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CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND THE
ORGANIZATION OF SECURITY
IN AFRICA

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To Heavy, Yiaya, Boys, Mama
and Mummy's Baby

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Max Weber rightly pointed out that "the choice of the object of investigation and the extent or depth to which the investigation attempts to penetrate into the infinite causal web, are determined by the evaluative ideas which dominate the investigator and his age."^{*}

The study is addressed to one of the most urgent and pressing problems we have in Africa today - the resolution of conflict and organisation of security. One of the prime needs of scholarly work should be to analyze and seek solutions to these problems.

While technological achievements and aspirations have attained 'space' dimensions in some parts of the world, Africa is still besieged by economic backwardness and appalling problems. Conflict is one of the several factors that hinder any meaningful efforts towards development.

This research is not just concerned with the military aspects of security in Africa, but with the social and economic sources and political and moral implications of the use and existence of armed force on the continent; in other words with the basic problems of peace in Africa. The study is concerned with keeping African states at peace among themselves and with avoiding the grosser kinds of strife within states.

^{*} On the Methodology of the Social Sciences,
edited and translated by Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch,
New York, The Free Press, 1948, p.84.

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VII .

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In an age of intersecting revolutions - military, political, economic, social - as we have in Africa today, the problems of maintaining peace and international order, inevitably become more complex. Yearly, events in Africa stress the urgent need for African states to intervene in African affairs.

The acquisition of sophisticated and unlimited force by African nations is certainly as terrifying as it is new. But it must be borne in mind that this transforms conflicts rather than the source. The existence of force is not by itself a threat to peace, as such. Indeed, the use of force is the normal way to keep the peace.

Peace, in the sense of a utopian absence of war in Africa, may not be a reasonable expectation. A different ideal may be attainable - peace in the sense of a generally accepted continental order which includes an effective machinery for settling disputes by persuasion and arresting violence by counter-force. Some aspects of this machinery could help to eliminate some of the causes of strife.

The ~~over~~all aim is to strengthen peace in Africa, and equip Africa with a structure which can help the cause of peace on the continent. This will free African states from cumbersome conflicts and enable them to pursue the tasks of development and economic upliftment fully. And, in the process, the cause of African unity will be enhanced.

Review of some extant studies on Conflict
and Conflict Theories

A vast and impressive literature on conflict has accumulated over the years. Even allowing for a high degree of selectivity, the list of relevant writings is impressive.

Conflict is a term of broad connotations with applications in the social, biological, philosophical and physical worlds. Conflict between social groups is the central interest in the study of 'Conflict Resolution.' Of such conflicts, international conflict often resulting in war, is (1) the most dangerous; (2) the most typical of social conflicts; (3) the most comprehensive of all other forms of conflict.

There is a tendency for international conflicts to generate war and as Quincy Wright has rightly observed for wars to spread and become absolute or total.¹

Wright thinks that the peaceful coexistence of inconsistent economic, political, social and ideological systems becomes increasingly difficult to maintain as the world shrinks. As the rate of shrinkage accelerates, such inconsistencies demand resolution, and efforts at resolution breed conflicts, which in turn increase tension and the probability of war, especially if efforts are made to effect such resolution as rapidly as the accelerating rate of historic change seems to make necessary.

¹ Quincy Wright. A study of War, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942, pp. 292, 297, 300 ff., 300.

Wright recommends that the resolution of international conflicts proceed through the continuous regulation of international relations by national governments, so as to prevent tensions from arising and aggravating disputes and situations among nations. Such resolutions can also proceed through the application of appropriate methods of enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, utilization of regional agencies or resort to the United Nations (UN) for recommendation and the co-ordination of measures to prevent aggression.²

Among specifically sociological contributions to the theory of social conflict, the work of the German sociologist, Ralf Dahrendorf seems the most fertile and important.

To Dahrendorf,³ the problem of conflict is no less complex than that of integration of societies. The attempt to reduce all actually occurring conflicts among social groups to a common principle, say that of classes is sterile. It leads either to empty generalizations or to unjustifiable oversimplifications. His first step is to classify 'social conflicts' into two: (1) exogenous conflicts (externally generated; (2) endogenous conflicts (generated within).

² Quincy Wright. Problems of Stability and Progress in International Relations, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954, pp. 150 ff.

³ Ralf Dahrendorf. Structure of Social Action, New York, Glencoe, 1949.
Cf. Ralf Dahrendorf, "Toward a theory of social conflict, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol.2 (1958) pp. 170-183.

He seeks to derive conflicts from specific structures and not to relegate conflicts to psychological variables ("aggressiveness") or to descriptive - historical ones (the influx of Negroes into the United States of America) or to chance. Conflicts can be considered explained if they can be shown to arise from the structure of social positions independently of the orientation of populations and of history.

Dahrendorf confines the sociological theory of conflict to an explanation of the frictions between the rulers and the ruled in given social structural organizations.

The dichotomy of social roles within imperatively co-ordinated groups, the division into positive and negative dominance roles, is a fact of social structure. He considers social conflicts structurally explained if and so far they can be referred to this factual situation. The model of analysis which is developed against a background of such dichotomy involves the following:-

1. In every imperatively co-ordinated group, the carriers of positive and negative dominance roles determine two quasi-groups with opposite latent interests. The opposition of interests means the expectation that an interest in the preservation of the status quo is associated with positive dominance roles and an interest in the change of status quo associated with the negative dominance roles.

2. The bearers of positive and negative dominance roles, the members of the opposing quasi-groups organize themselves into groups with manifest interests, unless certain empirically variable conditions intervene.
3. Interest groups which originate in this manner are in constant conflict concerned with the preservation or change in the status quo.
4. The conflict among interest groups in the sense of this model leads to changes in the structure of the social relations in question through changes in the dominance relations.

Worthy of mention also is Dahrendorf's important distinction between two dimensions of social conflict, intensity and violence. "Intensity refers to the energy expenditure and degree of involvement of conflicting parties... By contrast..., the violence of conflict relates to its manifestations than to its causes; it is a matter of weapons that are chosen...."⁴

The two he stresses, may vary independently and are therefore distinct in any conflict situation.

Lewis Coser⁵ posits that all social systems do not contain the same degree of conflict and strain. He says the sources and incidence of conflicting behaviour vary according to the type of structure,

⁴ See Ralf Dahrendorf. Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1959, pp. 211-212.

⁵ Lewis A. Coser. Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict, New York, The Free Press, 1954.

the patterns of social mobility, of ascribing and achieving status and of allocating scarce power and wealth, as well as to the degree to which a specific form of distribution of power, resources and status is accepted by the component actors within the different subsystems. Within any social structure, when there exists an excess of claimants over opportunities for adequate reward, there arises strain and conflict.

It must be pointed out however, that there is never complete concordance between what individuals and groups within a system consider their just due and the system of allocation. Normally, conflict ensues in the effort of various frustrated groups and individuals to increase their share of gratification. Their demands will encounter the resistance of those who previously had established a 'vested interest'⁶ in a given form of distribution of scarce resources. The latter will consider an attack against their position as an attack upon the social order.⁷

Coser sees internal violence within a social system as a response to the failure of established authority to accommodate demands of new groups for a hearing.

All political structures tend to provide channels for the expression of claims and grievances of the underlying population. Having been designed to register power balances of the past, these communication

⁶ See "Vested Interests," Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, XV, p. 240.

⁷ Also see Veblen Thorstein, The Theory of the Leisure Class, New York, The Modern Library, pp. 201 - 3.

channels tend to be insufficient when it comes to accommodating claims of new groupings not previously considered as political actors worthy of being heard and their contributions counted. In this kind of situation, the actual or threatened use of violence must be seen not only as a signalling device by which the new groups indicate their dissatisfactions and grievances to those in power, but also as an indicator to the seriousness of their commitment, of their will and their ability to have their voices heard and counted.

Coser differentiates between realistic and non realistic conflicts. Conflicts that stem from frustration of specific demands and from estimates of gains of the participants, and which are directed at the presumed frustrating object, he calls realistic conflicts, in so far as they are means toward a specific end. On the other hand, non realistic conflicts are not occasioned by the rival ends of the antagonists, but by the need for tension release of at least one of them. This kind of conflict stems from frustrations caused by agents, other than those against whom the conflict is waged.

Like Dahrendorf, he also touches on the intensity of conflict. When a system proves incapable of flexibility in dealing with aggrieved groups, conflicts tend to "assume peculiar intensity due to the total involvement of the personality and the accumulation of suppressed hostilities."⁸ The more intense a conflict, the higher the chances of admixtures of non-realistic elements into what may, originally, have been quite realistic contentions.

⁸ Lewis Coser. The Functions of Social Conflict. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956, p. 134.

Coser makes a very important contribution in the field of militant struggle. His contention is that it would be a major analytical error to argue that groups threatening violence or actually engaged in violence can be disregarded, because they are typically small in numbers. We must attend to articulate minorities at least as much as to habitually inert and mute majorities, if we are concerned with historical change. Given the psychic costs that are always involved in the uses of violence, Coser argues that only relatively small numbers of men will at any given time be ready to engage in a politics of violence. For these few, the psychic rewards of violence outweigh the cost. But the very fact that they are able to break with the habitual pattern of the political game, gives them a specific weight that is out of proportion to their sheer numbers.

According to Coser, relatively small groups given to a politics of violence differ from larger groupings by requiring full commitment of their numbers. The sect-type of group committed to a politics of struggle demands the wholesale commitment of the members' personality in the service of the cause. Hence numerically small groups of this militant type, by being able to mobilize the energies of their members to the fullest, can exert influence quite disproportionate to their numerical insignificance. These considerations, he says, help explain the crucial importance of militant struggle groups.

He is also of the opinion that it is not right to view moderate and militant wings of political movements separately since a very subtle dialectical interplay is likely to be operative between them.

The reformist or conciliatory wing, in bargaining with the authorities might argue that more radical and militant elements will take over where it fails. It might also claim that if its demands are not met, it might no longer be able to control its members.

Conflicts in Africa

Conflicts in Africa can be generally traced to one or a combination of the following sources:⁹

- (1) border disputes
- (2) secession
- (3) decolonization
- (4) internal revolt or attempts at social reform
- (5) group animosities

Across a broad spectrum of conflicts in Africa, four case-studies have been chosen and in such a way that each embodies particular or combinations of the varieties.

The factors enumerated above are going to be discussed in greater detail.

1. Border disputes¹⁰

Territory has a psychological importance for nations that

is quite out of proportion to its intrinsic value, strategic or economic.

⁹ See Adda Bozeman, Conflict in Africa: Concepts and Realities, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1976.

¹⁰ Ravi L. Kapil, "On the Conflict Potential Inherited Boundaries in Africa," "World Politics," XVII, No.14, (July 1966) pp. 656-73
 Cf. Saudia Touval, "Africa's Frontiers: Reactions to a Colonial Legacy," International Affairs, XLII, No.4, October, 1966, pp.641-54 and S. Touval, "The Organization of African Unity and African Borders," International Organization, XXI, (1967), pp. 102-127.

For a detailed analysis of the OAU's mediation efforts in African border conflicts see B. Andemicael, Peaceful Settlement Among African States. Roles of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, (UNITAIR) PX Nr. 5, New York, 1972.

Sentiments of national honour and pride are aroused by threats to territory more rapidly and intensely perhaps than over ~~and intensely~~ ~~any other type of issue~~. Long-standing resentment and long-cherished desires to recover territory may be harboured, whether the territory in question represents an economic asset or an economic burden and whether it is inhabited by ethnically-related peoples or not. Territorial disputes have been waged not so much to change the map as to define it. Conquest of new lands, and the advancement of national power or glory that results from it, are less often the aim than the defence of territory often held on both sides to be justly theirs.

In Africa, territorial and purely irredentist problems have arisen in the wake of retreating colonial powers. Even if these colonial powers had ruled territories delimited by nature, race or tongue, the dislocations of independence could hardly have failed to strain the map.

By 1963, it was clear that irredentist claims were one of the source of threats to the peace. The majority view on this issue was voiced at Addis Ababa in 1963 by the late Modibo Keita of Mali: "African unity demands of each one of us complete respect for the legacy that we have received from the colonial system, that is to say maintenance of the respective frontiers of our respective States."¹¹

¹¹ Quoted in S. Touval, "The Organization of African Unity and African Borders," International Organization XXI (1967) pp. 102-127.

However, the OAU did not immediately accept the territorial status quo as one of the binding principles of African Unity. In 1963 the issue was considered too sensitive to merit specific mention in the Charter. Member-states, instead, bound themselves to respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity and made provision for the establishment of a separate Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration to handle inter-State disputes.¹²

After fighting had broken out first between Morocco and Algeria in October 1963 and then, early in 1964, between Somalia and her two neighbours, Kenya and Ethiopia, the necessity for a binding commitment became apparent.

The OAU Assembly adopted a General Resolution on Border Disputes, following these disputes, neither of which was resolved by armed conflict. The independent African States pledged themselves by an overwhelming majority "to respect the borders existing on the achievement of national independence."¹³

¹² The Protocol establishing The Commission was signed at Cairo on July 21, 1964. For text see: 1. Brownlie (ed.) Basic Documents on African Affairs, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971, pp. 2-9.

¹³ This resolution resulted from a Tanzanian initiative. For the text see Catherine Hoskyns, Case Studies in African Diplomacy: Two - The Ethiopian-Somali-Kenya Dispute 1960-67, Dar es Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 68.

2. Secession

Secession, like the issue of boundary revision of which it is an extension, is a potential threat to most African States whatever their political or ideological complexion. The existence of minority groups whose loyalties to the central government are suspect and which, under the right circumstances, can be attracted by foreign patronage, helps to create a political culture in which political warfare is endemic.

Many African states are plagued today either by secessionist, separatist movements, or by revisionist expansionist designs. Yet the very factors that make for this instability also explain why African states are determined to prevent fragmentation by holding fast to the territorial contours bequeathed them by their former colonial rulers. Underlying this strength of African commitment to the status quo, is the fear that by conceding the demands of any group for self-determination, they would encourage similar claims by disgruntled minorities elsewhere.

The fear itself reflects the fact that it is internal rather than external conflicts which pose the greatest threat not only to the States concerned but to African stability generally. It was the acceptance that without a normative framework for inter-African diplomacy, the existence of these "hidden" constituencies would constitute a perpetual threat to African governments that led first to the framing of the Charter on the basis of State

sovereignty and subsequently to the Declaration on the Problem of Subversion,¹⁴

3. Decolonization

Decolonization has become one of the volatile issues in African politics, particularly with the advent of liberation movements.

Colonial powers have been pitted against their colonial peoples in the struggle for independence. The decades of the 60's and 70's introduced a new dimension to conflicts emanating from this source. International institutions and bodies began to give recognition and aid to liberation movements.

These conflicts have shown Africa and the OAU at their best. There have been concerted efforts and aggressive drives to sell the African stand to other actors on the international system. Even the U.N. has come to accept the liberation movements as the representatives of the peoples they represent.

The struggle against the colonial power, as experience has shown, is only one aspect of the struggle. Internal rivalry within the different movements or factions constitute almost as serious a threat. Trying to patch the schisms between factions has been Herculean. Each group has sought to wreak havoc where the reins of power are not bequeathed to it.¹⁵

¹⁴ For text, see Brownlie, op. cit., pp. 18 - 25

¹⁵ As a case in point, for Jonas Savimbi's continuing dalliance with South Africa and covetousness for Angola, see "Angola: Savimbi's Odd Alliance, Newsweek, October 26, 1981, pp. 20.

4. Internal revolt or attempts at social reform

African regimes are becoming increasingly corrupt and decadent, the leadership retrograde and incompetent, and government arbitrary and unpredictable. This is a continent of abject poverty, but paradoxically, the obsession of the ruling groups is with luxuries. Each clique comes to power mouthing the rhetoric of change only to tackle the critical poverty and dependence of their nations with recklessness and frivolity.

In Africa, politics is not about issues and policies but about politicking. Politicians compete with one another for power but do not use power to confront the myriads of problems that their nations have.

Modern African political history is a chaotic account of coups and counter-coups. And the men in uniform have not done any better. The military formations have little information and no discipline and tend to adopt a bookish attitude towards national issues. They lack the earnestness and decisiveness of purpose that Africa needs in its leadership. Besides, the army reflects local rivalries and so accentuate inherent instabilities.¹⁶

¹⁶ For varying shades of opinion regarding the role of the military in African politics see among others Claude E. Welch, Jr., ed., Soldier and State in Africa, Evanston, Ill., 1970.

Normal J. Miners, The Nigerian Army, 1956-1966, New York, 1971.

Ruth First, The Barrel of a Gun, London, Penguin, 1972.

Ronald Mathews, African Powderkeg: Revolt and Dissent in Six Emergent Nations, London, 1966.

See also Adewale Ademoyega, Why We Struck: The Story of the First Nigerian Coup, Evans Brothers Limited, 1981.

Ruth First has rightly pointed out that: "Africa is far from change... because she has produced few leaderships, these independent years, that want it."¹⁷

Thus, the aim of each ruling group is to perpetuate itself in office, reaping as much spoils as possible. Any attempt at change or social reform is considered 'treason' and is met with fierce and ruthless opposition from the status quo.

To this end African leaders tend to internationalize internal wranglings. Those seeking to introduce changes are branded 'communists' or 'imperialist agents.' In crisis situations like these they call for aid from foreign powers and reactionary African states.¹⁸

5. Group animosities

In creating nation-states on the African continent, the colonial powers did not take ethnic, religious and other related factors into consideration. Hence diverse peoples were lumped together to suit their economic interests and administrative convenience. As a result African nation-states are conglomerates of multiple, often hostile, tribal communities.

¹⁷ Ruth First, op. cit, p.13.

¹⁸ In August, 1981, the incumbent President of the Gambia used Senegalese troops to crush a military coup that had overthrown him. Egypt and Sudan have made an international propaganda of their differences with Libya. They have intentionally drawn the United States of America into the conflict. American troops use Egyptian bases and both participate in joint military manoeuvres. "A heightened U.S. concern for Sudan's security is precisely what Nimeiry wants..." Newsweek, October 26, 1981, p.15 pp 10-14.

Emerging from foreign tutelage, these groups suddenly became aware of all that 'divide' them. Antagonistic interests, ancient hatreds and animosities surface once more. This gives rise to a vast spectrum of variegated conflict situations which range from mere friction or misunderstanding to irreconcilable enmity. It is this obdurate persistence of ethnicity in politics that explains why the state cannot rely on the people's commitment to nationalism, civic loyalty, or territorial integrity.

After independence, it became clear almost immediately that the goal of transcending tribalism was indeed the most intractable of the many problems faced by all African governments. There is hardly any African state where the fear that tribal differences might erupt into violence does not exist. Experience has shown African leaders that diverse peoples cannot be united by mere legislations or stale appeals to patriotic stereotypes like "in the interest of national unity," "one nation, one destiny." As a matter of fact, in many instances, individual and tribal interests are projected as national interests. Policy decisions seek to strike a mean between actual national needs and ethnic balancing. Those who govern Africa's new states face enormous problems beginning with the need to weld their peoples into cohesive polities.

This study as already stated is concerned with keeping African states at peace among themselves. One of its tasks will be to design a peace-keeping machinery for the OAU.

The OAU may serve to keep the peace precisely because it is a sublimation of the sort of local feeling which, in the form of nationalism, is a fruitful source of war. It combines the nationalist passions for keeping others out and running one's own affairs, with an expressed purpose to settle disputes between African nations by peaceful means. African states realized this as far back as 1963. A Council of Ministers Resolution urged member States to "settle their differences by peaceful means within a strictly African framework."¹⁹ Thus the peace-keeping apparatus is an attempt to secure for Africans a prior right and adequate power to cope with disorder in Africa.

In analyzing the case-studies, the major hypotheses advanced revolve round three questions: (1) the issue/issues; (2) the units: their posture and relationships; (3) third parties: their interests and the extent of their involvements.

The more fundamental the issue the more difficult it is to deal with the conflict. The relative success of a conflict-resolution mechanism depends primarily on the success of the pertinent political forces in reaching an agreement. This primacy of the political element has been demonstrated in all African (and even U.N.) experience to keep the peace.

The other hypothesis relates to time factor. If attempts are made to resolve conflicts in the early stages, the chances of success are likely to be higher. Conflict is generally more amenable to remedial action when positive steps are taken in the incipient stages of the affair.

¹⁹ O.A.U. Council of Ministers' Resolution I. (1) November 15-18, 1963.

At such times, commitments are less deeply entrenched, status and prestige factors less emotional and consent is more readily secured for some degree of third-party intervention.

In studying the cases, the background of each conflict will be examined in relation to the issues, the units involved, the stance of third-parties - especially the political, economic, military and diplomatic constellations brought into the conflict - and the role of the O.A.U.

To accomplish these tasks, the study has relied primarily on:
I(a) a careful study of the conflicts by means of documentation (library) research on primary sources; (b) fieldwork for data collection and interviews of officials in the Lagos Embassies of the States involved in the conflicts (c) Content analysis of research bulletins, journals, and newspapers and 2 (d) General theoretical works and (b) Secondary interpretative studies.



ANGOLA: Districts and district capitals

CHAPTER TWO

The Angolan Civil War

That Angolan independence came amid chaos and bloodshed is directly traceable to internal cleavages, which beset many African societies and to the obnoxious policies of a particularly tenacious and repressive colonialism. Like many other African societies, foreign domination left Angola politically disunited, economically underdeveloped and vulnerable to continued domestic strife and external manipulation.

Background to the Conflict

After World War II, the British, French and Belgian colonial administrations, though reluctantly, permitted African nationalists to organise, politicize, and assume increasing degrees of political power. Contrastingly, the Portuguese remained intolerant of any expression of colonial dissent. Arguing that their African "provinces" had been immutably integrated into the Portuguese nation; Portugal went all out to prevent the development of organized political, or even cultural movement among Africans.

Historically, Portuguese rule in Angola had been one of exploitation and brutal suppression. Beginning in 1498, Portugal conquered and subjugated the three dominant tribal kingdoms - The Bakongo, Mbundu and Ovimbundu, exported over three million slaves and left vast reaches of the colony under-populated.²⁰

²⁰ James Duffy, Portugal in Africa, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1955, pp 22-27.

Preventive repression was facilitated by centuries of educational neglect. Therefore, when the explosion came, it represented the released passions of a frustrated inchoate nationalism that Portuguese colonial policies had effectively localized and truncated.

The cleavages that existed within the Angolan nationalist movements are a reflection of the Angolan society itself. Each of the liberation movement was more or less entrenched in one of the three ethno-linguistic regions that make up Angola.²¹

Before the arrival of the Portuguese, the area now known as Angola was dotted with various kingdoms and tribal groupings that spoke different languages and had different cultures and histories.²²

The Bakongo, living in northern Angola constitute about 25% of Angolan population. Descending from the ancient Kongo Kingdom, they now live in the Republic of Congo, Zaire and Northern Angola, often migrating across the borders.

The Uniao das Populacoes de Angola (UPA) and Partido Democratico de Angola (PDA) merged in March 1965 to form the Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola - FNLA - (Angolan National Liberation Front). The FNLA was built on the Bakongo nationalist movement that developed in the 1950's. The Bakongo had a long history of resistance to the Portuguese

²¹ For a detailed history of Angolan nationalist movements see John Marcum, The Angolan Revolution: Vol. 1. The Anatomy of an Explosion (1950-1962). Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press 1969, pp. 132 ff.

²² Thomas Okuma, Angola in Ferment. Boston, Beacon Press, 1962. pp. 11.

(as did the Mbundu and Ovimbundu). They confronted Portuguese invaders with sporadic wars and uprisings throughout the last half of the 19th century.

Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola - MPLA - (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) arose out of the nationalist currents that developed among the smaller layer of intellectuals, both African and mestico (of mixed African and Portuguese parenthood) after World War II principally in the capital, Luanda. It also had a base among the 1.5 million Mbundu of north-central Angola, as well as in the major urban centres.

Uniao Nacional para Independencia Total de Angola - National Union for Total Independence of Angola - (UNITA) was formed by Jonas Savimbi in 1965. It was based predominantly on the Ovimbundu population of the central plateau region but also had adherents among the smaller ethnic groupings of eastern and southern Angola.

Large-scale arrests and forced exile depleted indigenous Angolan leadership after 1957. Leaders of the northern Angola's Bakongos moved across the Congo border to join earlier exiles who had already begun to organize among tens of thousands of Angolan Bakongo emigres in the Lower Congo. The UPA and PDA first organized as ethnic movements in a Congolese sanctuary from where a northern uprising of March 4, 1961²³ had been partially planned and organized.

²³ Ernest Harch, Tony Thomas, Malik Miah, Angola: The Hidden History of Washington's War, New York, Pathfinder Press, 1976, pp. 30-34.

After the 1961 rebellions, direct pressure against Portuguese colonial rule was only limited to occasional ambushes and sporadic clashes in the rural areas. A united and effective campaign against Portuguese rule was seriously undermined by the rivalries between the Angolan nationalist movements.

However, the limited warfare in Angola combined with the more significant campaigns in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique was an economic and political drain on Portugal. During the 1960's Portugal's armed forces more than doubled in size.²⁴ By 1971 her defence expenditures consumed up to 50% of the government budget.²⁵ Growing opposition to the colonial wars coincided with economic crisis - high inflation and unemployment. These factors greatly increased discontent within Portugal and led to the overthrow of the government of Marcelo Caetano on April 26, 1974, in a military coup.

The coup, in turn, affected the course of the Angolan liberation struggle. It brought the prospects of formal independence closer. With independence within grasp, Angolan nationalist movements went berserk. They went towards independence saddled with antagonistic interests, contradictions, irreconcilable differences and a conflicting alliance configuration.²⁶ This led to the subsequent bitter power-struggle before and after independence.

²⁴ The Military Balance, 1971-72, London, The Institute of Strategic Studies 1971, p.21.

²⁵ "Portugal's Year in Africa," in Colin Legum, ed., Africa Contemporary Record, (hereafter cited as ACR), 1970-71, London, Rex Collings, 1971.

²⁶ For this aspect of the conflict see C.K. Ebinger, "External intervention in internal war: the politics and diplomacy of the Angolan Civil War," Orbis, 20, Fall 1976, pp. 669-699.
Cf. Colin Legum, ACR, 1975-1976, pp A3 - A7.

The pre- and post-independence bewildering pattern of events could be attributed to a number of persistent, differentiating sociopolitical variables within Angolan nationalism: ethnoregional tripolarity that derived from the regional development of Angolan nationalism within the country's three principal ethnocultural communities, Luanda-Mbundu, Bakongo and Ovimbundu; social cleavage, notably an underlying urban/intellectual versus rural/peasant class dichotomy; additional sociopolitical differentiation and commitment based upon factors of race, culture, ideology, leadership, religion and external alignment.

The two nationalist movements - the FNLA and MPLA - that dominated the early and latter stages of Angolan insurgency were led by competing elites with dissimilar social backgrounds. They reflected differences grounded in ethnic genesis, cultural, class, and racial stratification.

Ethnicity

This was manifested in the composition of movement leadership and the regional locus of movement activity. This was particularly strong within the FNLA. Excluding Savimbi²⁷ (Ovimbundu), the historical referents for FNLA leadership were to the former Kongo (Bakongo) kingdom.²⁸ On the part of the MPLA, its literature focused on Mbundu resistance to Portuguese rule in the 17th century.²⁹

²⁷ Jonas Savimbi was foreign secretary to the FNLA/GRAE* till July 1964 when he resigned. For details about the GRAE see this work, p.31 ff.

²⁸ See John Marcum: The Angolan Revolution: Vol. II. Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 1978, p.334.

²⁹ Agostinho Neto, "The Historical Evolution," Toward Angolan Independence, Brussels: World Assembly of Youth, 1963, p.9

Each movement sought to transcend its origins and attract some representation from other ethnolinguistic communities. Although all of them presented themselves as genuinely multiethnic, each received much of its support from a primary ethnic segment and perceived the others as being exclusively and antagonistically ethnocentric.

Religion:

Religious factors reinforced ethnic cleavage. MPLA leadership counted more persons with Catholic background and occasionally accused the FNLA of wishing to impose Protestantism on all Africans. The religious differentiation might be of little importance but it had some impact on external alignments. Leaders, students and refugees of each movement tended to look abroad to "their church" for humanitarian help.

Race, class and culture:

Interrelated factors of race, class and culture also set Angolan nationalists apart. These factors constituted mutually reinforcing barriers to social mobility; Angolan colonial society was segregated into six racial categories defined by the portion of white blood in each, with two categories of pure black at the bottom of the scale. Social and economic privileges accrued only to the 600,000 whites, mulattoes, and assimilados. The ninety per cent of the population classified as indigenous suffered every form of discrimination including forced labour, beatings, arbitrary imprisonment and execution without trial at the hands of the colonial administrators.

Portuguese Catholic mission schools transplanted rigidly class-based and class-oriented educational system into Angola.³⁰ Elitist, this education was acquired by only a few Angolans who created a diminutive class of culturally assimilated blacks (assimilados). Assimilados were taught to rank fellow assimilados by level of formal education.

All the same, the social status of most African assimilados remained inferior to that of mestigos, who constituted a more relatively privileged caste. These people were considered automatically assimilated by virtue of their mixed parentage. Mestigos were kept in a second-class relationship to European settlers.

This pattern of social hierarchy produced a perceptual duality among Angolan nationalists. In the course of the conflict while some stressed the centrality of class conflict some others insisted on the importance of social cleavage.

The issues:

The differences between the nationalist movements derived from these factors. The FNLA was of the opinion that the MPLA leadership consisted uniquely of privileged mestigos and assimilados, who had enjoyed the advantages of "education, exemption from forced labour, access to property and professions, civil rights, and a higher standard of living" in the Portuguese colonial system.³¹ Therefore, the FNLA argued that

³¹ Marcum, op. cit, p.49

given the social and psychological gulf between this privileged classes and the peasantry, the latter would fear and reject domination by this elite after independence.

MPLA leadership depicted its FNLA counterpart as parochial, the victim of an inferiority complex, "traumatized" by the "limits of its knowledge of the real Angola by an intellectual emptiness attributable to its lack of educated cadres³² and by the fact that its power extended to a mass whose national perspective was constricted to a Bakongo horizon. As a result of this weakness, the MPLA reasoned that the FNLA largely 'emigre' leadership (culturally alienated) tried defensively to assert a monopoly role for itself as the sole representative of Angolan aspirations.³³

The racial issue is very important and complex and plagues even the present-day MPLA government of Angola. The FNLA rooted in an ethnically conscious and black peasantry perceived socioeconomic cleavage in racial categories. It asserted the nationalist legitimacy of Angolans little conversant with Portuguese. The FNLA held that through cultural assimilation and racial miscegenation whites had co-opted and reinforced its ranks, with a mestizo additive. As an extension of European rule, the latter became "Portuguese." Hampered by its number, this class could

³² See Emmanuel Kunzika, "Angolan Unity, Toward Angolan independence, Brussels, WAY, 1963, p.6 Kunzika argues that Portuguese education and culture divided Angolans into two categories: a Portuguese-educated elite with a superiority complex and an uneducated mass with an inferiority complex.

³³ Mario de Andrade, "La crise du nationalisme angolais, "Revolution africaine, June 27, 1964 p.13.

neither modify nor influence colonial rule.³³ From an FNLA point of view, mestiços and assimilados were to all intents and purposes "white." The great mass of the population was unassimilable by virtue of its irreducible blackness and therefore fated to remain an ascriptively exploited caste. It thus followed that political alliances with white groups could only do harm to the African cause.

MPLA defended the leadership credentials of mestizo and assimilado intellectuals and petit bourgeois who could not speak any African language but Portuguese.³⁴ Such persons were described as "the driving force behind the awakening of political consciousness" in Angola.³⁵ Influenced by Marxism, the MPLA saw the Angolan struggle as essentially a class not a racial conflict against colonial and imperialist politico-economic exploitation.

