause 8 of the Marriage Draft Treaty confers the power on the President of Senegal to control the Armed Forces in The Gambia. I informed you of the Aburi Agreement and told you that perhaps this matter should be dealt with along the lines of that Agreement. I enclose a copy of the final Communique of the Aburi Agreement and I advise that negotiations on the question of integration of the Armed Forces should take place on that basis. In this respect, I enclose for your information the proposals of the Ministry of the Interior conveyed to me in a letter dated 9th December, 1981 with special reference to paragraph 1 of page 1.

10. In view of the advice I have given in the two preceding paragraphs, it would be evident that if the marriage treaty is signed, the Senegalese will have effectively, either now or in the near future, absorbed The Gambia, and it would be too late to secede especially because of the commanding power granted to the President of Senegal. When Singapore joined the Malaysian Federation, the powers of withdrawal were specifically spelt out by Lee Kuan Yew who, incidentally was then and still is a brilliant Queen's Counsel and the Leader of Singapore.

..../L

11. One other matter on which I advised you today: the political decision taken is that there should be an Economic Monetary Union. An Economic and Monetary Union does not include a Customs Union. If it is argued that it does, it should be resisted because if there were to be a common customs tariff system, The Gambia will have to suffer and the cost of living in this country would go up. As you pointed out to me, Your Excellency, if there is going to be a Customs Union, the tariff should come down to the Gambian level, but the Gambian level should not go up.

Berthan Macaulay, Q.C.
SPECIAL ADVISER

NOTES ON SPECIFIC PROBLEMS
RAISED BY THE PROPOSAL TO CREATE
A CONFEDERATION OF SENEGAMBIA

1. Confederacy - Statehood or Association

(i) The political and juridical incidents of confederation are not fixed, in that the very purpose of such an arrangement is to allow the greatest degree of flexibility and independence to constituent states whilst at the same time permitting them to undertake only such specific commitments as will, in the opinion of the said states, enure to their benefit.

(ii) However, it is clear that confederal states are a number of otherwise fully sovereign states which are linked together for the maintenance of their external and internal independence by a recognised international treaty into a union with organs of its own which are vested with certain powers over the member states but not directly over the citizens of those states.

Such a union of confederated states is itself not a state and is merely an international confederation of states composed of fully sovereign states where each retain its separate international personality.

2. Sovereignty of The States of The Confederation

(i) It follows therefore that Gambia will continue to exist as such and will be able to retain its separate membership of the various international institutions of which it is a member.

(ii) The Articles of Confederation may be signed and ratified by the constitutional processes of both The Gambia and Senegal

3. Citizenship And Movement of Persons

(i) It is not possible to have as between a person and a confederation a direct relationship of citizenship in its full sense for the simple reason that the powers directly bestowed on a confederation are themselves limited.

However, it is possible for the member states of the Confederation to agree to their citizens being considered as citizens of the Confederation.

Such citizenship is purely secondary in nature being dependent upon the prior acquisition of citizenship from a constituent member of the confederation.

Such an arrangement may and does even exist amongst associations of states of a much more amorphous kind which do not purport to be confederations - e.g. Commonwealth Citizenship and ECOWAS (ref. Article 27 of the ECOWAS Treaty "citizens of member States shall be regarded as Community Citizens.."). Any such citizenship particulars may be endorsed on the national passport issued by the member states.

4. Confederal Institution

Legislative Authority And Competence

(a) It is submitted that The Gambia should be very wary of giving any undertaking which could lead to it being perpetually subject to legislative and military domination of Senegal. It should therefore insist upon a blocking mechanism in the Confederal Parliament if there is no equality in numbers of members of the Confederal Parliament.

Executive Authority

(a) In paragraph 4 of the Joint Communique issued by The Gambian and Senegalese authorities on the 14th November 1981, it is stated that the President of Senegal shall be the President of the Confederation and that the Vice President of the Confederation shall be the President of The Gambia. It is also provided that there shall be a Council of Ministers of the Confederation.

(b) In the Legislative and Executive confederal institutions it is submitted that veto power should be given to the member states so that no action, especially of an executive kind, is taken without the compliance of all members. It should not be made to appear that by the fact that the President of Senegal is the President of the Confederation the interests of The Gambia have been superseded.

(c) There is also the need to clarify the issue as to whether the distribution of Officers will be maintained at all times or are personal to the present occupants. In order that the confederation shall not be seen to be a domination of The Gambia by Senegal it should be made clear that the present arrangements do not preclude a President of The Gambia from being the President of the Confederation in the absence, illness or other incapacity of the President. (Articles 31 - 33 of the Senegalese Constitution makes it clear that the President must be a substantive President).

(d) It is submitted that in order that there should be some continuity in the organisation of the confederation, there must be a Confederal Secretariat to service the Council of Ministers and the President and Vice President.