This issue of the sociopolitical role of the mestiço, as well as that of the white sharply divided Angolan nationalists. The MPLA undertook to associate itself with progressive Portuguese born in Angola, some of whom, it said, tried to neutralize the support that Portuguese settlers gave to the forces of repression and tried to fight for the same objectives as those of the Angolan nationalist movements. The MPLA accused UPA insurgents of exterminating mestiços during the 1961 uprising as a consequence of anti-mestizo racism.³⁶

³³ These FNLA views were encouraged by Zaire. She declared that she would support only those whose "African authenticity" protected them from a "prejudicial acceptance" of "communist or capitalist ideology," protected them from becoming satellites. See speech by Zaire's Foreign Minister, Mario Cardoso at Kinshasa ceremonies commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Angolan war, GRAE Actualites, Kinshasa, No.3, 1971.

³⁴ Dr. Neto. Sun, Baltimore, Dec. 21, 1962

³⁵ Macio de Andrade, "Colonialism, Culture and Revolution," in Portuguese Colonies, p. 49

³⁶ MPLA, First National Conference, p.16.

The FNLA argument was that its relationship with mestizos - as individuals and groups - was determined by the extent to which the mestizos concerned were "integrated into colonial society" and as a result alienated from African society. The FNLA barred any political role for fils de colons (mestizos acknowledged by their Portuguese fathers and coopted into colonial society. Its deduction was that such mestizos rejected the culture of their African mothers, accepted that of paternal (European) oppressors, and generally joined forces with marginal whites in opposing African nationalists who threatened their colour-based socioeconomic privilege. Furthermore, the FNLA attributed negrophobic sentiments to most mestizos. It maintained that mestizos sought to monopolize access to higher technical education.³⁷

Lastly, the mere fact that the MPLA leadership comprised many of coloured parentage was viewed by the FNLA as being responsible for much of the MPLA hostility toward the FNLA. It saw the multiracial MPLA as compromised by its involvement with the "liberal fringe" of Angola's white bourgeoisie. The FNLA saw itself as the champion of an indigenous national culture based upon "Negro-African civilization."³⁸

Ideology:

Another issue of dispute within Angolan nationalism revolved round ideology. MPLA obsession with ideological discourse implied a clear subordination of other considerations, such as race.

³⁷ Centre angolais de recherches et de documentation, "Revolution angolais et lutte de classes, "Afrique en marche, Kinshasa, 1968, mimeo, pp. 7-17.

³⁸ Ibid.

The FNLA maintained that ideological considerations should be put off until after independence.³⁹ This posture, in effect, represented an implicit rejection of MPLA's intellectual Marxism.

Ideological commitment pitted what was generally seen as MPLA's progressive and prosocialist leanings against FNLA's strictly nationalist and pro-western persuasion.

Polarization:

Military rivalry sharply polarized Angolan insurgency. The numerous incidents of FNLA ambush and carnage of MPLA guerrillas⁴⁰ widened the chasm between the two movements. Such encounters created psychological barriers of bitterness, guilt and fear.

While the MPLA continued to press for the creation of a common nationalist front, the FNLA strove to reinforce polarity. The FNLA had gone ahead and formed a government in exile, (in emulation of the Algerian revolution) - Governo Revolucionario de Angola no Exilio (GRAE) in total exclusion of the MPLA. Since neither the MPLA nor the FNLA could absorb, eliminate, or eclipse the other, intense polarization enhanced Portuguese capacity to manipulate Angolan insurgents, promote internecine conflict, and minimize metropolitan losses.

³⁹ "Declaration de principes du GRAE" in FNLA, Angola: Bulletin d'information 1, No.2, March 10, 1963, pp. 8-10.

⁴⁰ On one of such occasions in November, 1961, UPA forces apprehended a twenty-man MPLA patrol en route to reinforce beleaguered insurgents, and executed them.

The role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) I

Algerian independence on July 1, 1962, was hailed throughout Africa as a triumph of revolutionary will and action. Belgian-linked secession in Katanga was defeated. Africa set its sight at the liberation of the whole of southern Africa.

Algeria (pro MPLA) and then Congo Leopoldville, now Zaire (pro FNLA) played leading roles at the early stages of Angolan insurgency. The two also played leading roles within the opposing blocks into which African states were organized before the creation of the OAU.⁴¹

While Algeria was associated with the Cassablanca group, Congo Leopoldville was in the Monrovia group. At Lagos, Nigeria, in January 1962, a proposed charter for continental association drawn up by a meeting of Monrovia states elaborated goals and structures for interstate cooperation and opposed "any intervention, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatsoever in the internal affairs of any member," and made no mention of the colonial and racial issues of Southern Africa.⁴²

In May (22-25) 1963, when the Monrovia and Casablanca groups finally came together to form the Organization of African Unity (OAU), they adopted a charter similar to what had been proposed in Lagos, including a non-intervention clause and machinery for the peaceful settlement of

⁴¹ See Jon Woronoff, Organizing African Unity, Metuchen, New Jersey, Scarecrow Press, 1970, for the politics and events preceding the formation of the OAU.

⁴² Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Information, Proposed Charter of the Inter-African and Malagasy Organization, Conference of Heads of African and Malagasy States, January 25-30, 1962.

disputes among members. But a concession was made to the Casablanca group. They also agreed that one of the OAU's purposes was "to eradicate all forms of colonialism from the continent of Africa".⁴³ In addition, they armed the OAU with a special fund for the purpose of aiding national liberation movements.

In the weeks preceding the Addis Ababa conference, the MPLA worked closely with Algeria's Ben Bella who by then had assumed the role of leading international spokesman for the Angolan cause.

The conference voted to establish a co-ordinating committee better known as the African Liberation Committee (ALC). It charged this committee with the responsibility for managing a special fund raised by voluntary contributions of unspecified amounts and for harmonizing collective assistance to liberation movements.

ALC membership was carefully distributed. It consisted of three former Cassablanca states - Algeria, Guinea and the United Arab Republic (UAR) and Uganda (which backed Kwame Nkrumah's proposal for a pan-African government). Balancing these were four former Monrovia states, Congo Leopoldville, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Senegal. Then Tanganyika, now Tanzania, the ninth member, provided the ALC with its headquarters.

⁴³ Charter of the Organization of African Unity, article 2, in Colin Legum, Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide, rev. ed., New York, Praeger, 1965, p.282.

However, the May summit did agree with Ghana and Algeria, on the issue of liberation group unity. It "earnestly invite(d) all national liberation movements to co-ordinate their efforts by establishing common action fronts wherever necessary, so as to strengthen the effectiveness of their struggle and the rational use of the concerted assistance given them."⁴⁴

Parallel to MPLA-FNLA rivalry, Congolese-Algerian competition for influence in Angolan affairs intensified during May and June, 1963.

OAU involvement in the Angolan dispute was greeted with conflicting contentions. The MPLA denounced UPA fratricide and Congolese partiality and sought OAU support for its long-proposed common front - Frente de Libertacao de Angola (FLA). On its own part, the FNLA restated its claim to be the only movement "actively in combat," and denied the right of its competitors to a share of any OAU assistance and invited the ALC to visit its camps⁴⁵.

Confronted with this internecine conflict, the ALC decided that its first order of business was to be one of reconciliation. To this end, it dispatched a special goodwill mission to Leopoldville (Algeria, Congo-Leopoldville, Guinea, Nigeria, Uganda and Senegal).

⁴⁴ See I. Brownlie (ed.) Basic Documents on African Affairs, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971, pp. 17.

⁴⁵ Untitled FNLA memorandum signed by Holden Roberto to the "Bureau of Coordination for Assistance to Nationalist Movements, Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika," Leopoldville, June 220, 1963, mimeo.

Holden Roberto did not budge on the issue of unity. He repeated his frequent assertion that "the doors of the FNLA were wide open to all...."⁴⁶

On July 14, the mission began its work, electing Jâja Wachukwu, then Nigeria's Foreign Minister, who was a close personal friend of Roberto, as Chairman.

In July, 1963, the MPLA and some minor nationalist movements had come together to form Frente Democratica de Libertacao de Angola (FDLA). When Agostinho Neto attempted to testify in the name of the FDLA rather than the MPLA, Wachukwu ruled on a point of order that the OAU mission could not "listen to him in this capacity as its mandate clearly stated that it was to help reconcile the two known Angolan Nationalist Organizations which had given evidence in June at Dar es Salaam."⁴⁷ When Neto who had had little time to perfect his French or English since escaping from prison in Portugal sought to testify in Portuguese, the chairman ruled that he would have to speak in French or English because of the absence of adequate translation facilities.

The next day when he presented a written request for an opportunity to present the MPLA's case more amply, Wachuku ruled that it was too late.

Of significance, the mission acted favourably on a written petition from Viriato da Cruz (who was then leading a breakaway faction of the MPLA and was acceptable to Roberto for admission into the GRAE) to the chairman

46

Ibid.

47

Marcum, op. cit. p. 95

requesting an opportunity to testify in the name of the "Provisional Executive Committee" of the MPLA.

The FNLA in its own presentation stressed its military accomplishments. Capitalizing on the confusion and controversy surrounding the FDLA, it warned against infiltration by "collaborators and secessionists" who would propose conciliation or unity in order to sabotage the revolution from within.⁴⁸

Neto pointed out that the Congolese government was responsible for the MPLA's military weakness since it refused to provide training and border access to the MPLA. But the Congolese government argued that this was due to its desire to help those who were actually fighting and said that it had recognized the GRAE in hopes of uniting Angolans around it.⁴⁹

That Congo Leopoldville supported the GRAE vigorously and scorned the MPLA was of great significance, given the special role that the ALC was to ascribe to contiguous states in all liberation struggles. The ALC had adopted working guidelines based on four principles: (1) that "the relation, concern and interest of geographical neighbours should be weighed when considering aid to any given colonial or dependent territory; (2) that contiguous states by virtue of "their local knowledge and proximity, should play a vital role in the advancement and progress" of any struggle;

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Remarques africaines, July 11, 1964, pp. 333-334

(3) that the "host country" should be given "the right of supervision" over a liberation movement operating within its borders; and (4) that care should be taken "to evolve policy of action" that would not impair "the sovereignty and independence" or prejudice the "security" of the host-state.⁵⁰

The result of the Leopoldville meeting routed the MPLA and bestowed a political triumph on the FNLA/GRAE. The goodwill mission presented its findings on July 18. In its view, because the FNLA's "fighting force" was "far larger than any other," it controlled "the only real fighting front in Angola," and the "continued existence of another and minor front" such as that of the MPLA would be detrimental to the rapid achievement of independence, the mission concluded it was "necessary for the FNLA to continue the leadership that has so far proved effective."⁵¹ Without visiting Kinkuzu training camp and base or FNLA-held areas within Angola, the mission recommended by unanimous vote that all African or external aid to the Angolans be channelled through the Congolese government and earmarked for the FNLA exclusively; that all units and persons that have had military training, including the "fighting force of the MPLA," seek admission into the FNLA; that African governments "be requested not to entertain or offer help to other organizations in their territory who claim to be working for the liberation of Angola; "and lastly that the OAU Council of Ministers at its next meeting recommend to all independent

⁵⁰ OAU, "General Report of the Goodwill Mission of the Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa to the Angola Nationalists, Leopoldville, 13-18 July, 1963," Leopoldville, mimeo. See Appendix I for full text.

⁵¹ Ibid.

African states that they accord diplomatic recognition to the GRAE.⁵²

It looked as if the OAU too, was at war with the MPLA. By this unprecedented action, the OAU sharpened the animosity and differences between the FNLA and MPLA.

The OAU mandate to the Goodwill Commission was to help reconcile the FNLA and MPLA. Its terms of reference did not include the assessment of the military capability of either of the contending parties. Neither was it asked to give its opinion as to which movement was to give way to the other.

What the Commission should have undertaken to do was: to put pressure on the Congolese government to grant training facilities to the MPLA, to desist from harrassing MPLA insurgents and to adopt an even-handed approach towards the two movements; pressurize Holden Roberto into dropping his intransigent posture to a common front and to put an immediate stop to the callous slaughter of MPLA militants.

Directing that all aid should be channelled through the Congolese government to the FNLA not only served to intensify the conflict but gave Congo Leopoldville a free hand in its conspiracy against the MPLA.

Directing "the fighting force of the MPLA" to seek admission into the FNLA was the limit. Maybe the Commission never pondered over the implications and consequences of such an action. With the benefit of hindsight, the friction between Robert Mugabe's ZANLA forces and

⁵² Ibid.

Joshua Nkomo's ZIPRA forces⁵³ provides an insight into the catastrophe that could have followed.

The goodwill mission should have geared its efforts towards getting the two movements "to coordinate their efforts by establishing a common front wherever necessary so as to strengthen the effectiveness of their struggle and the rational use of the concerted assistance given them,"⁵⁴ and not seek to establish a myth about FNLA military prowess.

Years later an insider was to point out that "we had understood that UNITA was the weakest militarily of the three liberation movements; in fact Savimbi's army was several times larger than the FNLA's, better led, and supported by a political organization." Not only that, he revealed that the FNLA had no logistical system, the poorest of internal communication and no organization or leadership below the level of major."⁵⁵

The same source acknowledged that the "MPLA was best qualified to run Angola. The MPLA was the best organized of the three movements. They were the best educated up and down the line, from leaders who had taken doctorates at European universities to cadres of urban dwellers, civil servants, and technicians. By comparison the FNLA, Holden Roberto's crowd, had few educated men at the top, no intellectuals - and had spent much of its history in the cocktail parties at Kinshasa. UNITA was about the same."⁵⁶

⁵³ Africa, No. 108, August 1980, pp. 26-28.

⁵⁴ I. Brownlie, op. cit., p.11.

⁵⁵ John Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, London, Futura Publications Limited, 1979, p.64.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

The MPLA presented a new case to the OAU foreign ministers that met at Dakar on August 2, 1963, on the basis that the Leopoldville proceedings were unfair. The MPLA argued that the FNLA military strength in the Congo had no necessary relationship to the struggle inside Angola where MPLA units were fighting in the Nambuangongo-Dembo region.⁵⁷

MPLA protests were ineffective. Wachuku presented the Goodwill Mission recommendations to the OAU foreign ministers, stressing the special role accorded to contiguous independent states. He argued that because of the "exaggerated claims" often made by liberation movements, it was necessary to rely heavily upon the local "knowledge and experience of contiguous states." According to him, the head of the MPLA had never crossed the Angolan-Congolese frontier into the fighting zone (which also could be said about the head of the FNLA). Wachuku said the goodwill mission had "proof" that the FNLA controlled at least 4,000 well-trained men operating to a depth of over 150 kilometres inside the country." Instead of heeding reasoned advice to achieve unity by joining the FNLA, he said the MPLA had formed a new political front with collaborators whose function it was to spy for the Portuguese. On that score, the mission recommended that "the head of the FNLA alone should have the right to judge all membership applications so that the FNLA might not be destroyed from within."⁵⁸ And the OAU foreign ministers adopted the goodwill mission's

⁵⁷ MPLA, "Memorandum: For the Attention of The Honourable Committee of Coordination for the Liberation of Africa," signed by Agostinho Neto, Dakar, August 1963, Leopoldville, mimeo.

⁵⁸ OAU, Council of Ministers, "Proces verbal," Dakar, August 1963, mimeo, pp. 36-39.

recommendations without dissent.

The OAU mission to Leopoldville had followed an easy course concentrating on the evident disarray of one movement without making any serious effort to plummet the real strengths and weaknesses of its opponent. It had given all the powers to Holden Roberto to set the pace and the trend of events in Angola. The Commission did not think it fit to seek the advice of Algeria, which at that moment in time, was the only African state that had brought a colonial liberation struggle to a successful conclusion. Rather, it concerned itself only with stressing the importance of contiguous states thereby endorsing the Congolese (Leopoldville) conspiracy against the MPLA.

In emphasising the importance of contiguous states and their role, the OAU displayed a singular lack of foresight. It did not anticipate that contiguous states could have incumbent regimes of different orientations at different points in time.

As a case in point, Cyrille Adouala's regime was completely pro-FNLA. During his premiership, the GRAE enjoyed the advantages of an external base superior to its rivals. Its total reliance on that base, its dependency on exile-emigre manpower, and its immersion in the Congolese political system clearly conditioned its inability to develop a programme of political education and mobilization within Angola. Roberto never ventured across the Congolese-Angolan border.

During Moise ~~Tshombe~~'s ascendancy in Leopoldville, Angolan insurgency came to a near standstill. Tshombe pursued a policy of gradual suffocation, encouraging the natural process of crumbling that accompanies deceleration in revolutionary action. He cut off external and internal supplies of arms and ammunition (some of which he feared might end up in Congolese rebels hands) encouraged officials to harrass GRAE supporters.

This climate facilitated Portuguese efforts to infiltrate nationalist groups and enflame dissension. Thereby he hoped to hasten the decomposition of the GRAE while publicly asserting his belief in Angolan nationalism. Not that Moise ~~Tshombe~~ entertained the MPLA's variety of their revolution either. Leopoldville described Portugal as "one of our best friends," equated "subversion in Angola with that of Lumumbist rebels in the Congo and blamed Arab "slavedrivers," Ben Bella and Gamal Abdel Nasser for "sustaining" insurgency in both countries."⁵⁹

General Joseph Desire Mobutu now Sese Seko, seized power on November 24, 1965. His rule ushered in another period of FNLA monopoly of Congolese favour. Angolan exile politics in the Congo was pervaded by a poisonous fratricidal climate.⁶⁰

Some of the dangers of the arbitrary powers given to contiguous states were discernible in the dubious roles, both Zaire and Congo-(Brazzaville) played in fostering and encouraging Cabinda separatism.

⁵⁹ See a speech by Tshombe's Katangan associate and minister of interior, Godefroid Munongo in Diario Popular, Lisbon, December 3, 1964.

⁶⁰ Marcum, passim; Stockwell, passim; For press reports dwelling on this condition see Courier d'Afrique, July 16-17, 18, 19, August 1, 31, 1966.

On the eve of the July 1964 summit meeting of the OAU in Cairo, Jonas Savimbi resigned from the GRAE. He accused Holden Roberto of "tribalism (Bakongo favouritism), racism (anti-mestizo and anti-white), corruption (diverting movement funds to his own foreign bank accounts)." Savimbi alleged confusion and disunity within the movement and charged that far from intensifying military action and regrouping the popular masses... had limited itself to empty speeches." He called upon African states to reopen the questions of Angolan unity and GRAE recognition and to convene a congress of all active Angolan nationalists.⁶¹

Savimbi's action helped to reinforce doubts among African leaders concerning the wisdom of their Angolan option. One year after the OAU recommended that all African states grant formal diplomatic recognition to the GRAE, eighteen had done so. Basing his judgement on Savimbi's evidence, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana declared that the OAU's first year was that of retrogression.

The ALC, he argued had handed the primary responsibility for helping liberation movements to contiguous states such as the Congo. He alleged that the ALC had inexcusably rejected the counsel of military specialists "on ideological grounds" and argued: "If the Liberation Committee had made effective use of the military experience of Egypt and Algeria, where neo-colonialist interference and espionage had been frustrated and held at bay, we would have given the freedom fighters the necessary help in their liberation struggle." Instead the ALC had supported the idea of

⁶¹ New York Times, July 19, 1964; Le monde, July 22, 1964

training forces in the Congo where they were exposed to "espionage, intrigues, frustrations and disappointments."⁶²

Nkrumah went on to conclude that "by raising a threat at Addis Ababa and not being able to take effective action against apartheid and colonialism, we have worsened the plight of our kinsmen in Angola, Mozambique, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. The OAU simply frightened the imperialists sufficiently to strengthen their defences and repression in Southern Africa."⁶³

In reference to the fact that the MPLA had embarked upon military action in Cabinda, Nkrumah told the conference: "It is not fair of us to recognize one side and leave the other because both of them are engaged in war. If you recognize one, it discourages the other. Political, and not military priorities should prevail during an armed struggle and therefore the proper task of the OAU was to bring the two Angolan movements together in a common front against Portugal. This is what Ghana had been trying to accomplish for several years."⁶⁴

By this time, the GRAE had received about \$154,000 during the first year of the OAU Liberation Fund. This amount was less than it had been receiving through bilateral aid, now collectively replaced by collective assistance.⁶⁵

⁶² Spark, Accra, August 9, 1963; November 29, 1963.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ OAU, Assembly of Heads of State and Governments, "Verbatim and Summary Records," first session, pt. IV, 8th meeting, Cairo, July 21, 1964, mimeo, pp. 10-13 (Hereafter cited as OAU, "Verbatim and Summary Records").

⁶⁵ Jeune Afrique, Paris, July 27, 1964 p.16.

Holden Roberto did not retire. Nkrumah did not succeed in persuading his peers to rescind their recognition of OLA. But President Massamba-Demba of Brazzaville did inject a new dimension into the whole affair. He criticized Holden Roberto for refusing to accept the MPLA, except on a piecemeal, individual basis. Due to this negativism, he said the MPLA had regrouped in Congo-Brazzaville, assembling an armed force of at least fifteen hundred. According to him, the MPLA had quite independently organized "raids all along the Cabinda border...." Did the OAU expect his government to shutdown the activities of these real fighters?"⁶⁶

This prompted Kaunda to "venture to suggest that we continue to support what has been recognized as the majority organization in Angola," but "at the same time appoint a Committee" to seek once again a "reconciliation" between the two Angolan movements.⁶⁷

President Ben Bella of Algeria citing the experience of the Algerian revolution and the triumph of his own movement over an unassailable rival,⁶⁸ he counselled: "It is the struggle, the development of that struggle, the contradictions, the obstacles, that ultimately determine the leading team, the group that will shoulder the responsibilities of the Revolution." He was of the opinion that the OAU should "continue seriously helping the Government, we have recognized and ... request that those who have not yet recognized it do so at once and appoint a conciliation committee to attempt

⁶⁶ OAU, "Verbatim and Summary Records, 8th meeting, p.6.

⁶⁷ Ibid. pp. 9-10

⁶⁸ Ben Bella was referring to the ascendancy of the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) over Messali Hadj's Mouvement National Algerien (MNA).

once again to mediate differences and promote voluntary unity among the Angolans."⁶⁹

President Sekou Toure of Guinea, who was the Chairman of the session, named Congo-Brazzaville, Ghana and the UAR (three countries sympathetic to the MPLA) to constitute the conciliation committee. Thus, the OAU unanimously reaffirmed its recognition of Holden Roberto but simultaneously named a committee of governments hostile to GRAE to reconcile it with an adversary that the organization had itself rejected the previous year as unworthy of continued existence.

Nominally, the OAU continued to recognize and support both the FNLA and MPLA, but the organization extended preferential aid to the MPLA from 1966 to 1972. OAU officials held Roberto responsible for continuing Angolan disunity.⁷⁰ The bulk of the arms and funds funnelled through the OAU Liberation Committee for the Angolan war went to the MPLA. Having cut off all assistance from 1968 on, the OAU officially derecognized Roberto's government in exile in June, 1971.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ethiopian Herald, June 28, 1968. Diallo Telli was especially critical of the FNLA for blocking MPLA access to northern Angola.

⁷¹ Financial Times, London, June 23, 1971.

Post-coup politics

On April 25, 1974, an Armed Forces Movement (AFM) overthrew the Portuguese government. During the months immediately following the coup, it was unclear whether the federationist sentiments of General Spínola, the provisional president or the pro-independence views of younger officers who organized the coup would prevail.

However, the three nationalist movements girded for what increasingly looked like a race for political power. By the end of July, UNITA and MPLA both reached tacit ceasefire agreement with Portugal. On October 12, 1974, the FNLA signed a ceasefire agreement with Portugal but not after the FNLA had ensconced itself militarily in the north.

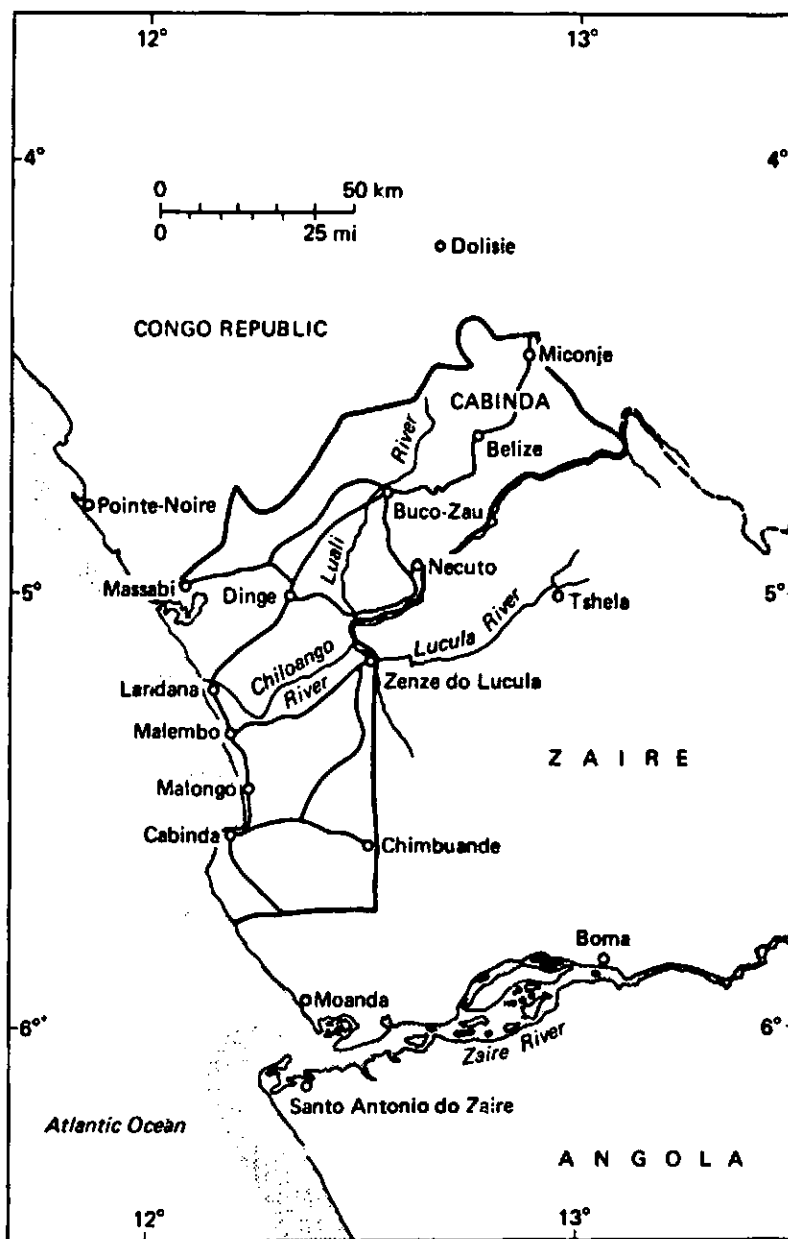
Cabindan Separatism:

Profiting from the post-coup confusion, Cabinda, a small, 2,800 square mile area of 60,000 people stepped up its efforts to carve out a separate enclave state.

In 1898, the Cabindan tribal chief had signed the Simbuluku treaty with the Portuguese, accepting their protection in order to escape the dreaded, forced-labour of King Leopold of Belgium.⁷²

Cabindans relate loosely to the Zairians of the lower Congo River, at least more than to the Mbundu of Central Angola. Cabinda is separated from the rest of Angola by a narrow strip of Zairian territory. Since the sixties it had been coveted by the two Congos - Brazzaville and Leopoldville.

⁷² D.L. Wheeler, Toward a history of Angola: problems and sources in D.F. McCall et al (Eds), Western African History, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1969: pp. 45-68.



Cabinda

The fact that Cabindan oil produced a government revenue at the rate of \$450 million a year by 1974⁷³ was central to the calculations of aspirants to the Angolan corridors of power. That, that same revenue, if reserved for Cabindans alone, could mean an average per capita income of over \$5,600 for 70,000 to 80,000 Cabindans was just as central to the thinking of Cabindan separatists.

In Cabinda, several aristocratic families enjoyed special status and influence; among them the Franque, Mingers, Pina etc. Prior to the coup, Cabindans had obstructed MPLA efforts in Cabinda and cooperated with the Portuguese. Emulating the FNLA, the Cabindan Liberation Front (FLEC) had undertaken to establish governmental credentials, creating a government in exile. On January 10, 1967, it sent a letter to the United Nations announcing that the "Fiot peoples" of Cabinda, desirous of "complete, immediate and unconditional independence," had formed a Government Provisoire de Revolution Fientes en Exil. (GPRFE)⁷⁴

The coup rekindled old aspirations and unleashed family, personal and ethnic ambitions and led to a flurry of Cabindan activity.⁷⁵

Zaire, of course, gave full support to the separatists and allowed FLEC to broadcast the Voice of Cabinda over Kinshasa's radio, and refused to allow FNLA troops move into Cabindan territory. Zaire went to the extent of persuading Daniel Chipenda's breakaway faction of the MPLA to endorse Cabindan self-determination.⁷⁶

⁷³ Marcum, op. cit., p.131

⁷⁴ UN Committee on Decolonization, Doc. A/AC.109/Petition 641, May 25, 1967

⁷⁵ For this and other separatist activities see Marcum, op. cit., pp.253 ff

⁷⁶ Le monde, May 17, 1974.

Nor did Congo Brazzaville fault Cabinda for wanting separate existence. Brazzaville government gave fullsome support to the MPLA but also continued to allow Cabindan separatists to organize on its territory. Like Zaire, she persuaded another breakaway faction of the MPLA - to accept the principle of Cabindan autonomy.⁷⁷

In addition, President Omar Bongo of Gabon, expressed his - presumable French - support for the proposition that Cabinda constituted a "separate entity."⁷⁸

As for the nationalist movements, at the prospect of independence and Portuguese withdrawal, the factional rivalries that had developed over the years came to the fore. The three had taken steps to consolidate and expand their respective organizations as rapidly as possible.

Under pressure from the OAU, the three signed a formal unity agreement in Mombasa, Kenya on January 5, 1975. The agreement included a "declaration of principles" which stated that Cabinda would remain an integral and inalienable part of Angola."⁷⁹

The movements then declared themselves ready for formal negotiations with Portugal, to establish the procedures and calendar for the country's accession to independence. But as Holden Roberto later noted, the three groups had only agreed to "a common platform for negotiations with Portugal. He said "each group would retain its own identity."⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Le monde, May 31, 1974

⁷⁸ La semaine, November 17, 1974

⁷⁹ See Documents Section under OAU in ACR, 1975-76.

⁸⁰ Ibid p. B 539

Talks between Angolan nationalist movements and Portuguese authorities began on January 10, 1975, at Alvor in the Portuguese Algarve. The four parties hammered out and signed the January 15 Alvor agreement,⁸¹ which secured the three liberation movements status as "the sole legitimate representative of the people of Angola." It proclaimed Cabinda to be an unalienable component part of Angola, "and it set November 11, 1975, as the date for independence. The agreement allotted ministries in a coalition government and it mandated that government to draft a provisional constitution and conduct legislative elections during the eleven-month transition to independence. It also provided for the three Angolan movements by phases to pool 8,000 men each into a common national army that would include a 24,000-man Portuguese force to be withdrawn gradually between October 1, 1975 and February 29, 1976."⁸²

The Factional Struggle for Power

The transitional government began functioning in February, but in a climate of mistrust and violence. On March 23, FNLA forces attacked MPLA installations.⁸³ A few days later, FNLA troops attacked and killed over fifty recruits at an MPLA training camp at Caxito.⁸⁴ The fate of Angola had been sealed with blood and the outcome was to be decided through bloodshed.

In late April, renewed fighting broke out as the FNLA launched a coordinated series of assaults against MPLA offices in Luanda. Violence soon spilled into towns to the north and south, with MPLA increasingly taking

⁸¹ See appendix

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Sunday Times, London, March 30, 1975.

⁸⁴ Washington Post, March 27, 1975.

the initiative. By this time the MPLA had recruited the anti-Zairian Katangese gendarmerie.⁸⁴ This added significantly to the MPLA's military capability. But the move incensed Mobutu and he moved Zairian troops into Angola to help the FNLA.⁸⁵ In this regard, it should be remembered that the Katangese (Luanda-Luba) were implacable rivals of the FNLA and the Mobutu regime.

Such bloody incidents quashed all hopes that the Alvor Agreement would result in a government of national unity. African attempt to achieve this end through the Nakuru Agreement⁸⁶ on June 15, 1975, proved equally unsuccessful under the pressures of the struggle for power among the three groups. Nevertheless, at its summit in Kampala in July 1975, the OAU persisted in the increasingly hopeless task of preventing the growing violence into a full-scale civil war. African heads of state deplored the Angolan fighting, appealed to the three movements "to lay down their arms" and "earnestly requested Portugal to assume, without delay in an important manner, its responsibilities in Angola." They created an OAU Commission of Enquiry and asked it to consider the organization and dispatch of an OAU Peace-keeping force for Angola.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ The Katangese gendarmerie were a well-trained force of between 3,500 to 6,000 men who had gone into exile after the defeat of their leader, Moise Tsonbe, the former Katangese secessionists' leader. Portuguese colonial authorities kept them intact as a pre-emptive threat to Mobutu in case his support for the FNLA guerrillas went too far. The MPLA took over this colonialist weapon with which to threaten Mobutu.

⁸⁵ Colin Legum in Observer, May 18, 1975.

⁸⁶ Documents Section under OAU in ACR, op. cit.

⁸⁷ For the text see Colin Legum, "Foreign Intervention in After Angola, op. cit., p.67

But Portugal no longer had the capability to assume its "responsibilities." Some Portuguese military units were reportedly aiding the FNLA and the MPLA.⁸⁸

And the OAU failed to realize that it was no longer time for inquiry but action. It failed to recognize the fact that the first step towards securing peaceful process would have been an embargo on arms and personnel going into Angola by air, sea and land, that is, across Zairean border that even the Portuguese no longer pretended to be able to monitor. The OAU did not make real effort to carry out what the Portuguese had set out to do.

As a consequence, extra-African powers were encouraged to expand their intervention. However, a ten-member Commission of Enquiry spent ten days in Angola and reported back that UNITA had the largest popular following, followed in order by the FNLA and MPLA.⁸⁹

What was the use of that kind of exercise at that point in time? The Commission could not have possibly made the right assessment after such a short period. What was the character and variety of its sample? That type of conclusion at such a critical period only served to exacerbate the dispute.

The OAU failed to recognize certain basic facts: (1) That the main issue in the Angolan conflict was political and more fundamental than just the reconciliation of the rival nationalist movements (2) that the success or effectiveness of any settlement in Angola had to resolve the major political issues.

⁸⁸ Marcum, op.cit., p.262

⁸⁹ See C. Legum, Foreign Intervention, in After Angola, op.cit., p.29

The Commission's follow-up proposals for the expedition of an OAU peace-keeping force, met with resolute opposition from the increasingly militarily ascendant MPLA.

"By mid-July the military situation radically favoured the MPLA. As the military position of the FNLA and UNITA deteriorated, the governments of Zaire and Zambia grew more and more concerned about the implications for their own security. Those two countries turned to the United States of America for assistance."⁹⁰

Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia was primarily concerned with getting his copper to the sea. With the Benguela railroad closed, his only alternative was the expensive and humiliating route through then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa.

Zairean interests in Angola were many. Mobutu's reactionary regime definitely felt threatened by the possibility of the emergence of a Marxist regime in Angola. Many in the top rungs of MPLA leadership had ties with anti-Mobutu Lummumbists. And, of course, there was Mobutu's lust for Cabinda.

On her own part, Brazzaville's role in the Angolan conflict was more directed against Zaire's machinations in Cabinda and Angola, than an indication of a Soviet direction of policy.

The war was a see-saw of escalations, as momentum swung from one side to the other. Militarily, it progressed from the acquisition of obsolete weapons, foreign troops and eventually to sophisticated military ware like wire-guided rockets and late-model jet-fighter bombers.⁹¹

⁹⁰ See Testimony of Henry A. Kissinger, February 6, 1976, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on African Affairs, p.9.

⁹¹ Stockwell, op. cit., p. 198.

Politically, the war was complicated by a vast array of alliances. The FNLA and UNITA were supported at one time by the United States, France, China, West Germany, Rumania, Israel, North Korea, Senegal, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia, Tanzania and South Africa. The MPLA was supported by the Soviet Union, Cuba, East Germany, Algeria, Guinea and several European nations.⁹² There was constant sorting out all through the war until eventually many states shifted their support to the MPLA.

Each nationalist movement chose to present the struggle as that of survival. By August, the MPLA was in control of twelve out of sixteen provincial capitals including key posts and the capital, Luanda. The FNLA and UNITA withdrew from Luanda on August 10 and 11, respectively. Their withdrawal from Luanda marked a de facto collapse of the coalition. In fact, it signalled the beginning of a full-scale civil war.

By September, Angola's liberation movements were dug into their respective ethnic bastions. In addition, the MPLA had taken Cabinda, captured a number of ports and inland towns to the south. Many Angolans shifted from multiethnic and plantation regions back to areas of ethnic origin, a retreat to the past that accelerated with the collapse of the transitional government and the withdrawal of Portuguese troops.

With independence a few weeks off, the FNLA and UNITA patched together an alliance culminating in a formal government to counter that of the MPLA. This new alliance was not better than the old. All though Savimbi's membership in the GRAE, a north-south ethnic (Bakongo-Ovimbundu) cleavage

⁹² Cf. C. Ebinger, "External intervention in internal war, *Orbis*, loc. cit., p. 673

within the GRAE centred around rifts between Roberto and Savimbi.⁹³ Factional suspicion, hostility and conspiracy plagued the GRAE then. Nominally, Savimbi had remained GRAE foreign minister but Roberto assumed full responsibility for external affairs.

Now, while Roberto operated from a northern "capital" at Ambriz (and Kinshasa), the FNLA Democratic Peoples' Republic of Angola (DPRA) set up offices in Huambo, Savimbi's place. The premiership was to rotate monthly between the two movements, whose armies remained unintegrated. UNITA forces were not allowed to operate in Roberto's northern stronghold.

There was a turning point in the crisis when South Africa entered Angola on October 23, to intervene on the side of the FNLA and UNITA.⁹⁴ By the end of October, the MPLA was left in control of only four provincial capitals.

South Africa had been providing arms and training to UNITA and FNLA soldiers since September. South Africa felt there were sound reasons for the intervention: She had the million-dollar hydro-electric plant she was building at Cunene in southern Angola to protect. And South West Africa Peoples' Organization's (SWAPO) guerrilla bases were going to be destroyed in the process. Not only that; South Africa hoped to attract Western sympathy, particularly the United States, by pioneering the anti-

⁹³ For example Roberto precipitated the admission of Viriato da Guiz into the FNLA during Savimbi's absence in 1963. Savimbi was bitterly opposed to the admission of da Guiz, leader of a breakaway faction of the MPLA into the FNLA. Savimbi undertook a secret journey to Moscow, Prague, Budapest and East Berlin in quest of personal support. For further details see Angola, 1, No.14, Leopoldville, July 15-31, 1964, pp. 3-7.

⁹⁴ For a detailed analysis of the South Africa intervention in Angola see Charles K. Ebinger, "Cuban Intervention in Angola: A dissenting opinion." Paper presented to the African Studies Association Convention, Los Angeles, October/November, 1979.

Communism facade in Africa. Most importantly, South Africa wanted to influence the outcome of the Angolan civil war in favour of Savimbi who was considered the most likely of all three to establish a government in Luanda which could co-operate with South Africa.

Shocking as it may be, Savimbi invited South Africa to Angola after conferring with Presidents Mobutu, Kaunda and Houphouet-Boigny.⁹⁵

On November 1, a Katangese-style complication developed. The leader of the FLEC, Sr. Luis de Ganza Rarique in an announcement in Kampala, declared Cabinda independent of Angola.⁹⁶ Cabinda at this time was under the control of the MPLA. Heavy fighting was reported between the MPLA and FLEC in early November,⁹⁷ but the FLEC was no contest for the MPLA.

Independence Day, November 11, dawned with the proclamation of two governments: the Peoples' Republic of Angola (PRA) by the MPLA, in Luanda and the Social Democratic Republic of Angola (DPRA) by the FNLA/UNITA coalition. The MPLA government received immediate recognition from ten African states, the USSR, the COMECON nations, Brazil, Yugoslavia, North and South Vietnam and North Korea.⁹⁸ The DPRA never got itself organized or recognized.

On independence day in Luanda, the Portuguese high commissioner fled without ceremony or transferring power to any of the contending governments.⁹⁹ At independence, the OAU position was governed by the Kampala

⁹⁵ Stockwell, op. cit., p. 192

⁹⁶ Keesings Contemporary Archives (Hereafter cited as KCA) Vol. XXI, No. 1578, December 1975, p. 27500.

⁹⁷ For the position of rival forces at independence see Ibid, p. 27498.

⁹⁸ For comprehensive details of the Independence Day drama see Stockwell, op. cit., pp. 223 ff.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

Summit resolution insisting on a government of national unity which would include all three liberation movements.¹⁰⁰

After routing Roberto's army, the MPLA/Cuban forces turned south. The uneasy FNLA/Chipenda-UNITA alliance fell apart. A Christmas-eve shoot-out in Huambo escalated into an FNLA-UNITA war within a war.¹⁰¹

By the end of November, 1975, there was a temporary military stalemate as the rapid infusion of Soviet-Cuban aid checked the advance of South African forces. In early December, the military balance began to shift back to the MPLA when the West failed to aid the FNLA/UNITA coalition in a manner commensurate with Soviet/Cuban arms shipments to the MPLA.¹⁰²

The Role of the OAU: II

The OAU refused to admit either of the contending parties as long as the fighting raged on in Angola. The organization continued to press for the establishment of a government of national unity. However, as evidence grew concerning the magnitude of South African military support for the FNLA/UNITA coalition, more and more governments shifted their support to the MPLA. Of crucial importance to the MPLA was Nigeria's recognition on November 27 and Tanzania's recognition on December 5, 1975.

At the OAU emergency summit on Angola, held in Addis Ababa from January 10 to 13, 1976, the FNLA/UNITA coalition scored a major diplomatic triumph when pro-MPLA forces failed to obtain enough votes for formal OAU recognition. Nor did the conference condemn South Africa.

¹⁰⁰ Documents Section under OAU in ACR, op.cit., 1975-76

¹⁰¹ Financial Times, December 30, 1975, January 2, 14, 1976.

¹⁰² International Herald Tribune, December 13, 1975.

On November 10 and December 20, 1975, Savimbi had reportedly flown to Pretoria to meet South African Prime Minister, Dr. Voster and South African military officials to persuade them to delay the withdrawal of South African forces from Angola,¹⁰³ further undercutting whatever remaining sympathy he enjoyed in the OAU. Despite this, by the end of January, 1976, South Africa began to retreat from Angola.

Despite the fact that African States were divided over who to support in Angola, the OAU was able to maintain a broad consensus on four aspects of its Angolan policy until South African intervention in late October 1975. These were: support for the idea of a Government of National Unity; acceptance of MPLA, FNLA and UNITA as genuine nationalist movements entitled to a place in such a government; the need to maintain Angolan geographical integrity, including Cabinda; and opposition to any type of external intervention.

The incumbent chairman, President Idi Amin of Uganda helped to complicate matters for the OAU. He associated himself with the conservative side - the Zaire, United States and China clique and was completely hostile to the Soviets and Cubans. By publicly supporting Mobutu's stand on several occasions, Idi Amin showed that he was on the side of Mobutu.¹⁰⁴ The MPLA therefore came to see Amin as Mobutu's ally and as a result was suspicious in all its dealings with the OAU.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Sunday Telegraph, February 13, 1976.

¹⁰⁴ As a case in point, Radio Kampala, November 7, 1975, carried an endorsement of Zaire's Angolan policy.

¹⁰⁵ For the attitudes of the Angolan leaders to the OAU Chairman see Documents Section/Political Issues under Angola in ACR, 1975-76.

When Amin became the Chairman of the OAU, his first step was to appoint ten members to a fact-finding Committee of Enquiry and Conciliation to visit Angola.¹⁰⁶ This Committee produced report and recommendations after a ten-day visit.¹⁰⁷ This was considered by the OAU Bureau¹⁰⁸ which again endorsed the need for a Government of National Unity, composed of representatives of three liberation movements, the integration of their armed forces into a single national army and suspension of armed hostilities, in fact, the same package as was produced by Nakuru talks.¹⁰⁹

On November 5, one week before independence, Amin convened the OAU Defence Commission to consider the serious situation in Angola. He was pushing the idea of sending an OAU force, but the MPLA was strongly opposed. The Defence Commission agreed that the Angolan situation called for a political rather than a military solution. It condemned the role of mercenaries in Angola; expressed serious concern over the supply of arms to the warring movements, with its threat of internationalizing the problem. When the Commission found itself without any active role to play in the unfolding violent issues, it appointed an ad hoc Advisory Military Committee to assist the consultations with the Angolan leaders about sending a Peace-keeping Force to maintain security, or, alternatively, an African political mission to 'help the Government of National Unity' to establish a national army and an administrative structure.¹¹⁰ By this time, MPLA relations with

Amin had deteriorated to the point of not attending a meeting called by

¹⁰⁶ For OAU Resolutions on Angola see Documents Section, ACR, op.cit.

¹⁰⁷ The Report of the OAU Conciliation Commission in Angola, Addis Ababa, January, 1976.

¹⁰⁸ The OAU Bureau is the committee which operates between Summit meetings.

¹⁰⁹ OAU Resolutions on Angola, ACR, op. cit.

¹¹⁰ Memorandum of the OAU Secretary-General on the Situation in Angola, Addis Ababa, January 1976.

Amin which both the FNLA and UNITA attended.

The Nigerian proposal issued three days to independence, that independence be delayed for another three weeks to allow more time to find a solution did not receive any support. So the new state celebrated independence at war with itself.

The OAU united front began to crack when Algeria, Congo, Guinea, Somalia and the four former Portuguese colonies granted recognition to the MPLA government. By the time an emergency OAU summit meeting convened in February 1976, twenty-one out of the forty-six member states of the OAU had recognized the MPLA government. President Samora Machel of Mozambique insisted that FNLA and UNITA had forfeited their right to be considered genuine liberation movements because of their open collusion with South Africa.¹¹¹ The pro-MPLA group got powerful support from Nigeria which had completely reversed her earlier critical attitude to Soviet intervention in Angola.

The late President Seretse Khama of Botswana and Leopold Senghor, then President of Senegal, took the lead in opposing the pro-MPLA group.¹¹²

The summit ended in a complete deadlock. Half of the members called for immediate recognition of the MPLA as the legal government and the other half still insisted on the need for a Government of National Unity.

¹¹¹ "OAU Resolutions on Angola." ACR op.cit.

¹¹² Ibid.

About a month later, the issues that could not be settled within the OAU was settled on the battlefield. Accepting MPLA military supremacy, the OAU Council of Ministers on February 11, 1976, decided by a simple majority to recognize the MPLA as the legal Government of Angola.¹¹³

Internal cleavages and external dependencies do not dissolve with independence. Equipped with this knowledge and experience, African States should have adopted a much more realistic and practical approach to the Angolan conflict. Despite the fact that, in the final stages the OAU woke up to the fact that the Angolan conflict required a political and not a military solution, the organization continued to harp on the unfeasible question of Government of National Unity.

The failure of the OAU policy in Angola could also be traced to its parochial view of the Angolan conflict - focussing only on the rivalry of the liberation movements. This precluded African states from seeing the larger regional and international context of the Angolan struggle, for example the revolutionary effects that the triumph of a radical regime in Angola could have on the economies of the contiguous states, particularly the land-locked ones.¹¹⁴

Unfortunately, Africa's bitterest enemy understood the dynamics of the circumstances. "As I see it, the major problems facing South Africa for 1976 are: Angola, which threatens detente, the need for a settlement in Rhodesia and South West Africa and the state of the economy. As far as

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ See "Southern Africa: Union of the southern Nine," Africa, No. 105 May 1980, pp. 43-45.

the immediate future is concerned, our world turns on the axis of Angola... The Western powers should take note of what is happening in Angola and the inevitable results that would flow from the establishment of a Marxist, Soviet-dominated state in Angola for southern Africa, Africa as a whole and the entire free world."¹¹⁵

Given the inveterate hatred of each ethnic group for the other and the fact that the FNLA had helped the Portuguese to decimate the ranks of MPLA guerrillas during the struggle for independence, the three movements could not possibly work together. With the benefit of hindsight, Chad has produced a glaring example of the impracticability of these "if-wishes-were horses" patched-up coalitions with parallel personalities and orientations.¹¹⁶ Zimbabwe today, reinforces this view.¹¹⁷ After all, had the FNLA not successfully resisted all attempts by the MPLA and the OAU itself to create an Angolan common front. The continued insistence on unity was escapist.

The conflict was fundamentally a political one, thus the OAU should have addressed itself to finding a formula that would have resolved the underlying political issue: Who (which nationalist movement) would rule Angola?

¹¹⁵ John Vorster, then Prime Minister of South Africa in an interview with Newsweek See Newsweek, January 5, 1976, p.64.

¹¹⁶ See Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, Conflict in Chad, London, Hurst and Co., 1981 for an account of the conflict in Chad. For an insight into this difficulty see Africa, No.129, May, 1982. See also Africa, No. 105, May 1980.

¹¹⁷ The continuing conflict between Prime Minister Mugabe of Zimbabwe and his coalition partner Joshua Nkomo and their two movements supports this view. See Africa No. 128, April, 1982, pp.14-17.

There was the ideological dimension. The most important implications of government is that the regime in power seeks to stamp its ideology on the body politic, implement programmes and initiate changes which are normally in conformity with its ideological beliefs. It was, therefore very unrealistic and defeatist for African heads of government to stress the need for a Government of National Unity, comprising the three liberation movements. How could Marxist MPLA run a government with capitalist FNLA/UNITA coalition with South African connections. It could have been a collision of two worlds.

South African involvement and attendant African reaction taught all and sundry a hard lesson; certain black African states could accept South Africa's covert aid, but few sincerely bought her thesis of an African brotherhood which transcended racial issues.

Since Africa does not compromise the question of decolonizing southern Africa was it not apparent that installing any Angolan faction with South African sympathy was not in the interest of Africa?¹¹⁸

Angola has common borders with Namibia, which in turn has common borders with South Africa. Angola's role is particularly crucial to the liberation of Namibia and for the inevitable battle for South Africa.

African states do not have well researched, planned or well thought-out foreign policies. Rather, their foreign policies are measured reactions on ad hoc basis to events and situations as they arise. This was very much

¹¹⁸ See A.M. Ouda, "Following the victory of Angola," Africa Newsletter, Nos. 3 and 4, 1976, pp. 2-3.

the case with the Angolan conflict. Africa had not thought or planned ahead. And as has been pointed out, neither did the continent calculate the correlation between the outcome of events in Angola and the decolonization of the other tormented territories in the southern African enclave.

In early December 1981, South Africa despatched a bunch of mercenaries to overthrow the government of Seychelles.¹¹⁹ Earlier on in July, South Africa had embarked on a classic 'scorched earth' campaign in Angola, sweeping through villages, killing civilians, burning houses, crops and grain stores and slaughtering cattle. Water wells were either sabotaged or occupied by invading South African army units.¹²⁰ On August 23, South Africa invaded and occupied Angolan territory¹²¹ in an operation ominously reminiscent of the South African invasion of comparative magnitude at the outset of Angola's independence, six years before.

These recurrent punitive expeditions constitute a military defiance of Africa as a whole and reflect a significant development of Africa's intensifying war with the racist regime.

Additionally, the invasion had specific political, military and diplomatic objectives which can be clearly discerned from the timing of the operations. The assault was aimed at exploiting the differences between the Western Five Contact Group,¹²² seeking a negotiated settlement

¹¹⁹ "Seychelles: Soldiers of Misfortune," Newsweek, December 7, 1981, p. 20 ff.

¹²⁰ "Angola: Challenge from Pretoria," Africa No.122, October 1981, p.14

¹²¹ "Racist Challenge to world," West Africa, August 31, 1981, p.171

¹²² Africa, loc. cit., pp. 16-26.

on Namibia, which have manifested since the advent of the conservative Reagan administration in the United States and socialist government of President Mitterand in France.

South Africa like Washington chooses to interpret political developments in Africa usually in the very simplistic terms of East-West super-power ideological rivalry. Thus South Africa hopes to influence the United States in adopting what she calls an attitude of 'friendly neutralism' towards her and to abandon 'diplomatic hostility',¹²³ which the United States has shown in the past with regard to Namibia, and to withdraw support for SWAPO. Besides, South Africa is cleverly exploiting American intention of presenting a harder, more anti-communist image to counter Soviet influence worldwide.

By early September, with 11,000 South African soldiers still in Angola and holding a number of towns and 15,000 square miles of territory, Angolans speculated that what was in process of formation was a supposedly UNITA-controlled buffer zone. The invasion had been a cover to unload tons of military ware to Jonas Savimbi's insurgent groups in Cunene province.¹²⁴

In early December, Angola's only oil refinery was attacked. Jonas Savimbi claimed that the UNITA was responsible. It is somehow hard to believe that this attack was not consequent upon earlier deliberations

¹²³ Ibid p.17

¹²⁴ "The invasion that split the West," Africa Now, No.7, October 1981, pp. 16-18.

between Savimbi and Dr. Chester Crocker, United States Assistant Secretary of State.¹²⁵

Washington now seeks to tie the removal of Cuban forces in Angola to movement on the Namibian negotiations, using the Kissinger concept of linkage.¹²⁶ (It must not be forgotten that the United States up to date still occupies a part of Cuba). Apparently, Washington thinks Luanda would have little alternative but to come to an understanding with Savimbi once the Cuban troops are withdrawn.¹²⁷

The OAU must decide what role it intends to play in this new phase of broader confrontation which the situation clearly implies. It must translate moral indignation into effective action. It is here that the Frontline Summit held in Lagos in September, 1981, assumes appropriate significance. The summit should be placed within its strategic context. At the Summit, a range of military support was offered to the Angolans. The Summit also sharply raised the question as to whether the OAU is ready to pick up, once and for all, the gauntlet repeatedly thrown in its face by racist South Africa. Additionally, it brings to the fore another nagging question: Is the Cuban force the only credible fighting force in Africa today? And the corollary is: Who is going to fight Africa's wars?

¹²⁵ See The Guardian, London, Monday, December 14, 1981, p.6.
 Cf The Nigerian Tribune, Thursday, December 10, 1981, p.2.

¹²⁶ See Shehu Shagari, "South Africa is a threat to Commonwealth Existence," Nigeria Bulletin, Vol.3, No.20, October 16-31, 1981, pp.1,3.

¹²⁷ "America and puppet Savimbi," New Nigerian, Thursday, December 10, 1981, p.1

Africa has no choice but to come to grips, once and for all, with one of its thorniest problems. The immediate practical implications are two-fold. As a first step, on the international plane, the OAU must lay out plans and organize itself for a prolonged confrontation with the backers of apartheid, the United States in particular.

The OAU must sell its posture to other actors and canvass aggressively for support in international fora particularly the United Nations, the OPEC, the Arab League, and the Nonaligned Movement. Namibia is legally a UN Trust territory, therefore, properly situated, the fight for Namibia, for instance, should be between the UN and South Africa and not, as is the case now, between SWAPO and South Africa. The OAU should in this regard, seek UN support for Angola (socially and economically) and utter condemnation and isolation of the racist regime.

On the home front, Africa must not make the mistake of tackling the invasion of Angola in isolation from the general struggle against apartheid within South Africa. "President Des Santos ... appears to have thrown his full political weight behind efforts to secure the independence of Namibia through negotiations with the West.

"... The loss of Cunene province is the price Angola has had to pay for sheltering the South-West Africa Peoples' Organization that has been fighting a fifteen-year guerrilla war against South African forces for the independence of Namibia."¹²⁸

¹²⁸ The Times, Friday, December 18, 1981, p.9.

Namibia is only an outpost in the vast defence structure of apartheid. Independent Namibia will be just as vulnerable to South African aggression as independent Angola has been and will continue to be so long as the policy and practice of apartheid remain securely cocooned in South Africa itself. South Africa might choose to add Zimbabwe¹²⁹ and Mozambique to her hit-list, thus adding to the OAU catalogue of problems.

The security of Angola and other African States will be greatly enhanced¹³⁰ if apartheid is attacked directly at its base within South Africa. This means a properly co-ordinated plan for the southern Africa regions, involving of necessity sharply increased military support for the liberation movements within South Africa. South Africa will not seek adventures abroad if she has insurgency problems at home.

The need for Angola proper to strengthen her own security cannot be over-emphasized. The Angolan National Army, the FAPLA, was reported to have given the South African invaders a good fight. But there still have to be improvements. Angola has to develop a military capability independent of Cuba's military power. Poised, as it is, on South Africa's foothpath,

¹²⁹ Pretoria, already is unleashing economic war on Zimbabwe. See "Zimbabwe: war of attrition begins," Africa Now, October 1981, p.44.

¹³⁰ All indications point to the fact that South Africa is committed to the destabilization of neighbouring states. With stepped-up military and logistical support from South Africa, Mozambique's dissident guerrilla movement, the National Resistance Movement, has in recent months intensified its campaign of sabotage in the central regions of Mozambique. For greater details see "Mozambique: The hand that feeds dissidents," Africa, No.123, November 1981, pp. 65-67.

Angola must build up sophisticated military arsenals and acquire superb military skill and performance. South African military invincibility is a farce. Did rag-tag ill-equipped Vietnamese guerrillas not give the United States a humiliating defeat despite American deployment of a vast array of military arsenals, thousands of American soldiers and years of American involvement.¹³¹ Africans have got to and must learn to fight their wars.

It is probably the economic cost of maintaining the confrontation with South Africa that is putting the heaviest pressure on Luanda. The South African incursion has brought about food shortages and the crisis has forced Angola to cut imports and lower its main economic target.

Although potentially one of the richest nations in Africa, Angola is not being given a chance to develop her wealth because she has to spend most of her oil-revenues on importing arms, as well as the food that is not being grown because of the guerrilla war being waged by South-African backed UNITA.

The OAU must equally stress the campaign for economic aid for Angola as well. This is where the Arab League and the OPEC come in. In an earlier work¹³² the writer had observed that though many of the Arab states

¹³¹

For the story of Vietnam see Viktor Balor, Vietnam a diplomatic tragedy: the origins of the United States involvement, Dobbs Ferry, New York, Oceana Publications, 1966; Jaya Krishna Baral, The Pentagon and the making of United States foreign policy, Highlands, New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1978.

¹³²

M.N. Ojike, "Afro-Arab Relations" (unpublished Masters thesis, University of Lagos, 1979, pp.22-27.

are enormously rich, they have generally looked on with little concern as African nations have battled alone against balance of payment difficulties, the ravages caused by drought, civil war and apartheid, and the generally poor economic performances associated with underdevelopment. Arab posture in our confrontation with South Africa lacks the enthusiasm and seriousness with which Black Africa regards Arab war against Zionism. And Black Africa has made tremendous sacrifices for the Arab cause.

Now, is the time for the Arabs to flock impressively to the African banner. Some of the Arab capital that is frittered away in the large financial centres of Europe and the United States could be diverted to Africa to help Angola and the other frontline states to fight apartheid. In addition, the Arab League should throw its weight behind the OAU diplomatically in the fight against racist South Africa.

Oil-producing African states must rise to the occasion. They must wield oil power to wrest favourable concessions from the West and South Africa to enable this continent liberate South Africa. Power no longer lies just in the barrel of a gun but also in a barrel of oil.

CHAPTER THREE

The Nigerian Civil War

The Nigerian civil war represents a fine example of the tragedy of African states. A fine example of how a stitch in time can save nine. The Nigerian catastrophe could have been very much averted if only the Nigerian nation had taken, albeit, a little action to nip matters in the bud. And if only Africa had stood up courageously to condemn grisly events in Nigeria, maybe too, the war could have been averted. Africa must realize that, individual African states cannot perpetrate or condone the same policies and actions, Africans condemn in the apartheid stockade. Independent Africa must be seen as a fine and working alternative and model too, to racist South Africa.

The Nigerian conflict laid bare certain deficiencies in the OAU which in themselves threaten the very existence of the organization: Is the OAU a 'Court of Appeal' for all Africans - leaders and people alike - or an exclusive club for the protection of the personal interests of incumbent Heads of State and Government? When threatened with internal political revolt, no matter how justified, African leaders look to the OAU for protection. But when it suits them, they conveniently ignore the authority of that organization. The practical political implications of this sad anomaly is that it jeopardizes the fundamental human rights of the ordinary citizen in many an African state while the OAU remains an impotent spectator since there is an existing vacuum vis-a-vis the authority of that organization. Political stability in any African state should mean a state of natural balance involving, of necessity, social and political equity for the composite population and varying political tendencies in

that country. This is simply what all the volatile and ethnic politics in African states are all about. The continued and, in some cases, the increasing incidence of political injustice, is at the root of African political instability and the violence that erupts in attempts to seek redress.

Additionally, the Nigerian conflict brought to the fore another important question: a viable code of conduct for African political leaders. This brings us to the question of the clause in the OAU charter that forbids member-states to interfere in the internal affairs of each other. This work will not dwell much on this matter. Demarcation between internal and external affairs of sovereign states is a very tricky matter in international relations, especially in the Third World nations. Admittedly, it will raise a host of questions in Africa, particularly. This notwithstanding, this writer suggests this issue as an important area for research for scholars.

The Nigerian civil war was a cumulative of the nauseating divide-and-rule policies of British colonialism and events which Nigerians had spun for themselves.

There is a tendency for Africans to blame all their woes on external factors. Most of Africa's problems lie in Africa and within Africans. The Nigerian conflict is directly traceable to factors that plague almost all African states: bankrupt leadership and incompetence of government, decadence and corruption in the body-politic, hostile politics that stop short of war, ethnic hatred and rancour, deliberately generated by the elite. If colonial masters, in their interest sought to create or

emphasize divisions and antagonisms between various ethnic groups, do Africans not have greater interest in submerging these differences. Is it a clause in Adam's will that this obnoxious colonial legacy must be bequeathed to every generation in Africa ? Certainly, the things that unite peoples in Africa are greater than the things that divide them.

The Nigerian civil war is distinct from that of Angola in that it was not - as was the case in Angola - the case of the birthing of a new state in search of a role, an identity and a definition for itself. Rather, it was the case of the people of an already established state grinding themselves in competition, euphemistically called ethnicity, for monopoly and prime positions in the allocation of scarce resources.¹³³

It may not be correct to attribute the Nigerian civil war to the January 15, 1966 coup. Rather many of the factors that led to the conflict and even the coup itself dates back to the colonial days. The January 15 coup derived from the obnoxious pattern of social, economic and political events that prevailed before and after independence. The background to the conflict will be examined under three headings:-

1. The British colonial policy of divide and rule
2. Post-independence era
3. The Military.

¹³³ For a brilliant dissection and analysis of ethnicity in Nigeria, see Okwudibia Nnoli, Ethnic Politics in Nigeria, Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978.

The British Colonial Policy of Divide and Rule

The British colonial administration encouraged communal sentiments among Nigerians.¹³⁴ It pounced on every available opportunity to spread the myths and propaganda that they were "separated from one another by great distance, by differences of history and traditions, and by ethnological, racial, tribal, political, social and religious barriers."¹³⁵ In 1920, Sir Hugh Clifford, the colonial Governor of the country at the time, made it abundantly clear that his administration would seek to secure "to each separate people the right to maintain its identity, its individuality and its nationality, its chosen form of government; and the peculiar political and social institutions which have been evolved for it by the wisdom and the accumulated experiences of generations of its forebears."¹³⁶

British encouragement was reflected structurally by the administrative systems of indirect rule and regionalisation. Indirect rule¹³⁷ started out as an instrument for overcoming the pervasive financial, personnel, and communications problems of the colonial administration in Northern Nigeria and ended up as a means for reinforcing communal identity among Nigerians creating a new sense of communal identity where none existed, and providing

¹³⁴ J.S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, Berkeley University of California Press, 1958, pp.193-194.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Ibid, p. 193.