Judicial Authority

It is noticed that no provision has been made for any judicial organs as a part of the confederal institution. A protocol should be entered into incorporating the Judicial Convention between the States dated 28th April 1973. Such an organisation is especially relevant, since it may provide a means for the peaceful settlement of disputes which would otherwise lead to the dissolution of the confederation. It is also important because it has been submitted in 4(1)(a)(1) that the historical power given to confederal states to forcibly intervene in another member state to ensure compliance with confederal decisions and agreements is not a power to which The Gambia should agree. A judicial organ will enable any such dispute to be settled without recourse to violence.

5. Defence And Security Arrangements

(i) As has been stated above, care should be taken not to give the confederal institutions or Senegal the unilateral right of intervention in The Gambia. Article 1 of the Security and Defence Agreement of 18th February 1965 has been amended and this is reflected in Article VIII of the proposed Articles of Confederation.

(ii) It may be recalled that in the Nigerian-Biafran crisis it was the insistence of the secessionists in maintaining their own separate armed and security forces which finally led to the civil war. It is therefore important for the control of armed forces to be very clearly understood and the rights of the constituent states in relationship to the use of such force specifically itemised. Of course, it may be that in actual fact and taking the present situations into account The Gambia has very little to contribute to any joint defence arrangement and will have to rely on the Senegalese. It should be made clear that the military forces of The Gambia though harmonized with Senegalese forces would continue to be under the control of the President of The Gambia (see Section 31 of the Constitution of The Gambia) which provides that the President shall be the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of The Gambia.

(iii) It should also be made clear that since the confederation as such does not have any sovereignty or territory paragraph 2(1) of the Communiqué by The Gambia and Senegal must be read as referring to the sovereignty, integrity and independence of the member states and that where necessary the joint forces will be used to protect these.

Both Presidents should be able, however, at the request of either party to aid the Civil Power of the other as provided in Article 1 of the proposed Articles of Confederation.

6. Monetary And Economic Union

(i) The proposal for economic union can take the form of the European Economic Community (Treaty of Rome) which has provided a machinery for the integration of many aspects of the European Economies. It is pertinent to state at this juncture that there are already agreements on many economic matters between The Gambia and Senegal on e.g. maritime fishing, and a Trade agreement dated of 26th June 1970. It is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of these agreements. However, an economic and monetary union with specific time limits for the completion of the various stages of integration will tend to be more dynamic.

(ii) It may be that The Gambia Government has entered into certain agreements on the "most favoured nations" clause. This may create some difficulty where any concessions or benefits granted to Senegal and the Senegalese on a result of the close association may lead to a demand by third states for similar treatment. However such problems have to be dealt with diplomatically and essentially beyond the province of the lawyer.

7. Safeguards

What may be relevant is that, care should be taken to draft provisions which allow the proper distribution of Confederal assets and liabilities in the event of the breakdown of the East African Community was further complicated by the dispute as to the distribution of assets and liabilities. e.g. East African Airways Aircraft and Railway Locomotives and Wagons.

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The text of the final communique issued at the end of the meeting on January 5th stated that the Council had reached agreement on all items.

"On the powers and functions of the Federal Military Government, the Council reaffirmed its belief in the workability of the existing institutions, subject to necessary safeguards. Other matters on which agreement was reached included the following:

- (i) Reorganisation, administration and control of the Army: and
- (ii) appointments and promotions to the senior ranks in the armed forces, the police, diplomatic and consular services, as well as appointments to super-scale posts in the federal civil service, and the equivalent posts in the federal statutory corporations."

On the question of displaced persons, the Supreme Military Council agreed to establish a committee to look into the problems of rehabilitation and recovery of property. In this connection, the Military Governor of the East assured the Council that the order that non-Easterners should leave the Eastern Region would be reviewed with a view to its being lifted as soon as practicable.

"Agreement was also reached that the staff and employees of government and statutory corporations who have had to leave their posts as a result of recent disturbances in the country should continue to be paid their full salaries up to the end of March 31st, 1967, provided they have not found alternative employment.

"The Council agreed that the ad hoc committee on the constitutional future of the country should be resumed as soon as practicable, and that the unanimous recommendation of the committee in September 1966 will be considered by the Supreme Military Council at a later meeting. The Council unanimously agreed that future meetings of the Council should be held in Nigeria at a venue to be announced later.

"The entire members of the Supreme Military Council expressed

profound regret for the bloodshed which had engulfed the country in the past year, and vowed to do all in their power to ensure that there is no recurrence of the unhappy situation.

"The members of the Supreme Military Council placed on record their appreciation and gratitude for the constructive initiative and assistance rendered by the chairman of the National Liberation Council, the Government, and people of Ghana".

(R. Nigeria 5/1)

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