¹³⁶ Quoted in Ibid, p. 194.

¹³⁷ Margery Perham, Lugard: The Years of Authority, London, Collins, 1962. See also I.M. Okonjo, British Administration in Nigeria, 1900-1950, New York: NOK, 1974.

a new symbolic and ethnocentric focus for the urban population.

In the north, the British took over intact the system of centralized political power and patronage presided over by the emirs, using it to collect taxes. Government worked through the Native Authority system, which was embedded in the rigidly stratified social system. In return for helping the British keep order, the Northern ruling group retained its privileges and was insulated from the unsettling influence that came with colonization. Social changes and Western education reached the North last. And when politics came, the traditional elements of authority, government and party were virtually indistinguishable.¹³⁸

Colonial rule made a futile attempt to impose indirect rule in the south.¹³⁹ Traditional authority, status and wealth had been overtaken by and integrated with new forces, thrown up by trade and business, economic and social ferment. Southern political parties¹⁴⁰ were built by a new-breed

¹³⁸ Richard Sklar and C.S. Whitaker, Jr., "Nigeria," in J.S. Coleman and Carl Rosberg, Jr., Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa, Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1966. See also B.J. Dudley, Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria, London, Frank Cass, 1968.

¹³⁹ On the Ibo society refer to C.K. Meek, Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, London, Oxford University Press, 1937, "Ibo receptivity to Change," in W.R. Bascom and M.J. Herskovits, eds., Continuity and Change in African Cultures, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958. On the Yorubas see "The Yoruba of Nigeria," in J.L. Gibbs, Peoples of Africa, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.

¹⁴⁰ See Richard Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1963.

of educated and money-making generation.

At the political level, the various parts of the country did not share a common experience for a long time. The North was excluded from the area of the legislative competence of the Legislative Council set up by the 1922 constitution. At the time of the amalgamation of the North and South in 1914, the only bond of political unity was the person of Lord Lugard, the governor-general. Otherwise, the two retained their distinctive political identities and maintained separate administrations. High officials of the two separate bureaucracies only had the occasion of meeting at the annual session of the Legislative Council in Lagos. Despite the formal act of unification, Nigeria was still run as two colonies. Two administrative centres were built, one in Kaduna, the other in Lagos. In administration, land policy and in other fields of colonial government, the administration reinforced the "differences" between the North and South and not the unity of the colony.

These sectional differences in the political process divided Nigerians along communal lines, increased the social distance among members of the various groups. The same effect was produced by the attempt of colonialists to divide Nigerians along communal lines, as a mechanism for maintaining domination over them. As a political line, the colonialists used sectionalism to curb African nationalism and to maintain their power. For instance, in 1920, Sir Hugh Clifford effectively dampened the emergent West African nationalism by manipulating communal sentiments of the Nigerian members of the National Congress of West Africa when the latter called for reforms of the colonial order:

"I am entirely convinced of the right, for example, of the people of Egbaland ... of any of the great Emirates of the North ... to maintain that each one of them is, in a very real sense, a nation ... It is the task of the Government of Nigeria to build and fortify these national institutions."¹⁴¹

The impact of these colonial machinations was disastrous. Nigerians channelled their political attention toward their communal homelands. In a bid to check the march of Nigerian nationalism, the colonial administration identified with and sponsored reactionary communal interests in the country, particularly in the North. The British even resorted to the manipulations of elections along communal lines.¹⁴² This further poisoned relations between the North and South with a consequent increase in the social distance between members of their populations.

Successive colonial institutions devised for Nigeria, entrenched political power along regional lines.¹⁴³ By 1952, there was a Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) Government in the North, an Action Group (AG) government in the West and National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) in the East. From 1951 to 1958, Britain allowed Northern demand for half

¹⁴¹ J.S. Coleman, op. cit., p. 194

¹⁴² In the 1951 elections in Kano, the colonial administration tried very hard to frustrate Northern allies of Southerners. See "The Indirect Elections at Kano, 1951," unpublished mimeo, Nsukka, Nigeria, 1976, pp. 13-4.

¹⁴³ See John P. Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, London, Allen and Unwin, 1966, pp. 33 ff.

the seats in the Federal House. The 1958 Constitutional Conference laid down that the Federal Parliament would be elected on the basis of population figures. The North, with over half of the population was thus guaranteed cast-iron political dominion of the nation. Additionally, one of the major sources of conflict in Nigeria was sown: that the North is a privileged entity, with exclusive rights to leadership and political power and attendant benefits.

From 1958, when the North's electoral dominance was written into the Federal constitution, economic power also swung from the regions to the central government.¹⁴⁴ A new banking act gave the Federal government control over the operation of the regional marketing boards, and through them, the financial policies of the regional governments. The system of revenue distribution to the regions were governed by formula devised at the centre.¹⁴⁵ And the North controlled the centre.

The British succeeded in politicizing ethnicity in Nigeria. The net effect of this intense socio-economic competition arising from scarcity and inequality in colonial Nigeria was the sense of insecurity of the individual regarding its outcome. This led to increasing identification of individuals with their communal groups and to a proliferation of

¹⁴⁴ B.J. Dudley, "Federalism and the Balance of Political Power in Nigeria, Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, Vol. IV, No.1, March, 1966.

¹⁴⁵ See the Report of the Presidential Commission on Revenue Allocation (Okigbo), Vol.1, The Federal Government Press, Lagos, 1980, pp.15-24.

voluntary communal associations.¹⁴⁶

The regions succeeded in creating the false impression that the various political parties were the champions of the interests of various ethnic groups, and that the struggles of these parties for political dominance in the country, represented the struggles of the various ethnic groups for political ascendancy in the society. To mobilize mass support, the parties openly and covertly used emotive ethnic symbols, playing on alleged ethnic conflicts for their own self interests. The inevitable result was the intensification of the politicisation of ethnicity.¹⁴⁷

More than any other factor, inter-party struggle for political power politicised ethnicity and spread ethnic thinking to the most remote areas of Nigeria.

This sad development further polarised the country into ethnic compartments separated from one another by increasing divergence of political beliefs and interests, political experience and history of political struggle. The violence attendant on electoral campaigns became associated with interethnic relations. Under the circumstances, political disputes over the census, elections, constitution, the distribution of social amenities fuelled interethnic tension and hostility.

¹⁴⁶ E.P.O. Offodile, "Growth and influence of Tribal Unions," in West African Review, Vol. XVIII, No.239, 1974, pp.937-941

¹⁴⁷ For a comprehensive analysis see Okwudiba Nnoli, Ethnic Politics in Nigeria, Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978.

The increasing solidarity of each major ethnic group behind a political party, and the emphasis placed by Nigerian politicians on the pursuit of ethnic interests, heightened the fears of minority groups concerning neglect and domination by the leaders of the major groups. They saw their own social and political opportunities threatened by the tendency of the major political parties in government to secure these for the members of their own groups. So minority groups started agitation against 'domination',¹⁴⁸ and seeking regional status, too.

Thus, by independence in 1960, Nigerian politics had become synonymous with interethnic struggle for power. At both the national and regional levels politics meant sending of representatives into positions of power to enable them transfer regional or national resources to the ethnic homeland.

Post -independence era[†]

Confronted with the problem of how to operate within a federal system which the North could dominate even when they combined, Southern political parties tried all tactics - political compromise, shifting allegiances and alliances and incompatible coalitions.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ See Nigeria, Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Fears of Minorities and the Means of Allaying them, London, HMSO, 1958.

¹⁴⁹ See Mackintosh, op cit; see also Bill Dudley, Instability and Political Order, Ibadan, University of Ibadan Press, 1973. See also Richard Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1963.

The first battle for the control of scarce resources was fought in the second federal election in 1959.¹⁵⁰ No party secured an overall majority, but the colonial governor called on Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the leader of the NPC, as the largest party to form the government. The NCNC decided on an alliance with the NPC.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo, therefore went into opposition at the centre. Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola became the premier of the Western Region. Akintola's policy was directed to a settlement with the Federal government based on the old principle of regional security. His calculations was on Balewa's acceptance of a national triangular coalition on this basis. Such an arrangement could, however, have allowed no room for Awolowo, who himself coveted the role of the prime minister of the federation. The differences in the AG widened with ideological, intra-party and personal disputes.¹⁵¹

This conflict was suddenly and dramatically carried to the government. After the Awolowo wing of the AG appointed a new leader of the Western House of Assembly in place of Akintola, the first meeting of the House ended in disorder. The Federal government immediately declared a state of emergency in the West and imposed its own Administrator on the region. No state of emergency existed in the West and yet a state of emergency was

¹⁵⁰ Kenneth Post, The Nigerian Federal Election of 1959, London, Oxford University Press, 1963.

* The Nigerian first republic is well covered by John P. Mackintosh, et al, Nigerian Government and Politics, London, 1966.

¹⁵¹ Sklar, op. cit. pp 450-452. For further details see Ruth First, op. cit. pp 151-159.

arbitrarily imposed. A few years later, when a state of emergency did patently exist in the West, the Federal government refused to invoke its constitutional powers against the incumbent government which was its political ally.

Another spectacular development in the region was the treason trial of Chief Awolowo and other AG leaders, on a charge of plotting to overthrow the Federal government.¹⁵²

In the North, the NPC was having to call in the army to subdue its own turbulent Tiv opposition. NPC power, for all its 'northernness' did not carry with it the Tiv people of the Middle Belt, who agitated for a separate state. Led by Joseph Tarka, the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) fought elections in alliance with the AG and won landslide victories. Using its control of the regional ministries and Native Authorities, the NPC cut the Tivs off from amenities, dragged UMBC supporters to court on trumped up charges and dismissed UMBC supporters from employment and barred them from trade.¹⁵³ In 1960, the Tivs went riot. The army was called in. In 1964, there was another uprising which was quelled only with large-scale army intervention. From that time in February 1964, the Army had become permanently involved in the Nigerian politics of violence. The Tiv operations and the chaotic events in the West were crucial flashpoints for the

¹⁵² Sklar, "Nigerian Politics: The Ordeal of Chief Awolowo 1960-66" in G. Carter, ed; Politics in Africa: Seven Cases, New York, Harcourt Brace and World, 1966; L.K. Jakande, The Trial of Obafemi Awolowo, London and Lagos, John West, 1966.

¹⁵³ J.M. Dent, "A Minority Party - The United Middle Belt Congress," in J.P. Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, London, Allen and Unwin, 1966, p.486. See also J.I. Tseayo, Conflict and Incorporation in Nigeria, Zaria, Gaskiya Corporation, 1974, p.221.

young officers' coup of 1966.

The next major engagement in the struggle for control of political power at the centre and with it, for sources of national profit and patronage was fought during the 1964 Federal elections. The antagonisms created in the process caused a deep crisis. The lines of battle had been drawn in the quarrel over the census.¹⁵⁴

There was a general strike in June 1964. The government had set up a commission to review wages. When months went by and no recommendations were announced, workers called a general strike.¹⁵⁵ However, this was more a symptom of the general discontent with the politicians and the political system, than a wage strike.

Elections were fought in the West in October, 1965, in a state of incipient civil war, punctuated by unrestrained thuggery and ingenious trickery. As if that were not enough, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) government of the West announced when the elections were over, that there was to be a substantial reduction in the price paid to cocoa farmers. The West went into open revolt. What had begun as political violence to defeat a rival party in elections had grown into uncontrollable and uncontrolled lawlessness.¹⁵⁶ It was only in the West that the political crisis reached a point of total breakdown of civil government. But

¹⁵⁴ See Sklar, op.cit. pp. 133-135.

¹⁵⁵ See B.J. Dudley, Politics and Crisis in Nigeria, Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, 1973, p.33.

¹⁵⁶ For an account of these events in Western Nigeria see West Africa, October 23, No. 2525, 1965; pp.1177-1178, 1194-1195.

throughout the whole federation there was a profound disgust with politicians and politics.

Corruption was not backdoor and furtive but flaunted. The root of the Nigerian conflict was the quarrel over allocation of spoils. This took place at two levels: The first was the trilateral rivalry of the regions, which competed against each other for a larger share of the federal revenue of the export trade; over the allocation of development capital and the location of industries.

On the second level of this quarrel was the actual quest for the scarce resources. There was competition often called tribalism for jobs and promotions, vice-chancellorships of universities and chairmanships of corporations. Politics was organized on regional basis and politics contrived economic opportunities. Political parties were part of rival business and financial structures which existed to make money for certain individuals and to provide backing for the parties. Government commissions had laid bare the Nigerian-style greed and primitive accumulation.¹⁵⁷

Worse, Nigerian politicians had produced no ideology of national unity which could interpret or analyze conflict on social or class terms. The structure of the Nigerian political system at independence filtered all contests into regional and so inevitably into ethnic or communal channels.

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Report of the Tribunal Appointed to Inquire into Allegations Reflecting on the Official Conduct of the Premier of, and Certain Persons Holding Ministerial and Other Public Office in, the Eastern Region of Nigeria, Cmnd.51, London HMSO, 1957; Report of Coker Commission of Inquiry into the Affairs of Certain Statutory Corporations in Western Nigeria, Lagos, Federal Ministry of Information, 1962.

The Military [†]

In the army, as in politics, the misconception was that regional security and guarantees would cement unity.¹⁵⁸ As in politics, far from building a national force and national allegiance, regionalism also created fierce strains and sharp divisions in the army. Not surprisingly, regional cleavages and the built-in discord of Nigeria's political system infected the army. It became the military counterpart of the contesting regional groups in the nation's politics and the army finally went to war with itself.

Right from the start, the Federal government had injected politics into the army. Under British pressure, one of the first acts of the Balewa regime had been to introduce a quota system for the recruitment of officers and men, which was intended to reproduce in the army, the dominance of the North in the political system. The North was to have 50% of army recruits, officers and men while the East and the West would have 25% each. This principle of regional balance was also applied to the selection of candidates for training schemes abroad. Recruitment of ground troops was supposed to be on provincial allocations, in order to prevent a particular region from being over-represented, or certain traditional areas

¹⁵⁸ See Adewale Ademoyega, Why We Struck: The Story of The First Nigerian Coup, Ibadan, Evans Brothers, 1981, pp.33-63: See Also Robin Luckham, The Nigerian Military, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1971, p.43.

[†] S.K. Panter-Brick (ed.), Nigerian Politics and Military Rule: Prelude to the Civil War, provides valuable essays on the Nigerian Military and covers the period right up to the brink of the civil war.

of army enlistment from outweighing others. This was of particular Northern concern, since the Middle Belt was just such a traditional area, and the emirates of the far or 'true' North were not.

The bulk of the riflemen in the army - as many as 75% - were Northerners.¹⁵⁹ The army did not publish regional statistics but it was clear that the system of 'balanced' regional representation was not working in practice.

If the ground troops were predominantly Middle-Belters, the officer corps was dominated by Southerners, especially Easterners. 60% of the Officer corps were Ibos.¹⁶⁰ Until the introduction of the quota system, officer corps selection had been by open competition, with entry by educational qualification. By 1961, a great number of tradesmen, technical and transport staff, signallers and clerks were Southerners.¹⁶¹

The quota system had been devised to speed up the intake and training of Northerners. Along with it went a concerted effort to promote Northerners more rapidly, especially into the middle-level officer group where Easterners were dominant. To this end, Northerners were favoured for promotion, pushed upwards faster than their Southern counterparts.

¹⁵⁹ Martin J. Dent, The Military and Politics: study of the relations between the Army and the Political Process in Nigeria, 1966-67, Paper presented to a Seminar of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, 1968, p.3.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

Southern officers, eligible for promotion had to stand by and watch Northerners of shorter service and less experience being promoted over their heads.¹⁶²

Instead of controlling regionalism, the quota system only inflamed it. And Southerners were quick to take note of the fact that like the weighting of the constitution, the army quota was calculated to guarantee the hegemony of the North. In addition, it was also noted that the Minister of Defence was always, invariably an influential NPC politician and that all the military facilities - the military academy, the air force training school and the ordnance factory were all sited in the North.¹⁶³

The South felt that the most equitable national system for the army, as in politics and the civil service was to pin access on the basis of merit and not weight the system in favour of any one region.¹⁶⁴ What the quota system did was to abuse the military institution for the purposes of Northern politics. To the middle ranks of the officer-corps, the political disabilities of the South and their own professional disabilities in the army conveyed only too glaringly.

There were also tension and differences between the various educational generations of officers. From the colonial point of view, the Nigerian army was mercenary. The British looked upon Nigerian soldiers under their

¹⁶² Luckham, op. cit. p.43. Table 3

¹⁶³ Adenoyega, op. cit. p.24

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 67

command as soldiers of fortune, who had no interest in the continuity of the British Empire. For this reason, they were encouraged to remain illiterate.¹⁶⁵

A new age had dawned on the Nigerian army as more and more educated, politically conscious and revolutionary Nigerians sought entry to the officer corps of the Army. Ademoyega, on his commission into the Army "got the impression that a terrible conflict was inevitable, because the officers had widely different qualities. First, there were the Sandhurst-trained officers who had undergone a total of three years' training before they were commissioned. Almost invariably, they were real soldier-like officers who knew the art of the game. Almost invariably again, they had imbibed the British officer's aloofness from politics and nationalism. Ninety-five per cent of them had never studied politics and were really not interested. They would without hesitation and more or less without thinking of it do whatever the politicians commanded them. They would open fire on innocent citizens without batting an eyelid. In addition, a good percentage of them readily and willingly hob-nobbed with politicians, in order to attain the highest ranks and positions. That was the kernel of the inevitable conflict.

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Cf. N.J. Miners, The Nigerian Army, London, Methuen, 1971, p.2; Ben Gbulie, Nigeria's Five Majors, Onitsha, Africana Educational Publishers, 1981, p.51.

"The second group, consisted of young Mons-trained officers, who were commissioned after just a year of military training in Nigeria and Britain. Unlike the Sandhurst-trained type, they were not highbrow officers and were actually supposed to continue their training within the Army. Needless to say, they also had read nothing about politics and were not in the least interested in the matter. Perhaps the only politics they knew very well was that their own selection into the Army was based on the political division of the country, which conceded 50% representation to the Northern Region. As a result, those who were not qualified to enter, found themselves favoured by the quota system - a factor that further emphasised the disparity in the qualities of the officers.

"Thirdly, there were officers who were commissioned from the ranks. These soldiers who had served for some years were commissioned for the services such as transport, education and Quartermaster services. Usually, they were older in age than the above-quoted types. Some of them had attained high officer ranks by 1962 and were in fact holding the highest ranks in the Army, while some were newly commissioned and were of junior officer ranks. All of them had been rigidly schooled in the British military tradition of political aloofness and obedience to the politicians. They had not studied politics and most of them hooked themselves to politicians for promotional favours. This was another kernel of the inevitable conflict.

"Finally, there were the non-professional graduates in the fighting arms of the Army At least half of us were manifestly imbued with political and revolutionary zeal and principles." ¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Ademoyega, op. cit. pp. 28 - 29.

The new breed of educated officers openly despised the inferior intellectual showing and narrow professionalism of their seniors.¹⁶⁷ Starting from 1962, more and more young Nigerian graduates pressed to join the army but were rejected. Anxious about the implication of an enlightened officer corps, Britain alerted the Balewa Government to all its dangers. Using the university students demonstration of 1962 as an excuse, the prime minister discouraged further enlistment of graduates into the infantry. Instead such aspirants were sent to the supporting services, such as education and health.

The corruption of politics infected the military. Three Nigerian naval officers embezzled nearly one-tenth of the 1964 navy vote.¹⁶⁸ Also there were leakages of the ingenious system of perks used by the Defence Ministry, to ensure the loyalty of the army's top officers. The Fourth Battalion which was stationed in the West for about nine years (being transferred to the North in 1966) was used as an extension of the Akintola administration.¹⁶⁹ Many young officers resented this use of the army.

Early in 1966, Commonwealth prime ministers assembled in Lagos to discuss the unilateral declaration of independence by then Rhodesia. That Nigerian tradition of eternal quest for glory abroad while the nation is in shambles persists till today. Turning his face from the violence in his own country, Balewa was debating whether violence should be used

¹⁶⁷ Ben Gbulie's description of Aguiyi Ironsi aptly illustrates this: "Ironsi was ... a hard-drinking, slow-speaking introvert who had risen from the ranks, ... inept and inefficient - hardly the calibre of officer to command an army ... unfit to command even a funeral detail. Gbulie, op. cit. p.53

¹⁶⁸ Ademoyega, op. cit. p. 121.

against a white minority regime in Rhodesia.

By this time, there was widespread belief in the South that the army was to be thrown into the West to prop up Akintola's regime.¹⁷⁰ Suspicious attempts were made, though unsuccessfully, to change the army command. Changes in the police command put a Northerner, Alhaji Kam Salam, in charge of that force, by-passing two officers (Easterners) who were senior to him.¹⁷¹

The operation began to take on a more ominous look than just a move to crush resistance in the West. There were suggestions of a simultaneous declaration of emergency in more than one area. In certain quarters in the North, the violence in the West was interpreted as instigated by the Eastern region. There, were too, allegations that the NPC was encouraging Isaac Adaka Boro to start an insurrection in the Niger Delta so as to provide an excuse for moving Northern soldiers into Eastern Nigeria.

The January 15, 1966 Coup d'etat

On January 15, 1966, a group of young Nigerian army officers sought unsuccessfully - to overthrow the Nigerian government.¹⁷² Though the coup failed, it resulted in the establishment of military rule in Nigeria.

¹⁷⁰ Patrick Keatley, Guardian, 28th January, 1966.

¹⁷¹ Northern Echo, Members Newsletter, 21 November, 1966.

¹⁷² For the most authentic report of the coup, see Adewale Ademoyega, Why We Struck: The Story of the first Nigerian coup. Ibadan, Evans Brothers Limited, 1981. The coup had been conceived and planned by Majors Nzeogwu, Ifeajuna, Ademoyega. This work is an original account of the coup by the only survivor of the trio that originally planned the coup.

Nigerians were euphoric. All hailed the young majors. The national press wrote about the coup with great enthusiasm.¹⁷³

One of the tragedies of African states is their vulnerability to neocolonial manipulations. Directly or indirectly, many African states, though independent are still very much African colonies. Departed colonial masters still dictate policies and events.

This coup was eventually crushed. Sir Francis Cumming-Bruce, the British High Commissioner in Nigeria, sat in not only on emergency consultations but was privy to various crucial decisions, notably, the decision to hand over to the army, a course in all probability advised by the British High Commissioner personnel.¹⁷⁴ Major-General Johnson Ummakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi, who was the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Nigerian Army took up the helm of affairs of the state.

The first press suggestion that the coup was an Ibo affair open to Northern reprisals was made by a BBC correspondent who beat the news blackout on the coup day to mention that all the young majors seemed to be Ibos.¹⁷⁵ One week later the Sunday Times asked: "Can Ironsi Hold Nigeria?"¹⁷⁶ The British who had always showed themselves to be friends of the North had initiated Northern hegemony because it gave them all the access they needed

¹⁷³ As cases in point see Daily Times, January 18, 19, 1966; Morning Post, 18, 19, 21, 1966. See also A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Sourcebook, 1966-70, London 1970 which covers Nigeria from that period to the end of the civil war.

¹⁷⁴ See Ruth First, The Barrel of a Gun, London, Penguin Books, 1972, p.228.

¹⁷⁵ Reported by Walter Schwarz, Observer, 30 January, 1966.

¹⁷⁶ Sunday Times, 23 January, 1966.

to continue to manipulate the political and economic growth of Nigeria in their own favour. Because the British had always benefited from Nigeria's underdevelopment and purposeless political set-up, she was the first to impute tribal motives to the coup.

To all intents and purposes, the coup was not an Ibo coup with motives of tribal domination. It was inspired by widespread political grievances and it lacked a direct organizational link with the United Peoples' Progressive Alliance (UPGA) or any other political group. The January coup grew out of the angry but confused political purposes of young officers, who shared the impatience and disgust of their generation at the iniquity of the politicians. The reasons for the coup were contained in the state of affairs of Nigeria in 1966. The stage for some kind of revolution had been set for quite some time. Since independence, the nation had stumbled from one crisis to the other.

"Contrary to the load of wicked propaganda that had since been heaped ..., there was no decision ... to single out any particular ethnic group for elimination or destruction. Our intentions were honourable, our views were national and our goals were idealistic

".... It would be recalled that by late 1965, the efforts of the Balewa Government to Northernize the top echelon of the Army were already bearing fruits. Some northerners were already occupying most of the strategic positions in the Army. Those positions could be easily used to thwart our attempt to change the Government.

Sheer caution dictated that we should be sure to neutralize those officers so that our revolution would have a chance of taking off and succeeding.... Even among those earmarked for arrest, only four were Northerners, two were Westerners and two were Easterners. But the North had always had more than 50% of the intake of officers into the Army since 1961, and more than 70% of the intake of other ranks. Therefore, if casualties¹⁷⁷ were to happen, it was more likely to be in that proportion than anything else."¹⁷⁸

To buttress Ademoyega's assertion, one of the intimate participants of the coup says: "The truth of the matter, of course, was that the January coup was a coup of the progressive elements in the Nigerian Armed Forces - an intervention clearly necessitated by the breakdown of law and order in the country. It was therefore neither an "Igbo affair" nor for that matter the affair of any other ethnic group connected with it. It was essentially a symbiotic operation conducted, in spite of its apparent, shortcomings, in the best interest of the nation. The numerical strength of Igbo officers involved in it was purely incidental - considering that, all along, Igbos had constituted more than half the strength of the officers coups of the Nigerian Army. They had dominated Ironsi's counter-insurgency operation that ultimately brought the coup to a halt."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ See Appendix II

¹⁷⁸ Ademoyega, op.cit, pp. 60-61

¹⁷⁹ Gbulie, op.cit, p.71

At a press conference on May 21, 1967, at Enugu, the chief architect, and principal character of the coup, Major Chukwuma Nzoegwu, summed up the motives of the coup as follows:-

- (i) The unrest in the West had assumed anarchical dimensions, and had great possibilities of spreading to other parts of the country.
- (ii) The projected take-over of the country by the Nigerian National Alliance, with the assistance of highly placed Northerners in the Army, portended a bloody disintegration of the country.
- (iii) It was necessary to purge the country of its social evils - bribery, tribalism, bureaucracy, nepotism, feudalism and other social injustices.
- (iv) There had arisen a class of presumptuously chosen leaders who forget their powers were derived from the people, and were running the country for their own benefit.
- (v) Simpering at foreign eulogies on its democracy and stability, the civilian rulers had let the domestic affairs of the country come under the remote control of imperialists. In external affairs, the leaders sought to dance to the tune of foreign flatteries, resulting in lack of coherence in the country's policy statements.

- (vi) Because of the inability of Nigerian leaders to make useful plans and the consequent drift of the country, the Nigerian populace had developed a sometimes too emotional but often too soft and apathetic approach to vital issues. It was necessary to whip them up and re-orientate them, so they would appreciate things objectively, and to bring them to realise that national issues are also personal issues.
- (vii) The country needed a more realistic unification, a centralization of vital agencies and the building of a nation in which "every citizen belongs everywhere."
- (viii) The civilian leaders had proved completely incapable of managing the affairs of the country.¹⁸⁰

The need to scrutinize, sift and put the intentions and motivations of the leaders of the coup in their proper perspectives is very significant because the reasons behind the coup was to generate a lot of tension and controversy between Nigeria and Biafra. Later, it became one of the main conflicting issues between the two parties to the dispute.¹⁸¹

Nigeria's stand was that if the January 15 coup had not occurred, the subsequent tragic events in the country would certainly have been avoided.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Major Nzeogwu in his interview with Dennis D. Ejindu for Africa and the World, London, 1967, Vol. 3, No. 5, p.15.

¹⁸¹ See Nigeria, 1966, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1967, pp. 4 - 9.

¹⁸² Ibid.

Eastern Nigeria argued that the idea was to instal an administration headed by civil servants and university teachers. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Westerner was to be released from prison and installed as Executive President of the Republic.¹⁸³

As has been pointed out earlier, because the politicians did not provide any national symbol, myths, referents, analyses and interpretation of events in Nigeria are always sought in ethnic or ethnic-related frameworks. Nor did the politicians step in to where the British failed, to make attempts to unite the heterogenous groups that make up the country. Politicians continued the British colonial legacy emphasising the differences between the various ethnic groups.

Maintenance of law and order is divisible from politics only provided there is a political leadership. It was the failure of the political leadership to maintain law and order that created a vacuum for the military to move in.

The Advent of the Military

The January 15, 1966 coup shot the military to a pre-eminent position in the Nigerian political system. An analysis of the military has shown that it was not better than its political counterpart. The army itself was riddled by the same problems that it was expected to eradicate.

¹⁸³ For Biafra's own version of the coup, Cf. The Biafran pamphlet, January 15, Before and After, Government Printer, Enugu, 1967, pp. 15-39.

Directly, after the coup, the nation expected radical changes to prevent a resurgence of the old order. But the reforming zeal of the young officers had been snuffed out by the senior army command. The political representatives of the old order had gone, but the order itself was intact. The new men were of the old order, with all the reflexes of the old regime.

A new ruling group stepped into the power vacuum created by the toppling of politicians, the bureaucracy: the army and the civil service in close alliance¹⁸⁴ with the civil servants doing most of the thinking for the military. The misconception was that the faults of the old regime had been due to the politicians and not the political system. Therefore, there was that impression that if under the military there were no politicians in the government, the sources of political dissensions would have been removed.

Two main challenges faced the Ironsi regime: building national unity and elimination of the old regional divisions and the eradication of corruption. While Ironsi succeeded at least up to May 1966, in restoring the law and order, he was less successful in governing Nigeria in a way which would conciliate the various political factions. Ironsi's regime was marked by weakness, procrastination, vagueness and indecision. He threw away precious opportunities of initiative.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Wole Soyinka, The Man Died, London, Rex Collings, p. 180-183, gives an insight into the bureaucrat/soldier oligarchy.

¹⁸⁵ For greater details, see Madiebo, op. cit. pp. 29-59.

Ironsi's instinct all along was to placate Northerners. He relied on Northern officers in the army and appointed Lt. Colonel Gowon, Chief-of-Staff to Brigadier Ogundipe, giving him virtual command of the army; placed young Northerners in charge of ordnance and signals and was guarded only by Northern soldiers.¹⁸⁶ These measures neither resolved his government's dilemma in the face of conflicting pressures, neither did they remove the Ibo tag on him.

Some of the sources of the Nigerian conflict were to be found in the political system and not just in politicians. Once more, despite the demise of politicians, regional cleavages re-asserted themselves, infighting in the army and federal civil service for sensitive posts and promotions began anew, vested interests entrenched in the regions reared up their heads once more.¹⁸⁷

The advent of the military opened up new battlefronts. Political power now lay in the civil service. Old antagonisms between the top echelons of the civil service had not disappeared. The civil service, no less than the government of the politicians, had been a tug-of-war between contestants of different regions for office and promotion. Prior to the emergence of the military, Southerners argued that Northerners had been elevated to senior posts, because they were Northerners and not necessarily because they were qualified.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ See First, op. cit., pp. 301-333.

The bitter power struggle that had gone on for years between Ibos and Yorubas in the federal service, where the Yorubas had entrenched their monopoly as the first arrivals and earliest qualified, now assumed sharper dimensions.

In response to the coup, some quarters felt that "the federal system had proved a complete failure..." and called on General Ironsi to think seriously about a unified system of Government; the idea of regions must be thrown overboard."¹⁸⁸

As an attempt "to remove the last vestiges of the intense regionalism of the recent past and to produce the cohesion in the Government structure which is so necessary in achieving and maintaining the paramount objective of the National Military Government and indeed of every Nigerian, namely, national unity," Ironsi promulgated Decree 34 on May 24, 1966.¹⁸⁹ Nigeria ceased to be a federation, regions were abolished and the public services were to be unified.

On May 29, the North struck at its loss of power at the centre and what it believed to be the real purpose of the Ironsi regime - the demolition of the federal constitution to consolidate Nigeria under Ibo domination. The demonstration of the students at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, was the signal for serious disturbances with an ugly tribal undertone.

¹⁸⁸ The Nigerian Daily Telegraph, 23 January, 1966.

¹⁸⁹ The Constitution (Suspension and Modification) No.5, Decree No.34, 1966, May 24, 1966.

There were fierce mob killings of Ibos in Northern towns.¹⁹⁰ After the May killings, the Army then turned to slaughter the Ibos within it. There came at intervals of two months each, the revenge coup of Northerners in the army, the July coup which brought down the Ironsi regime¹⁹¹ and installed the Yakubu Gowon regime and the September/October massacre of Ibos in the North, after which the words pogrom and genocide became part of the Nigerian vocabulary.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ These killings were barely reported in Nigeria. The New Nigerian of 30th May, 1966, appeared with few of its eight pages blank and the announcement "Within fifteen minutes of this edition ... going to press, a telephone message was received from a government official instructing that no reference be made to the subject that formed the basis of the reports and pictures which should have occupied this space" New Nigerian, 30 May, 1966. For a comprehensive account of this carnage and the subsequent ones see Madiebo, op.cit. passim. See also Wole Soyinka, op. cit. passim.

¹⁹¹ For details see Madiebo, op.cit. p.53; Ruth First, op.cit. pp.184 ff. Lindsay Garret, Danjuma, The Making of a General, Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1979.

¹⁹² "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as

- (a) Killing members of a group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December, 1948 under Resolution 260 (iii).

Charges of genocide were made by various individuals, see for example Reverend T. Graig in the December issue of Presbyterian Record, London, 1967, See also Soyinka, op. cit. p.18.

The Unification Decree was in reality not as climacteric as the furore surrounding it. In fact, it changed less than in Northern fear. The regions were to be known as groups of provinces, and the governors were to be heads not of regions but of provinces. They were to govern under the same arrangements as previously. The Public services were to be unified under a single public service commission but provincial commissions were to make all appointments to the unified service except for the top-ranking posts.¹⁹³ This in effect, meant that provincial services would have more patronage to dispense than regional ones had previously, when all federal posts had been handled by the Federal Public Service Commission. Top Northern civil servants stood to lose from the fact that seniority in the federal service was to be calculated on salary since civil service grades were lower in the North than elsewhere.¹⁹⁴

Apart from the East, the rest of the Federation reported virtually nothing of the July coup. The Enugu version¹⁹⁵ of the July 1966, events was the only one available till recently when factual accounts by ex-army officers¹⁹⁶ have been published. These mentioned works are replete with details of names, time, places and particular incidents.

¹⁹³ Group 6 and above in the civil service at that time meant salaries of £2,200 per annum and over.

¹⁹⁴ See New Nigeria, 25 May, 1966.

¹⁹⁵ Nigerian Pogrom: The organized massacre of Eastern Nigerians, Ministry of Information, Eastern Nigeria, 1967.

¹⁹⁶ These works have been cited extensively: Madiebo, Adomeyega, Gbulie, Soyinka. Olusegun Obasanjo's My Command has been severely criticised by many including army officers as a reproduction of Nigerian Security Organization's (NSO) reports.

Northern Nigeria was bent on secession but its mentor, Britain, quickly pointed out that it would suffer if it seceded since the wealth of the nation emanated mainly from the South and also because the North is land-locked. They also impressed it on the North that all they needed to do was to press for the same political privileges as used to accrue to it. And in any case, Gowon who was from the Middle Belt saw in Northern secession the danger of the Middle Belt remaining a perpetual and vulnerable minority in the North and he had emerged as the head of government. This was how the secession speech drafted for Gowon to be broadcast on August 1, 1966, was hastily edited to remove the secession aspect.¹⁹⁷

When Ironsi was killed, Northern soldiers refused to accept the authority of Brigadier Ogundipe, who was next in rank to Ironsi. In addition, they would not have Rear Admiral Way of the Navy or Colonel Adebayo who was next to Ogundipe. These men were all Southerners of Western region origins. Instead, the North insisted that a Northerner had to be at the helm of affairs of the Nigerian nation. Yakubu Gowon had emerged as the North's compromise candidate. And he became the head of state of Nigeria.

¹⁹⁷ Frederick Forsyth makes an interesting remark on the incoherence of the speech. See Frederick Forsyth, The Biafra Story, Baltimore, 1969, p. 58. For the text of the broadcast see West African Pilot, Lagos, 1966, August 2, p.1.

The old Nigerian faith in constitutions re-emerged. With the right constitution, everything would fall neatly into place. Lawyers and leaders of thought went to work to draft a constitution for Nigeria. At the beginning of the conference, the Northern delegation opted for a loose federation on the grounds that "recent developments have shown that for the country, a rigid political ideology will be unrealistic and disastrous."¹⁹⁸

Shortly after, there was a sensational volte face, the North presented a new and significantly different set of proposals. Now the North insisted on an effective central government, immediate agreement "in principle" on the creation of more states and abandonment of the idea that secession should be written into the constitution as a basic right. There is no hard evidence of what had brought about this new stance. Presumably, the North had again yielded to arguments that losing its access to the sea and its share of the oil revenues would be tantamount to economic suicide.

Even as Nigeria's fate was being debated in the Constitutional Conferences, Ibos were being massacred in the North. The shocking pictures and eye-witness stories are difficult to dismiss as "propaganda." They have been supported by the testimonies of many that reported the tragedy.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Memorandum submitted by the delegations to the Ad Hoc Conference on Constitutional Proposals for Nigeria, Lagos, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1967, p.3.

¹⁹⁹ For example see C. Legum, The Observer, 16 October, 1966.

"Murtala Mohammed might have been the evil genius behind the coup: but it was executed by the NCOs, largely Middle-Belters."²⁰⁰ Federal fire-power now lay with these Middle-Belters and the political power with a knot of minority permanent secretaries.

Ibos in the North were ready targets for a pogrom. They had spread out throughout Nigeria as workers and fiercely competitive and successful traders. In the North, they had lived as a minority in a traditional static society and were resented as pushful intruders. A pogrom requires both a peculiar social situation and the exploitation of that situation by a politically organized group. Social change had begun to produce a group of Northern entrepreneurs who were ready and eager to take over the business of the Ibos. The successful alien minority could be projected as evil, responsible for all the crises generated by social change. The violence involved in a pogrom could be contained where a government is willing or strong. In Nigeria, the government was neither.²⁰¹

Like petty traders the world over, Ibos exploited their customers and ignored their resentment, which situation exists throughout Nigeria till date and is indulged in by all the ethnic groups. Petty traders and middlemen exploit situation. In Nigeria now, before wage increases are even mooted, traders revise prices upwards.

²⁰⁰ First, op. cit, p. 320.

²⁰¹ See C. Legum in The Observer, London, October 16, 1966.

As for the killings, Nigerian and African official callousness scared the Ibos indelibly. Even, Gowon's remonstrance at the peak of the pogrom, was not only belated but provocative in its pointed reference to himself as a Northerner and did little to mollify the North.²⁰²

The official federal version of the massacres explains that the killings in the North were reprisals for attacks on Northerners in the East. Inflammatory news report of these attacks, carried by Radio Cotonou, the report said, had incited Northerners. But the truth is that, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, governor of the East had made provincial secretaries directly responsible for the safe evacuation of Northerners in the East.²⁰³

The Radio Cotonou broadcast had been delivered in French on 27 September, 1966. A monitored version presumably by Americans somehow found its way to Ministry of Information in Kaduna.²⁰⁴ The item was transformed from a monitored news report into a government press release which was broadcast on Radio Kaduna several times.²⁰⁵

"The decision to release the Cotonou report under government auspices was taken by a caucus of top Northerners, among them Aliu Akilu, head of the civil service; the military government cleared it."²⁰⁶

²⁰² See Nigeria, 1960.

²⁰³ N.C. Perkins, Administrator of Enugu in 1966.

²⁰⁴ There was a United States Foreign Broadcast Information Service, staffed and operated by Americans in Kaduna. By an arrangement with the Northern authorities, it did monitoring in the region.

²⁰⁵ See letter by a M.O. Raju to Nigerian Opinion No.8/9, August-September, 1967; The pogrom of September, 1966, and a pogrom it was, might not have been but for the propaganda launched by Radio Kaduna.

²⁰⁶ First, op. cit. p.333.

The Kaduna repeats of the Cotonou broadcasts were broadcast the week the Constitutional Conferences in Lagos issued its press release. The North felt it was being out-maneuvred in federal politics and used that as its riposte. Certainly, the North was fully aware of the implications and consequences, since the region was already launched on an anti-Ibo pogrom.

When the storm had receded, the New Nigerian reported: "No truth in Radio Cotonou report."²⁰⁷ The paper had investigated and found nothing to substantiate the Radio Cotonou report. The federal government called the Cotonou broadcast "unfounded rumour."²⁰⁸ Yet, the following year in the federal government pamphlet, Nigeria 1966, the "unfounded rumour" that the federal government itself had denounced became the official version of the massacres in the North.

Attitudes towards the pogrom varied throughout the whole federation, from a strange sense of perveted joy in some places to blase indifference in others.²⁰⁹

If the scale of the disaster was amazing, the fact that the rest of Nigeria cared little was shocking.

²⁰⁷ New Nigeria , 5 October, 1966

²⁰⁸ See statement issued by the Federal Military Government in Lagos, Ibid.

²⁰⁹ See H. Loucheim in the New York Herald Tribune, 3 October, 1966.

The Drift towards secession and the Civil War

Nigeria's estranged leaders met at Aburi in Ghana from January 4 to 5, 1967. The meeting was presided over by General Ankrah of Ghana. The meeting raised hopes that the Nigerian conflict could be settled without recourse to further violence. Agreement was reached on two major problems: the question of leadership; the principle of collective rule on the basis of the concurrence of all Military Governors on decisions affecting their regions.²¹⁰

Lt. Colonel Ojukwu pressed the case of the East very persuasively. He proposed the need for separation of the forces and population, stressing the need to move slightly apart to survive, rather than closer to perish in collision. He also established a fact which nobody disputed, that no person at that point in time could command the entire loyalty of the people of Nigeria.²¹¹

The meeting²¹² also dealt with the questions of importation of arms, renouncement of the use of force, the reorganization of the army, an ad hoc constitutional conference and displaced persons.²¹²

²¹⁰ For the full text of the official minutes of the meeting at Aburi, see Appendix III.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

Instead of becoming the basis for permanent settlement, the Aburi meetings came to be a subject of bitter controversy which resulted in further erosion of confidence. When the sound of the guns had died down, the obnoxious role played by certain top civil servants in this connection came to light.²¹³ However, Gowon backpedalled on the Aburi Agreements and the East regarded that as the final act of bad faith.

The Nigerian official version of the causes of the war has heaped all of the blame for secession and the civil war on Ojukwu's ambition and the Ibos. In 1966, Colin Legum noted that "... Nigerians have been sheltered from knowing the full magnitude of the disaster that has overtaken the Ibos in the Northern Region. The danger is that the truth will not be believed and so no proper lessons learnt once the horror is over," If Nigeria and Africa as a whole are to learn proper lessons from the Nigerian conflict, analyses of the conflict must be made on a true premise.

The blame for the secession and the subsequent bloody civil war must be put squarely on the North. The other parts of the federation must be blamed too. "What happens to human beings and to a nation when any group within that nation is tacitly declared to be outside the law's protection...?"²¹⁴ "In those crucial days when Gowon had become the Head of the Rebel Army, he made it clear to Brigadier Ogundipe that his group wanted

²¹³ For details of post-Aburi developments see the excellent analysis by S.K. Panter-Brick, "From Military Coup to Civil War, "In Nigerian Politics and Military Rule, Prelude to the Civil War, London, University of London, the Athlone Press, 1970, pp. 14, 57, especially pp. 37-48.

²¹⁴ Soyinka, op. cit, pp. 20-21.

nothing short of secession of the North from the remainder of Nigeria."²¹⁵

Ojukwu who had barricaded himself at the Police Headquarters in Enugu quickly agreed that the North should be allowed to secede. Ejoor could not resist the idea either. So the Brigadier gave the green light that the North was free to secede. The next question is how did it come that the North which aimed at secession, turned round and fought for the integrity of Nigeria, while the East which did all the time work for and aimed at the integrity of this nation swung round to wear the garb of, and fight for secession?"²¹⁶

It was for the continued unity of Nigeria that Ojukwu accepted the effects of the May riots with stoical mildness. He appealed to his people for calm and encouraged them to go back to the North.

When Northern soldiers bent established rules to instal Gowon over and above higher ranking military officers as the head of state, the East felt that if the North which had been earlier bent on secession, would no longer go because the power had returned there, and would not stay unless the power remained there, that it had no further need to remain in that political association called Nigeria. Events had shown that the North was hell bent on having everything its own way. The North had refused to

²¹⁵

Ademoyega, op.cit, p.121.

²¹⁶

Ademoyega, op.cit, p. 122.

honour the few agreements reached by the Constitutional Conference with respect to the removal of the Northern troops from the West. However, if any single event could be so termed, it was that September/October pogrom staged throughout the Northern Region and directed in the main against the Ibos that made the civil war inevitable." ²¹⁷

By turning its back on the Aburi accords, Nigeria severed the last cords that tied the Ibos to Nigeria. On March 31, Ojukwu issued a Revenue Collection Edict 11, 1967, which in fiscal terms was very near secession. It decreed that as from April 1, 1967, "any revenue due from any source whatsoever in Eastern Nigeria and collected in Eastern Nigeria for and on behalf or payable to the Federal Government ... shall be paid ... to the Government of Eastern Nigeria." ²¹⁸

Reasons cited for the decision included the following:

- (1) The Federal Government had failed, despite its pledge in the Aburi agreement, to pay the salaries of refugee civil servants and Federal corporation employees up to March 3, 1967;
- (2) The Eastern Region had to look after about two million persons whose displacement from other parts of Nigeria was now considered "irreversible;"

²¹⁷ Ibid, p.131.

²¹⁸ Eastern Nigeria Revenue Collection Edict, 1967, Edict No.14 of 1967, paragraph 3.

- (3) The Federal Government had delayed paying the East its statutory share of revenues and had "withheld" monies to this Region from other sources, totalling well over ten million pounds sterling."²¹⁹

Other than seek ways to conciliate and bring back the East that had been slaughtered, battered and humiliated, the Federal Military Government responded by announcing economic sanctions. Gowon mentioned the possibility of the use of force in case the East seceded "for the protection of the Eastern minorities."²²⁰

Three of Gowon's colleagues were opposed to this - the Military Governors of the West, Mid-West, the Army Chief of Staff, Colonel Adebayo, who was the most outspoken said: "I consider wise and patriotic the solemn pledge signed by the military leaders at Aburi and re-affirmed at the recent meeting of the Supreme Military Council to the effect that force will not be used." He prophesied that they would find it "entirely futile in solving the problems we set out to solve."²²¹

(Nigeria's political problems are now legion. Each tribe is now accused by the others as being at the root of the nation's problems)

Perhaps, the strongest support for some of the East's demands came from Chief Obafemi Awolowo. In his address to the meeting of Western Region leaders of thought at Ibadan on May 1, 1967, he outlined the Nigerian crisis and made

²¹⁹ West Africa, London, No. 2601, April 8, 1967.

²²⁰ West Africa, London, No. 2604, April 29, 1967, p. 573.

²²¹ ARB, 1967, Vol. 4, No. 5 p. 777.

a number of points which were then embodied in the resolution adopted at the meeting. The resolution stated inter alia:

- (i) The West stands for a peaceful solution of the crisis and "will not be party to any attempt to impose a military solution, or to the use of force;"
- (ii) The East should be kept within the Federation on a basis which recognises the mutual interests of all the Regions, even if it means a constitutional arrangement that is looser than hitherto.
- (iii) If any Region secedes, "the Federation as we know it, shall cease to exist and Western Nigeria shall automatically become independent and sovereign."²²²

The North became alarmed at the thought of a possible loss of the West and East, with the Midwest and Lagos following suit and acted swiftly. At the meeting of the Northern Emirs and leaders of thought, a significant resolution was adopted: The North is irrevocably committed to the creation of more States whether or not they are created elsewhere, as a basis of stability in the North.²²³

Once again, the North was advancing its wishes and ordering the other arms of the federation, whatever their own wishes and views, to fall into

²²² West Africa, 1967, No. 2608, May 27, p. 715

²²³ Madiebo, op. cit., p. 87.

place. Once more, the North was showing that its word was the law in Nigeria.

Against this background, must be borne in mind that Awolowo had long been an advocate of creation of states drawn as far as possible on ethnic lines. And the obstacle had always been the North whose attitude had suddenly changed.

In the East, at a meeting of the Consultative Assembly in Enugu on May 27, 1967, a seven-point resolution gave a mandate to Ojukwu to declare "at an early practicable date, Eastern Nigeria as a free sovereign and independent State by the name of the Republic of Biafra."²²⁴

In Lagos, the same day, Gowon declared a state of emergency throughout Nigeria, and promulgated a decree dividing Nigeria into twelve states as "a basis of stability."²²⁵

On May 30, 1967, Ojukwu proclaimed the Republic of Biafra.²²⁶ In response, Gowon described the "ill-advised secession statement by Lt-Colonel Ojukwu" as an act of rebellion which would be crushed.²²⁶ The events of 1966, 1967, sum "up the colossal moral failure within the nation, a failure that led to secession and war. The truth is simply that then ... the nation was humiliated by a treason promoted, sustained and accentuated by forces

²²⁴ Decree entitled "States (Creation and Transitional Provisions) Decree No. 14," published in Lagos on May 28, 1967.

²²⁵ For the full text of the declaration of independence, see Appendix IV.

²²⁶ West Africa, No. 2609, June 3, 1967, p. 715.

that lacked purpose or ideology beyond self-perpetuation through organized terror, the failure to:

acquire an extraordinary historic acuity of vision to see with total clarity that humiliated nations are inevitably led either to a lethal decadence, a moral and spiritual withering, or to a passion for revenge, which results in bloodshed and upheaval.²²⁷

All through the chilling massacres there was "... not a word of condemnation from anyone. No protest to Gowon, not even a student demonstration, not one act of solidarity with the victims."²²⁸

At this point in time, the federal military government was not in anyway monolithic. Whatever popularity it had was provided by the conflict with Eastern Region. The sudden offer of new states consolidated the support of minorities within a very rickety federation.²²⁹ The civil war that followed crystallised this structure by giving it an external enemy.

The states scheme was not part of a carefully debated and structured new constitution for a more equitable distribution of power in a new federation. On the other hand, it was an operational decision for imminent war. The calculation behind the scheme was to turn the minority areas of the East into its Achilles' heel, depriving Ibos of Port-Harcourt, their outlet to

²²⁷ Quoted in Soyinka, op. cit. p. 91.

²²⁸ Ibid, p. 180

²²⁹ The creation of states represented the concession which The Federal Military Government had to make to Middle-Belters for their participation in the war against Biafra. Martin J. Dent, The Military and Politics: study of the relations between the Army and the Political Process in Nigeria 1966/7, op. cit. p.7.

the sea, as well as most of the oil in the region.

Furthermore, the creation of states struck several bargains in the division of power. Apart from catching the support of the West, the breaking of the North into six states at last met the Middle Belt demand for autonomy. Carving large states into smaller ones smothered the anxiety of the tiny Mid-West state, previously squeezed between two giants. Declaring Lagos a separate state kept the seaport and capital under federal control and in case the Western region contemplated secession - denied it access to the sea. Not just that, it provided Lagotian elites, ever detractors of the AG populist politicians, a leverage against Awolowo's influence in the West and at the centre.

On July 6, 1967, the civil war broke out.²³⁰ The Nigerian civil war lasted for almost three years. All through that period there was bloodbath, carnage, hunger, starvation, human waste and misery. Soldiers were thrust into the field with just the slogan "Kill-Yanmirin, Kill Hausa." A war was fought without a simultaneous programme of reform and redefinition of social purpose. A war of solidity; for solidity is a far more accurate word to employ in describing a war which can only consolidate the very values that gave rise to the war in the first place, for nowhere and at no time have those values been examined. Nowhere has there appeared a programme designed to ensure the eradication of the fundamental iniquities which gave rise to the initial conflicts.

²³⁰ Ibid, p. 181.

The vacuum which had been created in the ethical base of the nation - since national boundary was neither an ethical nor an ideological base for this conflict - was filled by a new military ethic-coercion. For politicians it had been manoeuvring. The war meant a consolidation of crime, an acceptance of the scale of values that created the conflict, indeed an allegiance and enshrinement of that scale of values because it was going to become intimately bound to the sense of national unity.

Victory did come to the federal government very well, on January 12, 1970. For whose benefit? The thinking is that the prevailing values when victory was achieved are the values that created victory. In the midst of the national euphoria accompanying Biafran surrender, the moral dereliction and ideological barrenness which led to the conflict were no longer seen as such. The identity of Nigeria since then has not changed, the nation has not undergone any revolutionary purge. One thing must be clear, a war with its attendant human suffering, when that evil is unavoidable, must be made to fragment more than buildings. It must shatter the foundations of thought and re-create. It is only in this way that every individual shares in the cataclysm and understands the purpose of the sacrifice. After all, there is only one common definition for a people and a nation - a unit of humanity bound together by a common ideology.

The thinking has arisen in Africa that because African nations comprise diverse ethnic groups, there can never be a state of peace and tranquility. But one would ask are the two greatest nations in the world - the United States of America and the Soviet Union not conglomerations of not just ethnic groups but nations ?

This work will not delve into the actual conduct of the Nigerian war.²³¹ The conflict was essentially and purely a political one. If the centre had striven to find political solutions at the early stages of the conflict, the situation could not have deteriorated into a civil war.

Maybe Nigeria could not have gone to war with itself if the incumbent regime had not been a military one. Dislodged from parties and government, where they formerly manoeuvred and manipulated communal opinion and support, political forces continued their activities but without the old outlets offered by regional and federal government. Disputes that were once settled by process of brinkmanship, bargaining and compromise, deals of political expediency among the political parties, now turned into military matters. If politicians sought expediency, the combination of civil servants and army was infinitely more lethal. Even if Nigeria under a civilian regime were to go to war with itself, certainly it could not have been with such deadly swiftness.

Admittedly, parties and politicians used tribalism for their own ends but the very existence of political parties insulated the nation to some extent from its most explosive forms. Communal conflicts were in part,

²³¹ See John de St. Jorre, The Nigerian Civil War, London, 1972; Zdenek Cervenka, The Nigerian War, 1967-1970, Frankfurt, 1973. Kirk-Greene, op. cit., Frederick Forsyth, op. cit.; Olusegun Obasanjo, My Command: An account of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-70; Madiebo, op. cit., Susanne Gonje, The World and Nigeria: The Diplomatic History of the Biafran War, 1967-70; London, 1972; Ntiyong U. Akpan, The Struggle for Secession, 1966-1970, London, 1971 among a host of others.

processed through political parties, to emerge amended and somewhat more subdued.²³² Communal or inter-group tensions could be dissipated or even, submerged in prolonged political manoeuvring.

With the advent of the military in Nigerian politics, control became centralized in the corporate groups of civil servants and military hierarchies. Successive crises were diagnosed and dealt with according to the needs of the two corporate groups. In one crisis after another, under both Ironsi and Gowon, soldiers and civil servants or aspirant bureaucrats (for example university students, trainees at the Institute of administrators or Air Force college etc.) sounded a national alarm and used the powers of the state when their own interests were at stake.

The vested interest of civil servants, who always pretend they have only the interest of the state at heart, were at the centre of successive crises in 1966 and 1967 and Decree 34 which threatened the security of a relatively small group of Nigerians - the top Northern civil servants as well as those who hoped to graduate into these posts and resulted in the May killings and the demolition of the Ironsi regime. One of the major grievances that stirred the July coup-plotters was the weight of Ibo officer-

²³² The Egbe Omo Oduduwa, for example, the leading ethnic association aligned with the AG used its influence in Yorubaland and worked vigorously to better the relationship between the AG, chiefs, men of influence, and the urban and the rural masses in the implementation of party policies. More often than not, it operated through the Obas, who as patrons, supported it on grounds of Yoruba patriotism. It settled disputes between Yoruba political leaders and chiefs, that might have otherwise embarrassed the AG. In its search for Yoruba solidarity, the AG occasionally used it to coerce recalcitrant traditional rulers as was done to the Alafin of Oyo in the early 1950's.

corps promotions in the army. New elites pioneered the drive for new states since they saw in each, a job apparatus that would absorb them.

At every stage of the crucial Constitutional debates, the Decree 34, Aburi meetings, the debates over federal, confederal or unitary systems, there was one prime calculation, in addition to any others that might have been entertained: unification meant that federal posts would be allocated to high calibre regional functionaries, implying that men at the centre could be displaced; a federal system with a strong centre would mean enhanced power and status for the top federal civil servants. The interest of this latter group were best served by the preservation of a federal system, tightly controlled at the centre. It is little wonder that at a stage during the OAU mediation efforts, Gowon vowed never to deal with Biafra on the old regional basis even if the latter abandoned secession but did not accept the twelve-state structure.²³³ Regional arrangement threatened Gowon and the crop of minority permanent-secretaries who had power at that time.

The army was not even the institution to attempt or embark on the solution of Nigeria's ills since it reflected within itself all the divisions, tensions, contradictions and crises of the Nigerian society. The army was only distinct in possessing the instruments of violence. It was supposed to be a corporate body, very compact and organized for the rapid communication of orders and action with a corporate sense and able, through training

²³³ See Ruth First, The Barrel of a Gun, London, Penguin, p. 331.

and discipline to avoid ethnic or other group antagonisms that divided other elite, groups. But the Nigerian army could not insulate itself from these divisions and antagonisms. Among all the ranks, soldiers broke with customs and discipline to identify with communal interests. The army finally led the nation to war.

The OAU as arbiter

East African initiatives:

After secession was announced by Biafra, Tanzania and Zambia²³⁴ made the first public moves to seek a peaceful settlement to the dispute. Neither state had vital interests in Nigeria and both were, of course renowned proponents of African Unity. Zambia saw General Ankrah's government too closely tied with British interests to deal effectively with the Nigerian case. In June, 1967, Lusaka began to assert publicly that Nigeria's internal difficulties were a legitimate concern to the rest of Africa and proposed that the situation be immediately reviewed by the East African Community with a view to arranging a just and peaceful solution.²³⁵

Initial diplomatic efforts by Biafran envoys to present Biafra's case were successful only in East Africa. This reveals much about the highly personalized diplomacy that exists between Africa's loosely linked political units.²³⁶ Both heads of state of Tanzania and Zambia had long-standing

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For reports on East African fears that Nigeria might turn into another Congo see Financial Times, June 21, 1967 and also Observer Foreign News Service, June 23, 1967.

235 Zdenek Cervenka, "Major Policy Shifts in the Organization of African Unity," in K. Ingham, Foreign Relations of African States, London, 1974 pp. 323-344

236 Morning Post, April 26, 1967.

personal contacts among Nigerian leaders, many of whom were now in Biafra. Prior to the secession, Zambia's High Commissioner in Lagos had become deeply concerned about the plight of the Ibos and travelled to the Eastern Region for fact-finding discussions with Ojukwu.²³⁷

In early 1967, Biafra sent envoys to East Africa to present her case. While Biafra was quietly making inroads in East Africa,²³⁸ the federal government concentrated on Europe. This was a serious oversight, particularly in light of the central role that Africa came to play in the Nigerian conflict. Prior to the civil war, Nigeria's priorities lay elsewhere.

In late June, a Nigerian delegation went to East Africa to state the federal position. The Zambian government announced that it would convene a meeting of the four East African presidents in early July to discuss the Nigerian conflict. Remarks by President Nyerere had made it plain that Tanzania was bent on "preventing the UN or the big powers from intervening in Nigeria."²³⁸

Hitherto, for very sound reasons, Nigeria had taken African support for granted. "Africa's interest in the Nigerian crisis is readily understandable. Every single African country, with the possible exception of Somalia, is plagued by tribal problems This country applauds President Kaunda's heroic efforts to build the Zambian nation. For this reason, he had the sympathy of Nigerians when he dealt ruthlessly with the Lumpa sect."²³⁹

²³⁷ Financial Times, June 15, 1967

²³⁸ Standard, Tanzania, June 27, 1967.

²³⁹ Radio Nigeria, Newstalk, June 28, 1967.

A day before the summit opened, Radio Nigeria had warned that the East African initiative could "wreck the already shaky foundation on which the OAU now rests."²⁴⁰

Before the summit, President Milton Obote of Uganda, had sought an assurance from Gowon that war would not erupt while the East African leaders were meeting.²⁴¹ Gowon declined and on July 6, 1967, less than forty-eight hours to the summit, federal troops launched their first major offensive against Biafra. When the summit convened, it sent an urgent request to Nigeria to allow a peace mission to visit Nigeria immediately. Lagos rejected, on the grounds that it was premature and unnecessary.²⁴²

However, there were considerable differences over what could or should be done. Whereas Presidents Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Obote of Uganda (who, at that time, faced a serious secessionist challenge from the Baganda) were cautious, Presidents Nyerere and Kaunda were more interventionist and sympathetic towards Biafra. The final communique reflected these conflicting pressures and realities. The two parties to the dispute were not mentioned but the evident desire to play the role of mediation was clearly evident: "Mindful of the approaches already made by Nigerian leaders to the four Presidents," they "expressed their concern about the Nigerian situation which is highly explosive ... " (and) the Four agreed that it was not too late to offer their good offices to the Government of Nigeria on their own or in conjunction with other African leaders."²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Radio Nigeria, Newstalk, Kuly 7, 1967.

²⁴¹ See Strem lau, op. cit. p.85.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ See Standard, Tanzania, July 11, 1967.

The Kinshasa Conference

Before the Kinshasa September OAU summit, President Mobutu of Zaire dispatched special delegations throughout Africa to seek support for a Congo-led peace initiative in conjunction with the September summit. The Republic of Benin (then Dahomey) also offered to mediate. In late August, Ghana hastily sought to arrange a West African mini summit to discuss the Nigerian conflict in advance of the OAU meeting in Kinshasa. But the federal government position was that the secession was a purely internal matter, and that if any initiative were to emerge within Africa, it should come from the OAU and not from one or more self-appointed mediators.²⁴⁴

This posture arose out of the knowledge that under normal summit procedures any attempt to discuss a member's internal affairs could be foreclosed on a point of order; therefore should a member call for a vote, the federal government was certain it could command the necessary majority. However, since Lagos did not wish to alienate African opinion, it carefully refrained from criticizing those who proposed some form of mediation. The federal government portrayed Ojukwu as being in collusion with European imperialists, and as seeking to exploit the goodwill in Africa by raising false hopes that a compromise was possible on Biafra's terms.²⁴⁵ Nigeria quietly elicited reassurances from African states that the crisis would not be called for mention at the summit without the full consent of the federal government.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Daily Times, August 24, 1967.

²⁴⁵ Radio Nigeria, Newstalk, August 8, 1967.

²⁴⁶ Kirk-Greene, op. cit. p. 337.

Of far greater concern, at this point, to Nigeria was the fear that non-African powers, notably the United States, might try to promote an OAU peace initiative contrary to Nigeria's interests. The United States had already taken the stand that the Nigerian crisis was an African affair but had become nervous about the sale of Soviet aircraft to Nigeria.²⁴⁷ At this time, Nigeria did not wish to be pressurized into any cease-fire or negotiations with Biafra until the predominantly minority and oil-rich Midwest, Rivers State and South-eastern states could be liberated and occupied by federal troops.

Ojukwu's appeal for immediate peace-talks under the auspices of the OAU further complicated the federal government's position. Declaring that such talks could only take place if Biafra's sovereignty were recognized, he dangled the prospect of future association with the federal government. It recalled the "common experience of over fifty years of political, economic, social and cultural ties" between Biafra and the rest of Nigeria.²⁴⁸ The memorandum proposed that the Republic of Biafra would be willing to resume economic cooperation on rail, road, harbour, aviation, post and telecommunications, customs and currency matters.

²⁴⁷ Washington Post, June 1, 1967.

²⁴⁸ Ojukwu's call was broadcast over Radio Biafra on August 21, 1967. The same message was cabled to the OAU Secretariat on August 27, 1967. The White Paper to this effect was published on the eve of the Kinshasa summit as "Memorandum on Future Association between Biafra and the Rest of the Former Federation of Nigeria," Enugu: Government Printer, 1967.

Two days before the start of the OAU Council of Ministers meeting in Kinshasa, Gowon replied to the Biafran White Paper in a speech that was a hard-line defence of Nigeria's military policies and concluded that "there is no alternative to a Federal Union of Nigeria."²⁴⁹

At the 9th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, the federal delegation carried instructions not to allow the Nigerian crisis to appear on the agenda for the OAU Summit.²⁵⁰

Before the opening session, an affront to the federal position came from Biafra, which had managed probably with the help of Zambia and Tanzania to circulate copies of a formal letter of appeal to the heads of state, supported by another Biafran White Paper.

Biafra, at the time, was still in control of most of the Midwest, so her contention was that "neither side can achieve complete military victory ... hence we (Biafra) have always stood for a negotiated settlement... (but) Nigeria has demonstrated her utter contempt by spurning fraternal offers of mediation from several of the continent's most distinguished elder statesmen."²⁵¹

Nigeria succeeded in resisting all efforts to discuss the crisis "... Nigeria would walk out of the conference, if necessary. We would not be pilloried. Every one of the members had its own skeleton in the closet

²⁴⁹ Gowon's Address to the Nation on the Progress of the War, broadcast over Radio Nigeria on September 2, 1967.

²⁵⁰ See Stremlau's interview with Gowon, Stremlau, op.cit., p. 88.

²⁵¹ Kirk Green op. cit. p. 267.

and we would not hesitate to raise it. No one had the right to question the internal affairs of another state. If Biafra succeeded all Africa would suffer."²⁵² When the summit opened, the incumbent chairman, Emperor Haile Selassie, who was plagued by Eritrean separatist demands, said he hoped that "there will soon emerge a lasting solution which will serve the interests of the Nigerian people as a whole, and the entire Continent of Africa."²⁵³ Apart from this reference, there was no formal discussion of the Nigerian conflict.

However, outside the conference, Nigeria finally agreed to participate in an ad hoc gathering of seven heads of state who were determined to involve the OAU in the search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. On September 12, 1967, Presidents Mobutu, Tubman, Kaunda, Ahidjo, Diori, Emperor Haile Selassie and General Ankrah started one of what was to be several discussions.

The federal government was particularly concerned by the involvement of Cameroon and Niger. The continued support of these two adjoining states was of vital strategic importance to Lagos. Both had close ties with France, which was in support of Biafra. In addition, President Diori of Niger was chairman of Organisation Commune Africaine et Malagache (OCAM). Already, Nigeria had reason to believe that the United States might have influenced Mobutu, Tubman and Haile Selassie. Now there was the added fear of pressure from France. As the proceedings got underway, the federal delegation learned

²⁵² Stremlau's interview with Awolowo who represented Gowon at that Summit, cf Stremlau, op. cit., p.91.

²⁵³ Daily Times, August 9, 1967.

of a draft resolution proposed by Kaunda of Zambia supported by OCAM states, which would have had the OAU call for an immediate cease-fire, endorse direct negotiations between Nigeria and Biafra, and "find a formula to permit de facto recognition of Biafra without coming out and actually saying so."²⁵³ Nigeria thwarted the plan by strictly adhering to "the technical point that the OAU had no jurisdiction to interfere in our affairs and if it did so it would open a floodgate of future interference which few of the others present could afford themselves ...; if such a precedent were set, Nigeria would feel free to support dissidents in other countries."²⁵⁴

On September 13, the caucus reached an agreement to establish an ad hoc committee of African heads of state to deal with the Nigerian crisis. In deference to Nigeria, it was to be constituted as a mediatory body but called "Consultative Committee." As far as Nigeria was concerned, she saw "their participation in an advisory capacity ... coming to Nigeria to offer their solidarity in support of Nigeria."²⁵⁵

On September 14, a resolution was adopted by acclamation and without debate by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Ministry of External Affairs; Report of the Federal Delegation to the OAU Summit, September 12-14, 1967.

²⁵⁴ Stremlau, op. cit., p.92.

²⁵⁵ Daily Sketch, September 16, 1967.

²⁵⁶ OAU Communique issued at Kinshasa, September 14, 1967, See Appendix V.

The text and the composition of the Committee (except for Kaunda) both served to reassure Lagos. It indicated that the purpose of the Consultative Committee was to "assure" Nigeria "of the Assembly's desire for the territorial integrity, unity and peace of Nigeria." Attempts to introduce more neutral language such as to empower the committee "to look into the matter," "the call for a ceasefire or negotiations between the two sides"²⁵⁷ were completely rejected by Nigeria. Nigeria also insisted on the omission of a call for a peaceful settlement of the dispute since Lagos argued that the insertion of that would imply a de facto existence of Biafra as a party to the conflict. Besides, she scored an important diplomatic point when the caucus agreed to include a formal condemnation of secession in the OAU resolution.

By allowing the OAU to take up the Nigerian question, the federal government conceded at last, though inadvertently that the conflict was not a purely domestic issue and could now be treated as a matter that was of legitimate concern to the whole of Africa. In addition, Tanzania and Zambia deferred their recognition of Biafra and it was on record now that East African states supported an OAU resolution that condemned secession. The threat of Tanzanian recognition had been used as a useful lever to push Lagos into accepting the formation of the Consultative Committee.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Kirk-Greene, op. cit. p. 421.

Biafra complained that the resolution went out of its way to placate Lagos, probably in order to make mediation possible, hence the relevant portion refers to the Conference's desire for "expressing the possibility of putting the services of the Conference at the disposal of the Federal Government of Nigeria." "The pains taken to assuage the feelings of Lagos heighten the fear that our cause could be compromised, and it is for this reason that this Government has maintained an attitude of discreet silence towards the OAU initiative. Above all, the OAU intervention will now have the effect of delaying individual initiative by those states as in East Africa, which would have given us recognition."²⁵⁹

The Consultative Committee

The Consultative Committee did not visit till November, 1967. The official reasons advanced for the repeated delays were various conflicts in the schedules of the members. But in actual fact, the postponements related more to military developments in Nigeria than to matters of diplomatic protocol. Nigeria was asked to refrain from further military aggression against Biafra at the formation of the committee, so as not to cause embarrassment to the committee during its peace mission. Nigeria turned this request down since she was then engaged in three crucial operations: liberating the Mid-West, capturing Enugu, the Biafran capital, and sealing the Cameroon border from Ikom to Calabar.

²⁵⁹ Biafran Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Foreign Policy Objectives: A Policy Memorandum," prepared in Enugu, September, 1967.

Within the military establishment some felt that the committee was proceeding with "indecent haste" to assist Ojukwu in achieving an immediate cease-fire.

At a point, the committee was to meet on October 5, but federal troops were poised to seize Enugu, so the date was pushed ahead to October 21.²⁶⁰ Nigeria's calculation was that the fall of Enugu would force Biafra to surrender and therefore believed that a renunciation of secession might be obtained in advance of any meeting of the Consultative Committee.

Unlike other wars in history, the fall of Biafra's capital did not bring about a rapid end to the war. Biafra quietly relocated its capital in Umuahia, from where it waged a remarkable war of attrition.

Throughout October, the federal offensive continued. With each advance, European and American press decried the Committee's failure to meet, raising the spectre of wanton massacre if Nigeria overran Biafra.²⁶¹ With so much at stake it is inexcusable that the heads of government have so long delayed their OAU mission These men need to remember that the standing and perhaps, the future of the OAU are at stake along with Nigeria's fate."²⁶²

In an effort to prod Lagos, President Tubman sent a highly publicized message to the UN and OAU, calling on members of the two organisations to try and contact Biafra in order to persuade Biafrans to lay down their arms,

²⁶⁰ For announcements of rescheduling and the "official" reasons for postponements, see West Africa, No. 2627, October 7, 1967, p. 1317; No. 2630, October 28, 1967, p. 1409 and No. 2632, November 11, 1967, p. 1565.

²⁶¹ See for example the West Africa Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation, Newsreel, October 24, 1967.

²⁶² New York Times, Nov. 15, 1967.

and to point out to Lagos the dangers of trying to realize its political objectives through military means.²⁶³

Nigeria made her stand clear at the Committee's opening session:"..

your mission is not here to mediate ... your consultations with the Federal Military Government can be fruitful only if we all recognize the nature of our crisis. There was fear of domination by one region over the other and by one ethnic group over the rest. The only way to remove this fear and the structural imbalance in the Federation is by creating more states It is just not possible to avoid friction through any arrangement based on the four former regions. The former Northern and Eastern regions had to be split up in order to remove the imbalance in the country's political structure We cannot cease current military operations to end the rebellion ... until the rebels renounce secession A new leadership of the East Central State must accept the new structure of the Federation based on twelve states."²⁶⁴

²⁶³ See the text of the message in the Daily Sketch, October 23, 1967.

²⁶⁴ "Welcome Address to the OAU Consultative Mission by the Head of the Federal Military Government," November 23, 1967, reprinted in Report on the OAU Consultative Mission to Nigeria, Lagos: Nigeria National Press, 1967.

In reply, the Emperor declared that he "unreservedly supports Nigerian national unity," but refrained from making any reference to the issues dividing country. The meeting then proceeded into secret session.

When the conference started, it became clear that both the committee and Nigeria were not quite sure how to proceed. There was neither an agenda nor a diplomatic precedent. Haile Selassie announced that their aim was to "consider the Nigerian situation on the basis of the OAU Resolution" adopted at the 4th Summit, and called on Gowon to "explain to us the problem we are facing and his views on the matter under consideration."²⁶⁵ Gowon replied that he had outlined the problem in his opening public address (which as had been pointed out earlier was his problem and that of the few minority permanent secretaries surrounding him for definitely what Gowon stated was not the problem in Nigeria) and on his own part sought to know what the committee felt about the situation.²⁶⁶

Once again, the emperor went all out to reassure the federal government: "The situation in Nigeria is of concern to all of us. It concerns us because secessionist tendencies are to be found in almost all African states. This is the legacy we have inherited from the colonialists who tried ruling Africans by dividing them." Then he went on to say that in his opinion, "in order to discharge effectively the mandate we hold, it is necessary to somehow ... communicate with Colonel Ojukwu."²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Verbatim Records of meeting of the OAU Consultative Committee on Nigeria (hereafter cited as Records of the OAU Consultative Committee), held at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, Nigeria, November 23, 1967.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

Other members endorsed Haile Selassie's call for OAU/Biafra contacts but there were differences regarding the appropriate level and expressed purpose of such contacts.

Hamani Diori believed that the committee's task was to find out from Biafra what minimum conditions they would accept for a renunciation of secession. Since previous pleas had been rejected, despite increasing military pressure, he pondered: "What are the safe-guards; what are the guarantees that the mission would be able to tell the rebels if they do not readily agree to return to Nigeria?" General Ankrah promptly added: "The federal government can also tell us whatever guarantee they may be able to give us, if any individuals are to go there (Biafra) or to make contact, and also finally if all went well, where the federal government are prepared to meet the rebels."²⁶⁸

Ankrah thought the purpose of the OAU/Biafra dialogue would have been to communicate the three demands contained in Gowon's opening address - renunciation of secession, acceptance of the twelve states, and repudiation of Djukwu's leadership, so that the rebels "may use our good offices to let them lay down their arms and renounce secession."²⁶⁹

President Ahmadu Ahidjo of the Cameroons suggested a more carefully graduated OAU initiative with Nigeria's precondition of Biafra's acceptance of twelve state system prior to the commencement of negotiations.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

He suggested there should be initially only radio contact with Biafran leaders to inform them of OAU's unanimous endorsement of the principle of respect for the territorial integrity of member states and imploring the rebels to be "integrated into the great Nigerian family." If the rebels agreed, then the OAU would "use its good offices to intervene between the two parties ... to bring them together at a political level,"²⁷⁰

The Emperor called on Gowon to "elucidate further about the ways and means of contact" with the rebels, adding that such contact "does not mean we hold any sympathy for them." The latter "accepted the need to transmit a message on behalf of the OAU consisting of the text of the Kinshasa resolution to the rebels." But Gowon affixed conditions: "I would expect the message to contain the conditions which my government considers essential . . . the twelve-state structure ... and a new (Ibo) leadership ... then military operations can cease, negotiations can begin, and for us on our part, we pledge that representatives of the East Central State can then take full part on a basis of equality in discussions regarding the constitutional arrangements of the country."²⁷¹

The rigidity of the federal position angered Ankrah. "We know the federal government demands twelve states... perhaps the rebels will accept three or two or one (states in the East) but the best thing would be to get around the table and argue out the two sides."²⁷² In his view, the

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

proper role of the Committee would have been to transmit the OAU's condemnation of secession, as well as the federal government's conditions for a cessation of hostilities, mediating the differences between the two sides.

Diori, Ahidjo and Haile Selassie rejected Ankrah's plan. Instead of tabling all of the federal government's demands at the outset, they proposed that the committee seek to limit its role to the one issue that most concerned the rest of Africa, that is, a renunciation of secession, who represented Ibos in any negotiations and the internal administrative arrangements resulting from those negotiations were of no immediate interest to the Consultative Committee. As President Ahidjo pointed out,

Basically it is the territorial integrity of Nigeria which is of concern to us. The rest is entirely a domestic affair. How can we in our contacts with the rebels discuss the number of states within the territorial boundaries of Nigeria itself? How can we really talk to them about the status of this or that Nigerian citizen or of this or that region? If we take the other (federal) terms, that there should be other leaders instead of the present leaders (of Biafra) how far can they claim authority over the areas they control? The OAU Commission lacks the authority to make such a determination. Responsible authority exists in the Eastern Region. We cannot ask them to renounce secession and then say that there are other conditions such as the need for someone else instead of Colonel Ojukwu.²⁷³

In a similar vein, President Diori appealed to the Committee to stick to basics: "The territorial integrity of Nigeria is the important thing, the rest is purely domestic... after the battle you may find that you need other (than twelve) divisions." Summing up, the Emperor declared, "the point of our task, is to end secession," which he denounced as a "dangerous precedent," for Africa. When the secession ended, "then Nigerians can take up other problems such as the division of the country into twelve states."²⁷⁴

The committee came out with a final communique.²⁷⁵ In addition to calling upon the secessionists to "accept the present administrative structure of Nigeria (paragraph 3) Gowon adamantly refused to deal with his adversary on the basis of the former regions, even if Ojukwu renounced secession in advance of negotiations.

It was Diori who suggested that the inclusion of a reference to the twelve state decree since the decree allowed for certain adjustments in the future was better rather than mentioning the actual administrative arrangement.

The committee mandated Ankrah to communicate the text of the final communique to Ojukwu by means of a two-way radio link. When news of the final communique reached Enugu, the whole package was rejected outright.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ See Strembo, op. cit. pp. 103-104.

True to its mandate, the committee had indeed placed its services at the disposal of the federal military government. The committee had further blurred the distinction between the domestic and international aspects of the conflict, by referring to the twelve-state decree.

The committee's decisions carried broad political implications for the future of Biafra. The Consultative Committee was seen as representing the interests of the African region. This meant that the strong pro-federal stand adopted by the Committee would stifle any further criticism from individual leaders within Africa. Additionally important was the implication of the participation of certain leaders in the decisions of the committee. As the incumbent chairman of the OCAM group, Hamani Diori was in a position to speak for the francophone community and in turn, influence Paris. Similarly, the views of Haile Selassie were expected to influence American stand, while Ankrah's support meant that the Commonwealth, especially British could ignore Biafra.

As Colonel Scott rightly predicted, the conflict developed into a situation "where the biggest and best-equipped battalions would win in the end."²⁷⁶ The federal forces defeated Biafra by the sheer weight of their superior numbers and firepower. The surrender ceremony took place at Lagos, on January 1, 1970.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶, Sunday Telegraph, January 11, 1970.

²⁷⁷ For details see Obasanjo, op.cit. pp. 121-143.

There is no more inflammable issue in Africa than secession. Biafra's case was Africa's nightmare, because Nigeria mirrored the breakdown, actual or incipient, of so many of the continent's independent states and their corrupt governments.

However manipulated, Biafra's secession was not externally instigated. Oil was not the issue that led to secession as has been argued by some.²⁷⁸ Biafra's secession arose out of the innermost failures of the Nigerian political system.

Whether it was right for Biafra to have seceded in the first place and to have fought on for years even when it was apparent that Nigeria's military might was superior, is difficult to argue but George Orwell remarked:

Whether it was right ... to encourage the Spaniards to go on fighting when they could not win is a question hard to answer. I myself think it is better even from the point of survival to fight and be conquered than to surrender without fighting.²⁷⁹

The policy of support for the Federal Military Government (FMG) even by those who realized what human catastrophes were involved, was justified by the argument that the break-up of Nigeria would spell the break-up of every other African State. The boundaries of these States are all artificial and comprise different tribal groups which have often been in conflict in

²⁷⁸ See Ken Post, 'Is there a Case for Biafra?' International Affairs, Vol. 44, No. 15, London, January 1968.

²⁷⁹ Quoted in Soyinka, op. cit. p. 180.

the past. It was argued, therefore, that the success of a tribal group in Nigeria would open a Pandora's box of similar events all over the continent. This theory of disintegration had a decisive impact on the majority of the OAU members.

On the other hand, could it not also be argued that since this is the case, all efforts should be made by African states to prevent such situations. Therefore, at the onset of the Ibo massacre in the North, the OAU should have courageously and openly condemned the Nigerian Federal Military Government (FMG). Maybe, the FMG could have been cowed and forced to put its reins on the North. And the rest of the pogrom, could not have been, and the Ibos could not have thought of secession.

But African States have a propensity to skirt round issues. They never tackle the 'core' question but only limit themselves to the periphery. They never call a spade a spade.

Many an African state has pleaded 'non-interference' to justify this cowardice. But as was mooted at the beginning of this chapter, African leaders react erratically and discriminatorily over fundamental issues which are vital to the social and political stability of the entire continent. Nigeria, at the beginning of the conflict refused to concede to the OAU or any African state the opportunity to mediate. It was purely a Nigerian affair.

Is it not a paradox that Nigeria spearheaded the crisis over the credentials of Liberia's Master Sergeant Doe in 1980. The latter was twice denied access to African caucuses in Lagos and then in Lome. Lagos had witnessed the triple assassination of heads of state, Prime Minister

Tafawa Balewa, and General Aguiyi Ironsi in 1966, General Murtala Muhammed in 1975. Lome had been the scene of the brutal murder of President Sylvanus Olympio in 1963. Yet, the two capitals oblivious of their own iniquities, sat in judgement over the Liberian coup-makers because they had killed President Tolbert and some other government officials.²⁸⁰

Anxiety to support Africa's multitude career Heads of State and 'life' Presidents, should be matched by a similar concern to see that those leaders conduct their affairs properly. The OAU must stop fighting shy of its responsibilities. When a corrupt regime is overthrown, cold chills run down the spines of other corrupt states. For example, after the second-coming of Rawlings in Ghana, corrupt African states, particularly Nigeria, were in jitters. The OAU recognizes heads of states in their official capacities and not as individuals. That practice must not be tampered with. But more than ever before, there is a dire need for an operational OAU machinery appropriately equipped to guarantee the human rights of African citizens within their states.

Sadly, there have been many more "Nigerias". When Amin came to power in Uganda in 1971, there was a systematic liquidation of the Langi and Acholi ethnic groups within the Ugandan army and elsewhere in positions of authority and potential influence. In 1972, the unsuccessful attempt of the Hutu majority in Burundi to seize political power in June led to bloody reprisals against them by the Tutsi ruling minority. Less than a

²⁸⁰ Africa, No. 107, July 1980 pp. 18 ff.

a month afterwards, over 50,000 had died and in September the figure stood at 80,000. In Rwanda, apparently reacting events in neighbouring Burundi, the Hutu ruling majority of Rwanda, descended with vengeance on their Tutsi minority.²⁸¹

There is at present, in Africa, a strong opinion on the principle of secession in general. For Africa's loosely united states, economically weak and politically unstable, to admit the validity of Biafra's cause, would have given rise to a host of troubles and re-opened disputes on the definition of boundaries and the re-grouping of ethnic and tribal groups. Success for Biafra, would have multiplied the difficulties of the continent, with a corresponding de-emphasis on the South African question. This could have jeopardized economic development as well.

African states were only too well aware of their own predicaments and were therefore inhibited from expressing fully their deep concern over the Nigerian war. Their opinions finally crystallized in staunch support for Nigeria, making it clear that the only possible settlement was the end of Biafra's secession. It was not surprising that Algeria, Guinea and the UAR, supposedly progressive states were among the most vociferous of Nigeria's supporters. The stand of Africa's leaders implied that they too would resist with force any attempt at secession in their own states.

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For greater details, see Okwudiba Nnoli, "Socio-economic Insecurity and Ethnic Politics in Africa," The African Review, Vol. IV, No.1. 1974, pp. 1-2.

This writer in no way supports the dismemberment of African States. Each political system should seek as much as possible to accommodate all shades of opinions and interests. All attempts should be made to forestall and prevent the grosser kinds of civil strife that explode into "secessive" situations.

The Nigerian war brings out clearly the difficulties that can arise from the role of the host state. The host state could either promote or obstruct peace-keeping initiatives. The conflict also brings out a very important aspect of inter-state relations in Africa which should be exploited in the discussion of an OAU conflict resolution mechanism.

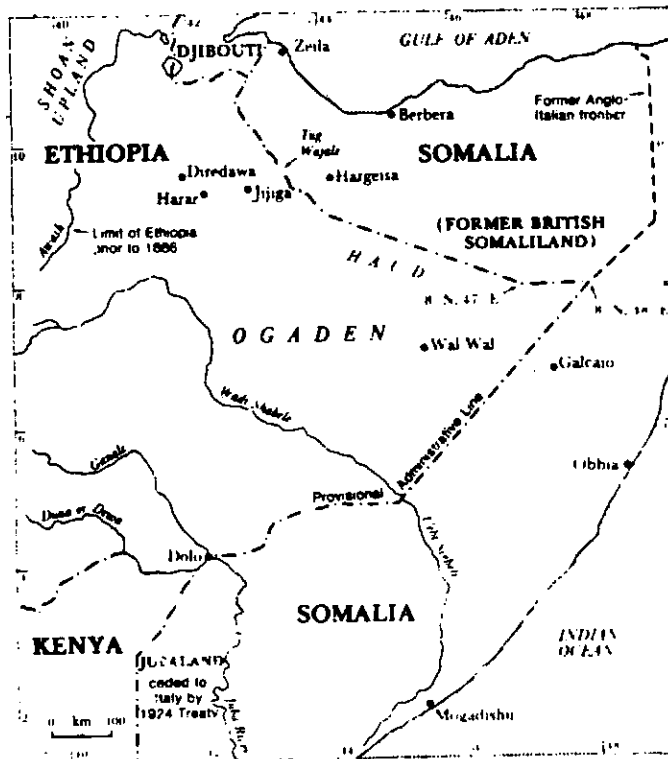
African disputes have often threatened to paralyse the OAU, but in the end African statesmen have not been prepared to acquiesce in its demise. Tanzania took a very hard stand at the Addis Ababa Assembly summit in September 1969. Her argument was explosive, touching on the one issue that enjoys African consensus: "If the charge of hypocrisy often levelled at Africa by South African authorities and sympathisers are to be refuted, it was essential for the OAU to endorse the justice of the Biafran struggle for survival. This was not a question of reversing OAU's ruling against boundary revision, but of recognising that any rule may be rendered inapplicable by special circumstances. "If we do not learn to criticize the injustice within our continent, we will soon be tolerating facism in Africa, as long as it is practised by African governments against African peoples. Consider what our reaction would have been if the 30,000 Ibos had been massacred by whites in Rhodesia or South Africa. Yet these people are still dead; the colour of those who killed Them

is irrelevant."²⁸²

Tanzanian and OAU stand on the Nigerian conflict will no doubt continue to be debated by historians. What is of immediate interest here was the way in which once the conflict had been resolved, the principles of African Unity were reiterated as the basis of reconciliation between Nigeria and the four states, including Tanzania, which had recognised Biafra. This myth of African unity will be discussed in a latter chapter. It must not be forgotten that the last operative paragraph of the Assembly's final resolution on the civil war appealed to both sides "to agree to preserve, in the over-riding interests of Africa, the unity of Nigeria"²⁸³

²⁸² OAU communique issued at Kinshasa, September 14, 1967. For text see A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Source Book 1966-1970, Vol.II, 1971, pp. 172-173.

²⁸³ Ibid, pp. 429 - 445.



ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA

CHAPTER FOUR

Ethio-Somalian Boundary Dispute

The Ethio-Somaliland frontier dispute is like a volcano, dormant for long periods, but nevertheless still active, and always liable to erupt. Today in Africa, it is among the conflicts that have far-reaching implications for not only African states but bilateral regional and international relations.

Like the question of secession, border dispute is a keg of gun-powder for African states. It threatens the very basis of the OAU since Member-States pledge themselves to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government, meeting in its First Ordinary Session in Cairo, United Arab Republic, from 17 to 21 July 1964:

Considering that border problems constitute a grave and permanent factor of dissension,

...

Considering further that the borders of African States, on the day of their independence, constitute a tangible reality,

1. Solemnly reaffirms the strict respect by all Member States of the Organization for the principles laid down in paragraph 3 of Article III of the Charter of the OAU;
2. Solemnly declares that all Member States pledge themselves to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence.²⁸³

²⁸³"Study of Ways and Means which may help to avoid new border disputes between African countries," 58, A.J.I.L., 873, 1964.

The conflict also raises the question of self-determination, which principle, has an explosive potential, which was deplored even at the time Wilson undertook to transform it into a principle of international law.²⁸⁴ Apart from stimulating conflict, the dispute because of the political, economic, military and strategic importance of the Horn, provides opportunities for extra-continental intervention. This chapter will trace the historical roots of the dispute, outline the facts underlying the dispute and discuss the economic, social and political issues involved.

Historical Background

Ethiopia and Somalia complement each other geographically. Each is poorer without the other, just as each is richer with the other. Somalia is Ethiopia's natural outlet into the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, just as Ethiopia is the natural hinterland of Somalia.

It is believed that the Somalis originally occupied only the Gulf of Aden coastal area, east of Zeila. The Danakalis inhabited the region to the west, and in fact, according to some, as recently as 150 years ago, these non-Somalia people extended to Zeila. The region immediately south of the Somali territory was known as Haud, 'the south', by the Somalis who considered it their southern frontier. This southern region, consisting of parts of British Somaliland, and all ex-Italian Somaliland, was inhabited mainly by the Gallas, who pushed the original Bantu populations southward.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ See E.H. Carr, The 20 Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An introduction to the Study of International Relations, London, Macmillan Press, p.14 ff.

²⁸⁵ See Richard F. Burton, First Footsteps in East Africa, Vol.I, London 1984; See also E.A.W. Budge, A History of Ethiopia, 1928, p.242.

Maybe due to pressure of population and lack of water and grazing land, the Somalis started pushing forcefully in all directions starting from the coastal region of the Gulf of Aden. The widely scattered Galla nomads, not able to resist their persistent attacks, retreated in a general south-westerly direction. About a century ago, the Somalis reached the Juba valley, and the Gallas were forced to move towards the Tana valley in Kenya. Possibly, pockets of Galla populations remained, which may have been gradually Somalised. The Sab are almost certainly remnants of Galla populations.²⁸⁶ Burton goes as far as to state that "the Somalis are nothing but a slice of the great Galla nation, Islamized and Semiticized by repeated immigration from Arabia."²⁸⁷

Some historians have traced a definite blood relationship between Somalia and Ethiopia that are much deeper and stronger than just politico-historical ties. The Somalis belong to the same general ethnic group known as eastern Hamites or Kushites - as most Ethiopians. Somali claim to Arab origin has no basis whatsoever.²⁸⁸ It is a recent fruit of Islamism and Arab-oil-wealth politik.

During the 19th century, European powers began to occupy the coasts along the Gulf of Aden. Before this time, the areas under direct or indirect Ethiopian rule varied with the strength or weakness of the Emperor.

²⁸⁶ I.M. Lewis, Peoples of the Horn of Africa, London, 1955, pp 51-5.

²⁸⁷ Burton, op.cit. p. 33.

²⁸⁸ O.G.S. Crawford (ed.) Ethiopian Itineraries, Cambridge, 1958. See also Arab-Fauih, Histoire de la conquete de l'Abyssinie, XVe Siecle, translated by R. Basset, Paris, 1897, and E. Cerulli, Somalia, Vol. 1, Rome 1959.

No state around Ethiopia was sufficiently powerful to secure boundary determination with Ethiopia. The borders of the Horn of Africa were in a condition of flux when Europeans arrived, Ethiopia being the only existing state. The Portuguese had tried to establish stations along the African coasts of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, it was the Italians, French and British who founded colonies or protectorates in the region during the nineteenth century.²⁸⁹

Between 1888 and 1897 France signed treaties to determine the boundaries of her newly acquired territory with Britain and Ethiopia. Between 1885 and 1907, the British concluded agreements with all the neighbouring powers to define their territory.²⁹⁰

Italy was the last European power to arrive in this part of Africa. She came to gain virtual control of the Indian Ocean coastline east of Kismayu. The western limit of the Italian sphere of influence was to be the Juba river. Italy became fairly well established along the Red Sea coast with British consent. Now, she began to think of joining her two colonies, and to look towards Ethiopian territory.

Ethiopia and Italy signed the Wuchale Treaty in May 1889.²⁹¹ Under this Treaty, Italy claimed Ethiopia as her Protectorate. Britain accepted the claim as a basis for her two treaties with Italy in 1891

²⁸⁹ Budge, op.cit. p.177

²⁹⁰ Ibid p. 203

²⁹¹ A.J. Toynbee, Abyssinia and Italy, London, 1936, pp. 135-6.

and 1894.²⁹² But Ethiopia did not recognise any of these agreements since she felt that neither of the two powers had any right to make them without the knowledge and consent of the Ethiopian Government.

After the defeat of Italy in 1896 at the battle of Adowa, Italy's pretensions towards Ethiopia evaporated into the thin air. And Ethiopia's status as an independent state with whom interested governments must deal directly with was recognised. The Wuchale Treaty was immediately abrogated. Ethiopia conducted negotiations with both Britain and France concerning the Somaliland borders, and in March 1897 signed an agreement with French Somaliland.²⁹³ In May 1897, Ethiopia also signed an agreement with Britain regarding the boundary of British Somaliland.²⁹³

One of the complications in the agreement (with the British) was that the delimitation of the boundary between Ethiopia and British Somaliland started from the Gulf of Tajura and ended in the Gulf of Aden. Following the agreement strictly, it would appear that, Ethiopian territory extended to the sea on both sides of British Somaliland. But this was precluded on one side by the existence of French Somaliland, which included the Gulf of Tajura, and whose borders had been delimited by other agreements - the Franco-British Treaty of 1888 and the Ethio-French Treaty of March 1897.

²⁹² I.M. Lewis, Modern History of Somali Land From Nation to State, New York, Praeger, 1965 p.300.

²⁹³ For text, see Appendix VI .

²⁹³ See Appendix VI for text.

As for the eastern part, there was no agreement binding Ethiopia and barring her from reaching the Gulf of Aden. There remained to be defined only the boundary between Ethiopia and what was to become Italian Somaliland.

Negotiations between Emperor Menelik and Italian consul, Nerazzini in Addis Ababa were proceeding simultaneously as the Makonnen-Rodd (British) Negotiations in Harrar. The upshot was that Menelik drew a line on a map of Habescht²⁹⁴ and affixed his official seal to it. On September 3, 1897, the Italian Government informed Menelik of their acceptance of his proposed line.²⁹⁵ On his own part, Menelik cabled back stating his pleasure and hoping for friendly relations between the two countries.²⁹⁶

This cartographic agreement of 1897²⁹⁷ is at the root of the present frontier dispute between Ethiopia and Somalia. Since there was no state of Somalia before 1960, whatever problems that exist between Ethiopia and Somalia are, so far as Somalia is concerned, inherited from the European colonial powers, Britain and Italy. Bardera could be accepted as the western point of the boundary of 1897. Italian Foreign Minister, Tittoni, referred to Menelik's "always explicitly manifested intention of

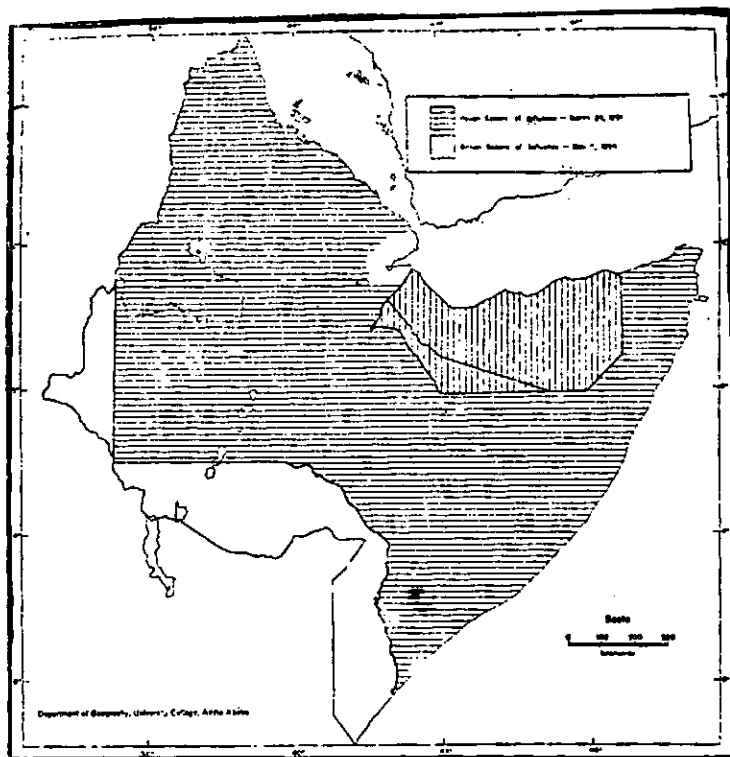
²⁹⁴ Spezial Karte von Africa, Sektion Abessinien 6.

²⁹⁵ C. Rossetti, Storia Diplomatica dell 'Ethiopia durante il Regno di Menelik II, Turin, 1910, pp. 404-5

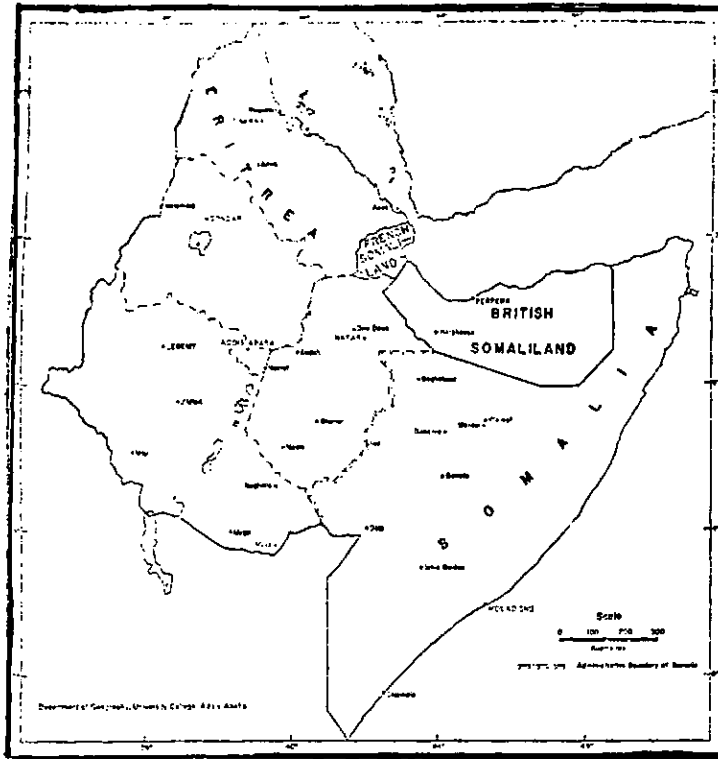
²⁹⁶ See Mesfin Welde Mariam, "The Background of the Ethio-Somalian Boundary Dispute"(hereafter cited as Ethio-Somalian Dispute), Journal of Modern African Studies, 2, 2, 1964, p. 199.

²⁹⁷ See maps on pages 151 - 154

Anglo-Italian Spheres of Influence



+ Italian East Africa



maintaining and assuring his sovereignty over the territory north of the line of Bardera, which, after one acknowledgement, has always been considered virtually his."²⁹⁸ One could then accept Bardera as the western point of the boundary of 1897. Hence, "according to Menelik's proposal, which was accepted by Italy, Lugh was to remain outside our frontier, which was fixed at Bardera."²⁹⁹

The question, then, is how did the 180-mile claim arise? There are two possibilities: it must have originated as an honest mistake in calculating distances on the map, or as a deliberate attempt on the part of the Italian Government to confuse the issue. Since the Italian Government is hardly likely to have been so ignorant of map scales, the latter seems to be more probable.

Italy was pressing Menelik between 1897 and 1908 to include Lugh in the Italian territory, thus pushing the line further north. The Italians thought Lugh a very important commercial station. The Italian attitude was not to take any agreement as final but only as a stepping-stone to more insistent demands.³⁰⁰

The Tripartite Agreement of 13 December 1906, by which Britain, France, and Italy defined and recognised their respective interests in Ethiopia, gave Italy another incentive to extend her boundary further north.

²⁹⁸ Rosseth, op. cit., pp. 406-10.

²⁹⁹ Luca Dei Sabelli, Storia di Abissinia, Roma, 1938, Vol. IV, p. 105.

³⁰⁰ Toynbee, op. cit. p. 271.

In 1907, an Ethio-British agreement brought the boundary of Kenya along Dawa to Dolo. This prompted the Italians to push their line to Dolo which they felt would enhance their 'politico-commercial influence.'³⁰¹

In 1908, on Menelik's initiative, negotiations for a new boundary agreement began. Italy sought to negotiate a new line that would start from Dolo and, following 4°N, reach the Wabi Shebelle. From there the line would conform to the 1897 cartographic agreement and reach that drawn by the Italo-British agreement of May 5, 1894. Italians wanted a neutral zone to be created at Mount Lugh. Menelik agreed to discuss the boundary on this basis but demanded pecuniary compensation for the value of the territory which Italy sought to possess. Italy agreed to pay three million Italian lira to Ethiopia for 50,000 square kilometres of territory, acquired under the agreement concluded on 16 May, 1908.³⁰²

This agreement was a master-piece of ambiguity. In spite of the solemn declaration of the two governments, that they desired 'to settle definitely' the frontier between their respective territories, the wording of that agreement was such that it almost assured the continued existence of the frontier problem. Tittoni, when replying to a member in the Chamber of Deputies who insisted on the speedy limitation of the boundary, said: "Frankly, I do not see the urgency and necessity of such delimitation," and concluded, "let us leave, therefore to time the solution of problems such as this."³⁰³

³⁰¹ Ibid p. 273.

³⁰² See Appendix VII

³⁰³ Quoted by E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Ex-Italian Somaliland, London, Oxford University Press, 1951, p.22.

Article 1 of this agreement which presumes to delimit a boundary line about 250 kilometres long, contains only one specific and definite point -- the confluence of the Dawa and the Ghenale. From here on, the boundary has no definite point at all. Certainly, the 'sources of the Maidaba' and the 'territorial boundaries of the Rahanwein tribe' are unsatisfactory phrases. Sources of streams and territorial boundaries of nomadic tribes are both variable, and the agreement was not accompanied by maps. Such phraseology inevitably leads to protracted disputes when the time comes for demarcation, even if the names are clear.

Maidaba is not to be found in any of the maps available. Ethiopia understood Maidaba to be another name for Ishia Baidoa when the agreement was signed in 1908 but there is no conclusive evidence for this interpretation, which seems far-fetched. The failure of either side to locate Maidaba serves to emphasize the extent of distortion, deliberate or otherwise involved in the treaty. The only name that sounds like Maidaba is Maidado, which is about 80 kilometres north-east of Ishia Baidoa at $3^{\circ} 33'N$ and $44^{\circ} 12' E$. Even if Maidaba could be proved to be another name for Ishia Baidoa or for Maidado, it still remains to be proved that in 1908, the Rahanwein tribal territory was south of either of these places. Both appear within the Rahanwein territory in post-1908 maps. But the boundary line running from Dolo eastwards 'by the sources of the Maidaba' was supposed to leave the tribe of Rahanwein to Italian Somalia. Therefore, if Maidaba itself was in Rahanwein territory, there is an evident contradiction. Other ambiguities abound.

The problems would have been revealed much earlier, if attempts had been made 'as soon as possible' in accordance with Article IV of the agreement. But, as it was, the problem came into the open only in 1931. In that year, Italian authorities, "without consultation with the Ethiopian Government, placed a boundary marker indicating the point of ~~tri~~junction between Ethiopia, Britain and Italian Somalilands, at a point approximately 180 miles from the coast."³⁰⁴ Ethiopia registered a strong protest to the British and Italian Governments against this unilateral demarcation of the frontier line; and the Italians did not pursue the matter any further at that time.

Three years later, the unresolved border problem between Ethiopia and Somalia erupted into open violence at Walwal. Ethiopia took the case to the League of Nations. Discussion was postponed in favour of direct negotiations, but these soon proved fruitless.³⁰⁵

The Ethiopian Government insisted that her frontier with Italian Somaliland must be settled, and that the first essential was to reach agreement on the interpretation of the 1908 Treaty. Ethiopia said it was willing to accept arbitration. Italy maintained that the Walwal incident was due to Ethiopian aggression, and refused to consider the frontier until reparations had been made. With the Hoare-Laval proposals, Britain

³⁰⁴ Eleventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 1957: Official Records, New York, agenda item 40, memorandum of The Government of Ethiopia.

³⁰⁵ George Baer, Test Case, Italy, Ethiopia and the League of Nations, California, Hoover Institution Press, 1976.

and France helped to appease Italy by offering her the whole of Ogaden and Tigre, in exchange for a narrow desert corridor to the Red Sea for Ethiopia.³⁰⁶

Thousands of Ethiopians died in the defence of Ogaden. Hundreds of thousands more died in the defence of Ethiopia as a whole. Italian occupation of Walwal became, in reality, the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. The shooting that started at Walwal spread and transformed the region between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean into Italian East Africa.³⁰⁷ The boundary of Somalia was pushed further inland so that the whole of Ogaden, the middle valleys of Wabi Shebelle; and Ghenale fell under Somalia.³⁰⁸ Italian expansionist policy, was thus realised.

In 1941, the whole Somalia region of the former Italian East Africa came under British administration. The temporary occupation of the Ethiopian part of the region was formalised by the Ethio-British agreement of 19 December 1944, under which, "in order as an Ally to contribute to the effective prosecution of the war, and without prejudice to their underlying

³⁰⁶ See L.F. Schaefer, ed, The Ethiopian Crisis: touchstone of appeasement? Boston, 1961, p. 26.

³⁰⁷ Leonard Doob, Resolving Conflict in Africa, New Haven, Yale Press, 1970, p. 173-177. See also John Drysdale, The Somali Dispute, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964, p. 85.

³⁰⁸ Lewis, op. cit. p. 97.

sovereignty,"³⁰⁹ Ethiopia agreed to have the Reserved Area and Ogaden³¹⁰ temporarily under British administration.

It was during this time, when British Somaliland, ex-Italian Somaliland and the Ethiopian region of Ogaden were under British administration, that the idea of Greater Somalia was born. Mr. Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, in 1946, "in all innocence" proposed that "British Somalia, Italian Somalia, and the adjacent part of Ethiopia, if Ethiopia agreed, should be lumped together as a trust territory, so that the nomads should lead their frugal existence with the least possible hindrance. All I want to do is to give those poor nomads a chance to live. I do not want anything else."³¹¹ Nevertheless, he did want something—that Britain should become the administering power of Greater Somalia. Bevin seemed almost to imply that Ethiopia should cede the Reserved Area and the Ogaden as a price for Britain's bearing the main brunt of restoring the independence of Ethiopia and of putting the Emperor

³⁰⁹ Quoted in Margery Perham, The Government of Ethiopia, London, Oxford University Press, 1948, p.44.

³¹⁰ These are the geographical terms employed to describe those areas which are now the chief subject of the present controversy. The Haud is the main grazing area of the Somali tribes, which as a result of the Treaty of 1897, lies partly in the Protectorate and partly in the Ogaden, which is part of Ethiopia. The group of grazing grounds contained in the region to the north west of the Haud is known as the "Reserved Area" (a term which came into use after the liberation of Abyssinia from the Italians in 1941 and which received formal sanction in the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty concluded in 1944). The Reserved Area lies largely outside the Ogaden, but close to the frontier of the Protectorate and adjacent to the boundary of British and French Somaliland, and it also passed into the hands of Ethiopians as a result of the Treaty of 1897. For text of the Treaty see Appendix VIII.

³¹¹ Margery Perham, op. cit, p. 448.

back on his throne after several years of sanctuary in Britain. It was British aspirations in the region that gave rise to the idea of Greater Somalia.

Despite bitter Somali and even Ethiopian³¹² opposition to Italian trusteeship, the United States concluded that the Italian Government was the best choice as administrative power. The United Nations voted overwhelmingly in November 1949 to return Somalia to Italy for a period of ten years.³¹³

With the benefit of the Walwal incident and her subsequent suffering, Ethiopia had insisted on the solution of the boundary problem regardless of who was selected the Administering Power. This point was apparently considered irrelevant to the establishment of the trusteeship by the UN. The UN left unsettled this boundary problem that had led to armed invasion in 1935.

In March 1950, Britain upon her transfer of authority to Italy, proposed a provisional boundary line between Ethiopia and Somalia. Although she believed this provisional line to represent "the maximum degree of administrative conveniences for both parties which is practicable

³¹² Ethiopia was the sole state at the UN General Assembly to vote against the return of Italy to Somalia. GAOR Fourth Session, 250th Meeting, November 21, 1949, p. 302. See Benjamin Rivlin: The United Nations and the Italian Colonies, New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Case Histories, No. 1, 1950, pp. 46-47.

³¹³ D. Collins, A Tear for Somalia, London, 1960, pp. 83-7.

in all circumstances," they regarded it as provisional only, and "without prejudice to the final settlement" of the question.³¹⁴

In the same year, a General Assembly resolution laid down the general principles for solving the Ethio-Somali frontier problem. The first step was to be bilateral negotiations between the Governments of Ethiopia and Italy, to be followed by mediation and arbitration if differences arose. Practically every year after that, the UN General Assembly or the Trusteeship Council passed resolutions expressing 'concern' and asking the two Governments to "intensify their efforts."³¹⁵ But Italian Government did not agree to commence direct negotiations until 1956.

Ethiopian position was still based on the 1908 agreement and the Ethiopian interpretation of it. Italy on the other hand, maintained her old position, which had fired the Walwal incident, based on the unilateral claim of the 180-mile limit. Ethiopia, anxious to solve the problem, took the initiative for a compromise solution, which involved her renunciation of more than 47,000 square kilometres of territory. Ethiopia proposed that both sides accept the British proposed provisional line. Italy rejected this and Ethiopia withdrew this proposal and returned to her strict interpretation of the 1908 agreement. The negotiations continued, but in 1957 they reached a deadlock.³¹⁶

³¹⁴ Sixth Session of the UN Trusteeship Council, 1950; Official Records, Geneva, 1950, annex II, Vol. II, pp. 112-113. The provisional boundary is shown in Maps on pp. 152 and 163.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ The Ethio-Somalian Dispute, loco. cit., p. 210.

In July 1959, Trygve Lie was nominated by the United Nations to head an arbitration tribunal to settle the dispute. Right from the beginning, Ethiopia's and Italy's postures were parallel. While Ethiopia took the view that the arbitration tribunal must be limited to settling the difference between the parties concerning their respective interpretations of the 1908 agreement, the Italian delegation maintained that the arbitrators must be given the widest powers of decision, including in the terms of reference not only the agreements between Ethiopia and Italy but also the international deeds and instruments concluded by each of the two Parties with third countries.³¹⁷ Ethiopia refused to accept this and as a result the conference reached an impasse. Lie formulated a draft compromise which recognised that the Ethio-Somali frontier had been 'established' by the agreement of 1908.³¹⁸ The amendments of both the Ethiopian and Italian delegations were irreconcilable, and the conference reached deadlock once again. In the midst of this, the Republic of Somalia, was born, and was destined to be at loggerheads with her neighbour, Ethiopia.

³¹⁷ Fourteenth Session of the UN General Assembly, 1959; Official Records, agenda item 40.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

Somalian Independence

On June 26, 1960, the British Somalia protectorate became an independent state outside the Commonwealth. Five days later, it was united with Somalia - the United Nations Trusteeship territory under Italian Administration - which achieved its independence on the same day, to form the Somali Republic. Article VI of the Constitution of the new unitary Republic provided that the Somali Republic would promote "by legal and peaceful means the union of Somali territories."³¹⁹ Of course, it was clear that the Somali-inhabited areas in Ethiopia were part of the territories. The political declarations of the Somalian leaders provided also a further confirmation of the Somali Republic's determination to see those areas in Ethiopia exercise their right to self-determination.

After independence, Somalia denounced the frontiers agreed by its colonial predecessors. The Government of Somalia officially abrogated the 1897 Ethio-British agreement, and the Ethiopian Government reacted by an official declaration terminating the grazing rights of ex-British Somaliland people inside Ethiopian territory.³²⁰

The Ethio-Somalian dispute is somehow, also a dispute about definitions of nationhood: the narrow and parochial Somalian definition based on ethnic common feeling, to which land is irrelevant (as it is irrelevant anyhow to largely nomadic peoples) and an Ethiopian definition

³¹⁹ See The Somali Peninsula, Published by the Information Services of the Somali Government. Also, more recently, The Portion of the Somali Territory under Ethiopian Colonization, 1971.

³²⁰ Voice of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 4 June, 1960.

based on territory, to which ethnicity is a mere divisive tribalism which stands in the way of nation-building. African states are all striving towards the latter definition.

As long as the Somalis of Somaliland and Somalia remained under the control of European powers and were divided by an international frontier, pan-Somali aspirations could not form the subject-matter of national policy. (except in so far as the Italians were said to have used them for their ends in their conflict with Ethiopia) The emergence of the Somali Republic on July 1, 1960, equipped the ethnic and territorial designs of a pan-Somali policy with an instrument seemingly having all the potentialities capable of bringing them to fruition.

Naturally, the Somali Republic inherited the same territory which was administered by the British after the Treaty of 1897 as a protectorate. But in Somalia's view, this is supported by the legal status of Treaty of 1897. Ethiopia's sovereignty over the Somali-inhabited areas, not being based on any legal title, amounts only to an act of colonial occupation. According to the Somalian government, "the situation in the Somali territory under Ethiopian domination represents a typical colonial case. Today, the Somali people under Ethiopian control are subject to constant tyranny and oppression. There is therefore justification on grounds of justice and fundamental human rights to permit these people to determine their political future, shape their own destiny."³²¹ Thus successive Somali governments have continued to support the demand of the Somalis in Ethiopia for their right to self-determination.

³²¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Somali Peoples' Quest for Unity, 1965, p. 14.

Conversely, the Ethiopian Government maintains that Somalia's support to the insurgents in the Ogaden constitutes an interference in its internal affairs. Ethiopia contends that the principle of self-determination cannot apply in the Ogaden since Ethiopia is an African nation and is therefore excluded from the club of colonial powers to whom the principle is applicable.³²²

Basic Issues in the Horn of Africa

This work is not going to dwell on the legal aspects³²³ of the Ethio-Somalian dispute, which aspect is only a small part of a very complex human problem. Undoubtedly, the juridicial issues hold less prominence than issues which more accurately reflect the social, political and economic realities of the Horn of Africa as well as the needs and aspirations of the people who are now caught in the middle of a savage conflict.

The Horn of Africa has been a meeting place of peoples since time immemorial and consequently a scene of continuing processes of conflict and assimilation. The Ethio-Somalian dispute can, as a result, be understood only as parts of a pattern of interrelationships which are far more extensive both in space and time than the present conflict itself. These involve tensions within and between ethnic, religious and national groups, and they draw both on ancient rivalries and on competition for the control of modern political, economic and strategic resources.

³²² The Ethio-Somalian Frontier Problem, published by the Ministry of Information of the Imperial Ethiopian Government, 1965.

³²³ Many works abound on this. See among others W. Michael Reisman, "The Case of Western Somaliland: An International Legal Perspective," Horn of Africa, July-Sept: D.J. Latham-Brown, International and Comparative Law Quarterly, X, January 1960, pp. 167-168; Yonas Kebede, "The Legal Aspect of Ethiopian-Somali Dispute," Horn of Africa, January - March, 1978, pp. 26-31.

The Ethiopian plateau is the central geographical starting point. It stretches from Addis Ababa region north to central Eritrea and this supports a sedentary Amhara-Tigrean society, based on arable agriculture, which over many centuries has found its political expression in the Ethiopian Empire and its religious expression in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The plateau is surrounded by peoples who, despite some assimilation, are mostly Islamic and in many cases nomadic: Tegray and Saho in Eritrea, Danakil (or Afar) in the Red Sea plains, Galla in much of southern Ethiopia and Somali in the Horn itself.³²⁴

Within the Horn, conflicts of many kinds are taking place. These primarily involve conflict between supranational or national or sub-national contestants. The conflict as a whole makes sense only in terms of all of these, and the ways in which they relate to one another. The Horn is an arena within which different contestants are seeking different goals, and in doing so make use of their resources which alliance with other contestants can provide.³²⁵ At the same time, each contestant tries to emphasize those elements in the total-conflict cluster which favour the achievement of its goals.

Ethiopia's main goals can be subsumed under the need to maintain her territorial integrity. She has pursued them by emphasizing the national level of the conflict and has accordingly sought to break down the linkages between national and subnational actors. She has insisted

³²⁴ I.M. Lewis, Peoples of the Horn of Africa, London, 1955, p. 17.

³²⁵ See Tom J. Farer, War Clouds on the Horn of Africa, New York, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1976.

that Ethiopia is a single indivisible state within recognized boundaries and that the position of the Eritreans and Ethiopian Somalis are internal matters in which outside states are not entitled to interfere. The OAU gives a solid endorsement to the Ethiopian stand.³²⁶

Far back in history, Ethiopians developed a political as well as a cultural identity, reinforced and sustained by a written language and literature and by aristocratic and monarchical traditions. Yet, the relative wealth of natural advantages, plus a strategic position on the Red Sea and at the sources of the Nile, inevitably make for Ethiopia's vulnerability. Ethiopia had to wage constant wars against the Turks, then the Egyptians, they fought the British in the 1860's and evicted the Egyptians, with two Emperors falling on the battlefields, two wars against Italy and now regrettably the bloodshed, for the fourth time, over the Ogaden.³²⁷

This perpetual struggle had certain consequences, the early emergence of an intense political nationalism; a fixation on frontiers as barriers against invasion and a fierce determination to retain access to the sea. These consequences are largely self-evident. For centuries, Ethiopia was the only independent state in Africa, south of the Sahara. The Italo-Ethiopian War, prelude to the collapse of the League of Nations and the outbreak of World War II, sprang out of Ethiopia's defence of her boundary and her territorial integrity in the Ogaden.

³²⁶ See Saadia Touval, The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972.

³²⁷ See Robert Hess, Ethiopia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970.

The principal objective of Haile Selassie for years before the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian War, and later pending the return of Eritrea, had been recovery of access to the sea. This is precisely the main objective of Mengistu Haile Mariam, today. It was the decision of the pro-Facist Laval to close Djibouti to Ethiopia that inexorably marked the doom of Ethiopia in 1936. Access to the sea will always remain at the heart of all instability in the Horn.

Ethiopia's opponents have sought to emphasize the subnational and supranational levels. The danger is that, at the supranational level, the Ethiopian position may be upset by involving the Horn in wider conflicts over which Ethiopia would have little control. And if that happens, Africa will be the worse off for it. This strategy has been followed particularly by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF),³²⁸ in associating its struggle with the Arab-Israeli conflict, and also by Somalia in courting Arab finance and influence and moreso by joining the Arab League.³²⁹

Similarly, at the subnational level, Somalia has tried to aggravate divisions within Ethiopia so that they can attain their objectives through a process of general fragmentation. Apart from Somalian support

³²⁸ See G.K.N. Trevaskis, Eritrea, A Colony in Transition: 1941-62, London: Oxford University Press, 1960. See also J.F. Campbell, "Background to the Eritrean Conflict, Africa Report, Vol. 16, No.5, May 1970.

³²⁹ In January 1978, the then Shah of Iran warned that "if Ethiopia violates Somalia's recognised borders, Iran will not stand by idly." See Africa, No. 78, February 1978.

for Eritreans and the Ethiopian Ogaden Somalis, there have also been Somali attempts to foment ethnic conflicts in southern Ethiopia with which they are not directly concerned.

There are about 4 million Somalis in the Horn. Only about two-thirds live in the Somali Republic. The remainder are spread out, mostly in south east Ethiopia, with others in north east Kenya and Djibouti.³³⁰ The position is complicated by nomadism, since many Somalis migrate through both Ethiopian and Somalian territory in search of seasonal pasturage. The object of the Somali government is to unite these peoples under the Somali flag. The object of the Ethiopian and Kenyan governments is to prevent this.

With the exception of the valleys of the Webi Scebeli and the Juba, both of which come from Ethiopia, Somalia is arid, with most of the population condemned to nomadism. Their poverty had relieved them of the necessity of constantly fighting off foreign invaders - a powerful and dominant factor in sustaining political consciousness and strong national identity in Ethiopia.

Forced by unforgiving climate into nomadism, Somalis could understandably, not accept boundaries as barriers to their constant search for water and grazing pastures.³³¹ Ethiopia whose concern was solely political-

³³⁰ Saadia Touval, Somali Nationalism, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 12.

³³¹ See A.I.M. Lewis, "Nationalism and Particularism in Somalia," in P.H. Gulliver (ed.), Tradition and Transition in East Africa, London: Routledge, 1969.

protection against encroachment by the Colonial Powers - therefore left the Somali inhabitants largely to pursue their nomadic life and to use their traditional grazing and watering areas in the Ogaden. The settled farmers of Ethiopia had scant incentive to move from their cool agricultural lands to take up the nomadic life of the Ogaden Somalis.

The concern of the Somalis, at least until the development of the Greater Somaliland Movement, was economic - the search for water and grazing lands. This search led them, as in the case of the North-eastern Province of Kenya, regardless of boundaries, to expel the original inhabitants. Their own territories possessed no rivers vital to their neighbours as in the case of Ethiopia. With seemingly endless coastlines whose strategic value was largely offset by those of Aden and Ethiopia close on the straits of Bab el Mandels, the Somalis, unlike the Ethiopians, had no concern for securing or preserving access to the sea.

The Somalis are fragmented into clan families - Darod, Dir, Isaq, Harviye, Sals.³³² These fragments share a common identity as Somalis, but at the same time compete with one another for the very scarce resources of a barren country. The aggressiveness with which she pursued unification in the early 1960's was increased by the elan of independence. With its successful union of the former British and Italian Somalilands, its thirst for a Greater Somalia became more acute and was whetted by the fact that the first two Prime Ministers³³³ after independence were both Darods. The Darods are the largest of the Somali clan-families and they

³³² Ibid, p. 24.

³³³ Abdisashid Ali Shermarke, 1960-64; Abdirazak Haji Hussein, 1964-67.

include most of the inhabitants of the disputed areas both in Kenya and in Ethiopia, with the result that they have most to gain from unification.

Between 1960 and 1963, the Somali government's main concern was the future of Kenyan Somalis. Somalia broke off diplomatic relations with Britain in March 1963 in protest at the British refusal to implement their desire to secede from Kenya and join Somalia prior to Kenyan independence. Guerrilla activities tacitly encouraged by the Somali government continued after independence.³³⁴

On the Ethio-Somalian border, intermittent frontier incidents punctuated by attempts at mediation took place throughout the early and mid-1960's, reaching a peak in the fighting at the border village of Tug Wajale in February, 1964.³³⁵ Throughout the 1960s and the 1970s a Somali nationalist movement, which came to be known as the West Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), had operated in the Ogaden and had frequently harrassed the Ethiopian rulers. With increasingly chaotic conditions prevailing in Ethiopia after the fall of the Emperor and the intensification of the Eritrean insurgency, the WSLF had also extended its activities and had been able to wrest substantial portions of the Ogaden from Ethiopian control. Somalia had never tried to hide its sympathy and support for the WSLF although it had denied charges of direct involvement in anti-Ethiopian activities in the Ogaden.³³⁶

³³⁴ See Catherine Hoskyns, Case-Studies in African Diplomacy; 2, The Ethiopia-Somali-Kenya Dispute, 1960-67, Dar-es-Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1969.

³³⁵ Ibid. For details about the negotiations and the British decision, see Doydsdale, Somali Dispute, pp. 103-66.

³³⁶ 'The Horn of Africa' in Conflict and Intervention in the Third World, ed., Mohammed Ayoob, London, Groom Helm, 1980, pp. 136-167.

Taking advantage of Ethiopia's external and internal difficulties, Somalia launched an attack on Ethiopia on July 23, 1977. The event that acted as the major catalyst for this attack was the overthrow of Haile Selassie's ancient regime in Ethiopia in early 1974 and its eventual replacement - after a period of uncertainty and confusion - by a military government controlled by the Provisional Military Administrative Committee, better known as the Dergue.³³⁷ The Dergue found itself divided on the basis of policies and personalities and its leadership locked in a power struggle which resulted in a series of purges until Colonel Mengistu Haile Marian emerged as the victor in early 1977.³³⁸ In addition, the revolution it had embarked on was troubled, anxious and violent and the government was embroiled in a bitter battle with Eritrean separatists. Ethiopia, the primogeniture of independent Africa, appeared to be inexorably proceeding towards disintegration. Ethiopia was engulfed by political strife, not only between the new rulers and remnants of the displaced feudal politicians but also between the authors of the revolution themselves.³³⁹

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'Dergue' is the Amharic term for 'committee.' For the origins and course of movement that led to the overthrow of the Emperor, the near anarchic situation in the country following the change in regime and the struggle for power within the Dergue, see Colin Legum, Ethiopia: The Fall of Haile Selassie's Empire, New York, Africana Publishing Co., 1975, and Colin Legum, 'Realities of the Ethiopian Revolution, The World Today, Vol. 33, No. 8, August 1977, pp 305-12.

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Possibly the best account of this transformation in Ethiopia, the intra Dergue struggle and the true character of the Mengistu regime, is John Markakis and Nega Ayele, Class and Revolution in Ethiopia, Spokesman, Nottingham, 1978

Somalia thought the time had come at long last, sent her armies across the frontier. They swept across the parched Ogaden seeking to fulfil their long-pursued irredentist policy towards that part of Ethiopia.³⁴⁰

Mogadishu, unfortunately did not anticipate Africa's reaction: the regime in Addis Ababa appeared to it isolated, friendless and vulnerable. Furthermore, it evidently misperceived the inter-play of super-power politics hoping that the sound of Cold War drums in Somalia, would galvanise the Western Powers into swift participation in the conflict on the Horn of Africa.

The Carter administration though it had encouraged Somalia to attack Ethiopia, refused to supply arms to Somalia and directly pressed for Somalia's withdrawal from the Ogaden.³⁴¹ All the same, Africa cannot be blind to the strategic implications on the continent that the conflict in the Horn contains. The conflict potential of the region has been enhanced by its proximity to the major theatres of Arab-Israeli conflict and because of the strategic importance to Israel of the Straits of Bab el-Mandels, the narrow waterway between the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ See James Mayall, "The Battle for the Horn: Somali Irredentism and International Diplomacy," The World Today, vol. 34, No. 9, September 1978, pp. 33 ff.

³⁴¹ Godwin Matatu, "Ethiopia's finest hour," Africa, No. 79, March 1978, pp. 17-26.

³⁴² A good example of Israeli preoccupation with the strategic importance of the Bab and therefore in the Horn is found in Mordechai Abir, 'Red Sea Politics,' Conflicts in Africa, Adelphi Papers, No. 93, December 1972, pp. 25-37.

A serious cause for concern in the 1977/78 Ogaden war is the role of a number of Arab states, in particular, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq and Iran³⁴³ which were calculated to increase military tension and further escalate the war.

There is little logic in the case of Iraq, for instance, which has spent years and resources fighting secession against the Kurds,³⁴⁴ espousing the cause of secession in Ethiopia. President Sadat preached the need for peace and stability in the Middle-East to his Arab brethren, made considerable compromises but turned round to sow seeds of disquiet and perpetual instability in Africa by supporting and aiding Somalia's cause. As for Iran, at that point in time, as the OAU rightly said: "Iran's continued association with South Africa which received 50% of its oil supplies from Iran did not qualify it to play any role in the African continent."³⁴⁵

By 15 March 1978, Somalia had bowed out of the Ogaden in defeat. But she has not stopped rattling the sabre of Somali nationalism. The Ethio-Somalian dispute had spilled over into Djibouti, formerly Afars and Isaas,³⁴⁶ Before 1958, the leading role in territorial politics was played by the Issa, the local Somali clan who comprise about one-third

³⁴³ See Africa Research Bulletin (ARB), January 1-31, 1978, Vol.15, No.1, February 15, pp. 4701-4702.

³⁴⁴ See Newsweek, March 2, 1981, p. 52. Newsweek interview with Kurdish Nationalist leader Abdurman Ghassemloo, p. 52.

³⁴⁵ Africa, No. 87, November 1978, p.33.

³⁴⁶ See V. Thompson and R. Adolf, Djibouti and the Horn of Africa, Stanford, California; Stanford University Press, 1968.

of the territory's population. Some of these took up the cause of unification, but the territory stayed out of the mainstream of the Somali dispute until the riots of August 1966 and the referendum of March 1967, where it was offered the choice between Guinean style independence and continued association with France. Sixty per cent of the population voted for continued association.³⁴⁷

In effect, the Afars sought refuge in French protection since they are not strong enough to resist either Somalia or Ethiopia. Somalian occupation (which Ethiopia would resist because of the importance of Djibouti's railway and the port) would involve rule and subordination to the Issa.

The Somalian government had embarked on an ambitious expansion strategy, after independence, which its meagre resources were quite inadequate to implement. The immediate result of its unification policy was to unite her neighbours against her and sow tension in Djibouti.

Djibouti became independent in June 1977. Immediately after, tension between the two main peoples of Djibouti, the Issas and Afars, reached a critical point.³⁴⁸ It was the problem of reconciling the demands of the two that provided the French with an excuse for holding into Djibouti till June 1977 and for leaving several thousand French troops behind.³⁴⁹

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Ibid.

348 For details see Africa, No. 78, February 1978, pp. 23-25.

349 Ibid.

A compromise had been worked out, prior to independence. The election of May, 1976 produced 33 Issas and 30 Afars and two Arabs in the National Assembly. Post-independence Cabinet consisted of an Issa President, an Afar Premier, 13 Issas and 7 Afars.³⁵⁰

This balance was jeopardised right from the outset by the Ogaden conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia. While both countries accepted the new Republic, they had different aims and interests.

Djibouti's economy came under immediate strain after independence by the bombing of the Addis Ababa/Djibouti railway by Somalian guerrillas in June 1976. Djibouti and Ethiopia are economically inter-dependent. Sixty per cent of the port activities of Djibouti and thirty-five per cent of the labour force emanate from Ethiopia.³⁵¹ Paradoxically, Somalis went en masse to Djibouti in search of work and a better life only after the Addis Ababa/Djibouti railway was built at the beginning of the 20th Century, and after the harbour of Djibouti itself became a centre of economic activity. Djibouti was harder hit by the Ogaden war of 1977/78 than Ethiopia. Apart from losing virtually needed revenue, she could not get necessary food supplies usually imported by rail from Ethiopia, on a regular basis.

The outbreak of the war in July 1977, only served to heighten tensions in Djibouti. The Afars were worried by Somalia's determination to incorporate all Somali speakers into a 'Greater Somalia.' Related to this fear, was a more ardent one at home - a distribution of power

³⁵⁰ Ibid

³⁵¹ Africa, No. 87, November 1978, pp.65-67.

in the Government, civil service, police and the army which they felt gave Afars a secondary position and ensured Issa domination - and a position that left them without enough control over their own future.

A considerable amount of this Afar discontent coalesced into the Popular Liberation Movement (MPL).³⁵²

Although Somalia's defeat appeared to have removed the fear of Afars, if only temporarily, of what they came to regard as an attempt by Somalia to fulfil her expansionist territorial designs to incorporate Djibouti into Greater Somalia - a fact which sharpened Afar suspicions against ethnic Somali Issa -, later events on the Horn showed that, that fear may be far from gone.

In 1978, the Ethiopian leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, made a virulent attack on Somalia, publicly accusing it of preparing to annex Djibouti. This, he said, could provoke another war between Ethiopia and Somalia. He accused Somalia of engaging in what he called 'a frantic exercise to redeploy and partially infiltrate troops into Djibouti. The situation has been exacerbated by the influx of refugees from both Ethiopia and Somalia.

³⁵² Ibid.

Self-Determination

Some have suggested the principle of self-determination for the people of Ogaden.³⁵³ Essentially, one of the fundamental issues that the Ethio-Somalian border dispute has raised is the question of "self-preservation of states" on the one hand and "self-determination of peoples," on the other. Given a situation where a colonial territory has attained sovereign independence, to what extent can it permit its own minority groups to invoke a right of self-determination against the territorial integrity of the State? This question lies at the very heart of African territorial problems. African States, at independence, anticipated these problems and responded by writing into the OAU charter a resolution enjoining all member States to respect colonial boundaries as they stood at the time of national independence.

Self-determination could scarcely be advanced as basis for the Greater Somalia claim to the provinces of Sidamo, Bale, Arussi and Hararage in their entirety" and up to the Awash River.³⁵⁴ Far more Gallas and Amhara farmers are in these areas than there are Somalis in Somalia itself. Leaving aside Djibouti and the north-east province of Kenya, this Greater Somalia formula demands of Ethiopia, approximately 202,689 square miles of territory, whereas the Hoare-Laval Proposals which aroused such world-wide indignation involved 175,625 square miles.³⁵⁵

³⁵³ For example, the President of the Republic of Somalia at the Conference of African Heads of States, Addis Ababa, May 1963.

³⁵⁴ Declaration of Abdullahi Hassan Mohammed, Secretary-General and Military Commander of the Western Somali Liberation Front. See New York Times, September 13, 1977. See also New York Times, September 25, 1977, p.3.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

... Djibouti was predominantly Afar, ninety years ago. It was only in recent years that Somalis have flooded into the territory and succeeded in transforming what had been a largely Afar city into a Somali one. Even today, the larger part of the Djibouti state is Afar territory and it is abundantly clear that the Afars are not in any way disposed to accept Somali domination.³⁵⁶

As for Eritrea, the secession of which Somalia supports, to enhance her own objectives, but which has no ethnic relation to her, it was the Italian aggression in 1885, that severed the one thousand year old cultural, religious and ethnic links with Ethiopia. Djibouti is critically dependent on Ethiopia and its railway, not on Somalia, and Eritrea has no relation with distant Somalia. By seeking, through Greater Somalia aspirations, to cut Ethiopia totally off from salt water, while demanding for herself yet more fresh water, Somalia is striking at one of the most sensitive and explosive issues in the Horn of Africa.

The spontaneity and sincerity of the demand of the Ogaden Somalis, for self-determination would be far more convincing, not acceptable though, were its self-determination sought by themselves not by others, and not orchestrated and supported by arms, troops and funds from Mogadishu as part of a proclaimed Greater Somalia movement.

Would Somalia herself hand over as large an area as she is claiming now to Kenya to repair a more sanguinary injustice consummated less than fifty years ago? After all, the Kenyan province of Jubaland and part

³⁵⁶ New York Times, December 18, 1977, p. 5; Africa Confidential, Vol. 19, No. 9, April 28, 1978, pp 6-7.

of Kismayu were snatched away only in 1924 from Kenya and handed over to Italy by Britain.

In many places in Africa, ethnic groups spill over into other states. The Hausas of Nigeria, for example, are found in many other West African nations. Is Nigeria then going to ride rough-shod over such countries like Niger Republic, Chad, Upper Volta, Cameroons etc, where Hausas also live, proclaiming the inevitable need for a Greater Nigeria? As Harold Laski has pointed out, "no geographical boundaries, however drawn, can possibly give territorial autonomy to each group of persons claiming distinctive characteristics; nor, on economic grounds, would such separation be desirable."³⁵⁷

Nor could the Arab states - to whom Somalia suddenly claims affinity - with their inflexible demand for territorial integrity, persuasively argue cession with Ethiopia or black Africa. Even, would cession establish quiet and stability in the region? Would it not open the question of Webi Scebeli and the Juba, the entire basins of which Somalia seeks to appropriate. Even, should Somalia abandon that objective, there would still remain her insistence that Ethiopia undertake no irrigation projects along those rivers which might reduce the volume of waters downstream, as have Sudanese and Egyptian preoccupations with regard to Blue Nile in Ethiopia.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁷ Harold J. Laski, *The Grammar of Politics*, London, (1941 edn.) p. 593.

³⁵⁸ See "Zone of Conflict," *Africa*, No. 124, December 1981, see also "Africa's Desert Wars," *Africa*, No. 73, September 1977.

In addition, cession of the Ogaden would inevitably raise fears in Ethiopia, not only for Eritrea, her sole remaining access to the sea today, now that Djibouti has joined the Arab League, as well, but also for the western areas which might be sought by the Sudan. Ethiopia is a very complex country with numerous religions and linguistic groups, the idea of Greater Somali threatens to dismember not only Ethiopia but other African states as well. As one of the principal characters of this dispute, President Siad Barre, remarked: "We all know that tribalism is our main weak spot."³⁵⁹ Far from reducing tensions, cession of the Ogaden could create lasting instability in the Horn. Besides, it would provoke violent convulsions throughout Africa.

How the boundaries of African states were drawn in the nineteenth century is common knowledge. Ethnic, religious and geographical considerations were almost completely neglected. Africa has inherited this territorial muddle from colonial powers. Any attempts to change it will unleash chaos on this continent.

Ethiopia, for example, has existed for centuries as an independent state and as a nation, for more than three thousand years. There is no record in history of a Somali State or a Somali Nation. In this dispute, Ethiopia has also made economic and strategic considerations. The prospect of petroleum in Ogaden, obviously, is important. The Wabi Shebelle

³⁵⁹ My Country and My People, Mogadishu, Somalia Ministry of Information and National Guidance, 1970-71, p.34.

and Ghenale valleys have great possibilities of agricultural development. Strategically, cession of the Ogaden would not only remove Ethiopia away from the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, but bring Somalia dangerously close to the Ethiopian Highlands. Ethiopia, has threatened to wreak havoc if Somalia attempts to force the situation in the Ogaden.

Ethiopia says she is prepared to negotiate for the solution of the problem only in so far as it is a boundary problem and will not entertain any proposition that will cause her to surrender a considerable part of her territory.³⁶⁰

Somalia will do well to accept, as many African states have done, the legacy of the boundary, which colonial masters bequeathed to her. To propose or contemplate changes will strongly be resisted in most places in Africa.

Today, the sore problem of Africa's future seems to hinge on nationalism. Admittedly, there is a conflict between tribalism and nationalism. Politicians should not be encouraged to use tribalism to achieve their political ends. One of the most useful things that colonialism brought about in Africa is the consciousness of a social, economic, and political organization which is wider than tribalism. African nationalism found its basis in a colonial-imposed territorial consciousness, and its expression in the reaction against colonialism. It is now in the province of African leaders to build, consolidate and crystallize African nationalism and carry the process a step further towards Africanism.

³⁶⁰ Africa, No. 79, March 1978, pp. 16 - 18.

If Africa is to be as great as its human and material potential, to have some level of credibility in the international system, tribalism must give way to nationalism, which, even, must give way to Africanism. Africanism is the dynamic and positive awareness of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, of the Mediterranean and the Red Seas, as partly African. It could draw upon vast and variegated natural resources, a common colonial past, and common aspirations for development, for its future. Within such broad perspective, there is no African problem, including seemingly intractable and perennial ones like Ethio-Somalian frontier dispute, that is not susceptible to solution.

The OAU and the Ethio-Somalian dispute

On January 9, 1964, Somalia requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the "Complaint by Somalia against Ethiopia concerning acts of aggression infringing upon the sovereignty and security of Somalia."³⁶¹ But the United Nations Secretary-General applied the "Try the OAU First" doctrine. He appealed to both sides to settle their dispute peacefully and "within an African framework."³⁶²

Ethiopia and later Somalia, requested the OAU Council of Ministers to consider the matter at its Second Extra-Ordinary Session scheduled to meet in February 1964 for a different purpose. The border dispute between Somalia and Kenya was also placed on the agenda of that session upon the request of both countries.

³⁶¹ See Africa Confidential, No. 5, March 5, 1965.

³⁶² Ibid.

A precedent had already been established in the Algerian-Morocco dispute to use the OAU in settling disputes between African states when the border dispute in the Horn of Africa flared up into an armed conflict.

The Council of Ministers solemnly urged the two countries to order an immediate ceasefire and to refrain from all hostile actions and called upon African states having official representation in the two countries "to assist in the implementation of the ceasefire," in regard to this dispute as well as that between Somalia and Kenya. The Council, furthermore, urged Somalia and its neighbours to refrain from further provocative actions and propaganda and to enter into direct negotiations to resolve their disputes peacefully. A five-nation committee of ambassadors was formed to keep an eye on the situation.³⁶³

The Council resolution was adopted on 15 February 1964 but the restoration of peace still depended on the goodwill of the combatants. The same day, Ethiopia and Somalia ordered a cease-fire, the actual truce having been arranged through the intermediary of the Prime Minister of Sudan, Ibrahim Abboud. Not long after, fighting broke out again.

When the Council of Ministers met again for a regular session in Lagos on 24 February, 1964, the whole matter came up anew for discussion. The Somalian Foreign Minister, Abdulai Issa repeated his country's stand and pleaded self-determination for the Somalis in Ethiopia and Kenya. He also repeated Somalia's request for a demilitarized zone and observers.³⁶⁴ But Ethiopia retorted that neither would be necessary if Somalia renounced

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Conflict and Intervention in the Third World, op. cit. p. 154.

her territorial claims and respected international borders.³⁶⁵

The Council again failed to give fire to its resolution. Another try to end the hostilities was made outside of the organization, although in compliance with the request of the Council of Ministers. Ethiopian and Somalian representatives met for talks in Khartoum in the middle of March. These talks eventually reached a satisfactory conclusion on 30 March, 1964.³⁶⁶ Later, a cease-fire was effected and the withdrawal of troops was confirmed.³⁶⁷

After the 1977/78 Ogaden war, the OAU tried once again to settle the Somalian-Ethiopian frontier dispute. Ethiopia, in this dispute, has had the silent but unequivocal support of Africa. For the OAU, the principle of the inviolability of boundaries inherited from colonialism is sacrosanct. Consequently, the OAU cannot condone the violation of one state's territorial borders by another. Member states "cannot accept a second scramble for territory in Africa."³⁶⁸

In this respect, Ethiopia, has found no better ally than Somalia itself. The Somalian position in the councils of the OAU has been undermined by what has been described as "the by-passing of Africa"³⁶⁹ by Somalia. In place of resolving the conflict within the context of Africa, Somalia has concentrated her diplomatic efforts on securing the support of

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Africa, No. 79, March 1978, p. 20.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, and other Arab states in the region.³⁷⁰ On its own part, Ethiopia has constantly invoked the OAU Charter and subtly but skillfully, played on the latent but real antagonism between the Arab world and Black Africa. Libya which has granted Ethiopia a loan of nearly \$200 million, and Algeria have, however, been exempt from the anti-Arab invective in Addis Ababa.³⁷¹

The eight-nation Good Offices Committee set by the OAU comprising Tanzania, Lesotho, Senegal, Liberia, Cameroons, Sudan, Mauritania and Nigeria met between 5 and 9 August, 1977, in Libreville. The committee was not impressed by the Somali argument that Ethiopia had participated in the nineteenth century partition of Somali territories and that the WSLF therefore, was a legitimate liberation movement.³⁷² The committee passed a resolution "reconfirming the inviolability of African frontiers and condemnation of all forms of political subversion."³⁷³

The Committee met again at the ministerial level in Lagos from 18 to 20 August 1980.³⁷⁴ The meeting was convened at the instance of President Shahu Shagari of Nigeria.

The Committee heard the statement of the Democratic Republic of Somalia which was represented by her Foreign Minister, Dr. A.J. Barre.

³⁷⁰ See Africa Research Bulletin, January 1-31, 1978, Vol.15, No.1. February 1978 pp. 4701-4702.

³⁷¹ Africa, loc. cit. p.21. For details of Arab aid to Somalia in 1977 see International Herald Tribune, 4-6 June, 1977.

³⁷² James Mayall, "The Battle for the Horn: Somali Irredentism and International Diplomacy," The World Today, Vol.34, No.9, 9 September, 1978, p.337.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ For details of the proceedings see ARB July 1-31, 1980, Vol.77, No.7, August 15, 1980, pp. 5730-5733.

He re-stated Somali support for self-determination for the Ogaden Somalis and the WSLF, which stand, he said flowed from Somalia's support for self-determination for peoples all over the world and encouragement for liberation movements, including the WSLF, in Africa and elsewhere.³⁷⁵

Ethiopia, which was represented by the Permanent Secretary of her Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tibabu Bekele told the committee that Ethiopia had four conditions for a negotiated settlement of the Ogaden question: 1. Somalia should respect the OAU charter and cease to infringe on Ethiopia's territorial integrity; 2. Somalia should abide by the OAU resolution that force should not be used in the settlement of disputes; 3. Somalia should "in addition renounce her expansionist policy also aimed at Kenya and Djibouti;" 4. Somali should compensate Ethiopia for the losses suffered as a result of the war, which according to Ethiopia was a result of Somalia's aggression. According to Mr. Bekele Ethiopia had had to compromise its literacy campaign and various projects aimed at uplifting its broad masses in view of Somalia's aggression. Another consequence of the Ogaden war in Ethiopia was the destruction of its 80,000 nomads' resettlement programme in addition to the disruption of the FAO research project in Ethiopia. Schools, clinics had been destroyed, lives lost and population displaced.³⁷⁶

The Committee then examined the issues in depth and came up with a six-point resolution³⁷⁷ that was to be submitted to the Heads of States, and broke off on 20 August. It urged Somalia to relent its support for

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ For the text, Ibid.

WSLF which is known as the claimant of the region. Ogaden was adjusted as belonging to Ethiopia. To buttress these decisions, the recommendations included "the recognition, affirmation, implementation and application of the principle of the inviolability of frontiers of member states as attained at the time of independence."³⁷⁸

This was in effect a restatement of the boundary resolution passed at the second OAU Summit in Cairo in 1964 to which Somalia then expressed reservation. Somalia rejected the recommendations as "biased" and giving the Ethiopian position "overwhelmingly predominant weight."³⁷⁹

Some³⁸⁰ see the OAU Charter as containing two mutually opposed principles. On the one hand, it upholds the sanctity of state boundaries arbitrarily imposed by colonial powers. On the other hand, it affirms the right of all African peoples, to self-determination. The former vindicates the Ethiopian stand and the latter, that of Somalia's. This argument could be dismissed by the fact that the former explains the latter. African states pledged themselves "to respect the borders existing on the

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ See for example, Yusuf Abdi, "Self-Determination for Ogaden Somalis," Horn of Africa, January-March, 1978, pp.20-25; Yonas Kebede, "The Legal Aspect of Ethiopian-Somali Dispute," Horn of Africa, January-March 1978; W. Michael Reisman, "The Case of Western Somaliland: An International Perspective," Horn of Africa, July-September 1978.

achievement of national independence."³⁸¹ As has been pointed out earlier on, Ethiopia was the only independent state south of the Sahara for centuries. The OAU was formed in 1963. Somalia became independent in 1960. Therefore Somalia is bound to accept her boundaries as they are. The boundary clause in itself is self-explaining. If Africa accepts her boundaries as drawn by the colonialists, she also accepts the fact that new states cannot be carved out of existing ones or existing states submerged in some others. Africa before independence and Africa now acknowledges the fact that the self-determination clause is for African states still under colonial bondage. Since the formation of the OAU, Africa has invoked the self-determination clause to advocate for independence for all its non-independent territories. This decade, it has performed brilliantly: all the Portuguese colonies were liberated. The OAU only has two left on the list now: Namibia and South Africa. The OAU 'Self-determination' clause is for that purpose and not for dismantling African states or starting the Armageddon in Africa.

Whatever is the criticism of the artificial boundaries bequeathed to Africa by the colonial powers, it will be a dangerous precedent if territorial changes, no matter how desirable, are made.

³⁸¹ Catherine Hoskyns, op.cit., p.68. See also Saadia Touval, The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972, especially Chapter 2: "Sources of Status—Quo and Revisionist Policies"; Carl Gosta Widstrand, African Boundary Disputes, Uppsala, 1969, pp. 183-185.

Somalia should accept the decision of the Good Offices Committee as binding. It is shocking that the major development programme a country, as poor as Somalia, can embark on, is expansion. Somalia is actually and potentially poor, with her population growing at the rate of one per cent a year. As was pointed out by the 1951 United Nations Visiting Mission, a 'precarious balance' has been maintained between the population and resources only through the operation of natural factors such as famine and disease.³⁸² Yet Somalia with her arid land, scant pastures and two rivers is always spoiling for a war with her neighbours, particularly Ethiopia.

Somalia will gain more by seeking a rapprochement with Ethiopia and so will Ethiopia. They could, for instance, engage in a project for national utilisation of the waters of the two rivers and the development of the region. Intelligent planning for digging wells and introducing controlled grazing could reduce much of the inter-tribal friction and fractricidal wars, thus creating the conditions for settled, peaceful life and progress. A friendly Somalia would shorten the distance to the sea and reduce the cost of transport, just as a friendly Ethiopia would facilitate communications between northern and southern Somalia. Ethiopia and Somalia could lay the foundation for mutual co-operation and security thereby giving Africa a sense of peace and security in its eastern flanks and the confidence to take on other problems.

³⁸² FAO, Production Yearbook, Rome, 1960, pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER FIVE

Western Sahara

As these pages are being written, African anxiety is now focused on Western Sahara. Like the admission of Angola into the OAU in 1975, the admission of the Saharaouis Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) on February 22, 1982 is now threatening to break up the OAU. Apparently, the question now is no longer whether the OAU will be split on this question but whether the Organization will survive the issue.

The Western Sahara dispute like the others clearly shows that, what plagues the OAU is the lack of political will among most African states in taking decisive actions within the framework of the Charter whenever a crisis situation arises. The OAU Charter clearly specifies certain positions that must be adhered to by member-states. But whenever a crisis erupts, the immediate reaction of member-states is to shy away from asserting the principles stipulated by the Charter. They resort to delaying tactics, 'skirting round the issue and leaving the core problem', calling endless conferences and forming numerous committees. The Western Sahara is a classic example and the most recent. (OAU Charter is unambiguous in its provisions stipulating the procedure for admission of member-states into the Organization)³⁸³

As always, the end result is indecision and confusion and consequently continuing problems. The Western Sahara has also revealed that re-writing the OAU Charter is not the only tonic needed to invigorate the Organization. Recently, there have been calls for a revision of the OAU Charter.³⁸⁴

³⁸³ For the text of the OAU Charter see I, Brownlie (ed), Basic Documents on African Affairs, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1971, pp. 2 - 9

³⁸⁴ The current secretary-general, for example, has made such a proposal. See "OAU Charter, out of date, Sunday Sketch, August 15, 1982, p.9.

Africa could be confronted with problems and be unable to solve them. This, however, does not mean that decisions do not need to be taken. The decisions could even serve to remedy the situation. This writer is of the opinion that even where international organizations fail to resolve conflicts condemnation of issues by forceful resolutions serve as psychological deterrents and in a way, help to check the guilty party. Admittedly, the OAU Charter fails in some respects, but no action has been taken, even where the Charter is clear.

Origins of the dispute ³⁸⁵

The area now called Western Sahara in current diplomatic usage, was under Spanish rule divided into the Saguia el-Hamra region in the north and Rio de Oro in the south.³⁸⁶ When Spain withdrew, Morocco and Mauritania came to administer these areas. The borders were agreed upon at the Tripartite Accord in Madrid on November 14, 1975, by Spain, Mauritania and Morocco.³⁸⁷ The latter two signed their own border agreement in Rabat, on April 14, 1976.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ For a background to the conflict written from a sympathetic viewpoint to Polisario, a general introduction to the question, including events up to the end of 1975, see George Gretton, The Sahara Anti-Slavery Society, London, 1976, George Gretton, Western Sahara: The Fight for Self-determination, Anti-Slavery Society, London, 1976. For a pro-Moroccan viewpoint see Robert Rezette, The Western Sahara and the frontiers of Morocco, Nouvelles Editions Latines, Paris, 1975.

³⁸⁶ For a history of the territory see John Mercer, The Sahara, Allen and Mercer Unwin, London, 1976.

³⁸⁷ David L. Price, The Western Sahara, Sage Publications, California, 1979, p.8.

³⁸⁸ Colin Legum, Africa Contemporary Records, (ACR), 1975/76, p.8 166.

It was not apparent at the time, but this marked the beginning of the end of Spanish rule.

The campaign was organized by the Mauritanian-based Front de Liberation du Sahara sons Domination Coloniale Espagnole (FLS).³⁹³ The FLS was the first of the anti-Spanish movements, apart from Moroccan regulars that proliferated between 1966 and 1973. It was anti-Moroccan since its sponsor, Mauritania, mistrusted Morocco's intention in the Sahara, and was closely allied with Algeria. In December 1966, the FLS had supported a resolution at the UN that called for independence for Spanish Sahara. In 1972, the FLS was dissolved, crippled by rival Mauritanian and Moroccan claims to the Sahara, a rivalry which the Spaniards were able to exploit.

On September 14, 1970, Presidents Boumedienne of Algeria, Ould Daddah of Mauritania, and King Hassan of Morocco met in Nouadhibou and agreed on a common strategy to "hasten the decolonization of the Western Sahara".³⁹⁴ The tempo of political agitation quickened. Two new groups were formed: a short-lived Organisation de Liberation de Saguia el-Hamra et Wadi el-Dahb was formed in January 1971; and the Mouvement de Resistance des Hommes Bleues (MOREHOB).³⁹⁵ The latter was recognized by the OAU. Its platform for independence - independence for the Tuaregs - was unacceptable to Morocco. The movement was to dissolve in 1975, declaring its allegiance to Morocco.³⁹⁶

³⁹³ Ibid, p. 13

³⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 14

³⁹⁵ Ibid

³⁹⁶ Ibid

Still united in their opposition to Spanish rule, Morocco, Mauritania and Algeria met again in January 1972 in Algeria, and in Agadir, Morocco in July 1973, in response to a Spanish plan to grant the territory autonomy under the Jemaa, a local parliament. The Jemaa was created by Spain in 1967. It was adopted from the tribal consultative system. Under Spanish rule, a Jemaa representative sat in the Cortes in Madrid.³⁹⁷

The seemingly united front was a cosmetic affair. In reality, the three countries were only tenuously united against the Spaniards, each had its own Saharawi nationalist movement. However, the united anti-Spanish front was to fall apart to be replaced by a pro-Algerian movement opposed to Moroccan and Mauritanian control of the Sahara.

Spain had learnt lessons from her neighbour, Portugal, which had been forced into a hectic scramble to get out of its African colonies. In 1974, Spain indicated a willingness to give up the territory.³⁹⁸ The People's Front for the Liberation of Saguiet el Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario Front)³⁹⁹ emerged as a party to be reckoned with, and the possible vehicle for the establishment of an independent Sahara state.

Now, Morocco and Mauritania pursued their respective claims to the north and south of the territory, maintaining that these were integral parts of the Moroccan and Mauritanian States. Rabat played skilfully on the consequences of Spain's decision, on Spain's desire to avoid conflict with neighbouring States. It also chose the moment of its diplomacy well - the approaching end of General Franco's life and rule which left the country bigger issues to face than the Sahara.

³⁹⁷ Mercer, op. cit., p. 130

³⁹⁸ ACR, 1974 - 5, pp. B 137 - 8

³⁹⁹ For a history of the Polisario see David Price, op. cit., pp. 27 - 31

Spain vacillated according to circumstances, presented by each side. One important consideration was protection of her heavy investment estimated at between £50 million and £80million in the Bu-Craa phosphate mines. The establishment of an independent Saharan State would possibly permit the Spanish-owned company operating the Bu-Craa mines to continue to do so as a foreign company in the new State. A division of the country between Morocco and Mauritania (with Morocco taking the northern half containing the mines) could involve much stiffer participation terms, or perhaps the exclusion of Spain altogether from the phosphate enterprise. As the situation in the Western Sahara deteriorated during 1975, the value of the mines became less than the price paid to defend them, both in diplomatic entanglements and the cost of troops required to keep order.

Using ingenious methods, King Hassan of Morocco master-minded a take-over of Western Sahara by Morocco and Mauritania, outfacing Algeria and the United Nations in the process. He sent thousands of Moroccans marching into the Sahara, daring Spain and Algeria to confront a horde of unarmed civilians.⁴⁰⁰ This successful manoeuvre led to a settlement with Spain in November 1975. Relations with Algeria were strained to a breaking point. By the end of the year, Morocco and Mauritania had taken virtual control of the country and the Polisario was engaged in bitter guerrilla action to uproot them.

There were now two conflicting forces trying to decide the future of Western Sahara. On one side, the UN with vigorous Algerian support defended the territory's right to self-determination while Morocco and Mauritania resisted it, laying claims to the north and south, already occupied by them. Moroccan and Algerian army units clashed twice in the Sahara, in early 1976, and diplomatic relations were broken between them.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰⁰ For details of the "Green March" see ACR 1975/76, pp. B 161, See also ARB, Vol. 12, No. 10, November 15, 1975, pp. 3806 - 3808.

⁴⁰¹ African Research Bulletin (ARB), Vol. 13, No 1 February 15, 1976, pp. 3910 - 3912.

The parties to the dispute will be examined and their rival claims discussed in greater details.

Rival Claims

Morocco

In modern history, Morocco first claimed the Sahara provinces - but only Tarfaya and Ifni - in 1956. In earlier periods, the 13th century, for example, Moroccan tribes had extended their influence down to the Senegal river, inland to Timbuktu, across to Tunis and up into Spain.⁴⁰²

A religious leader, Ma el-Ainin, built up a power base at Smara in defiance of the Spanish protectorate and advancing French forces. Although his allegiance to the Moroccan Sultans was ambivalent, he did act as their agent and consolidated Moroccan control in the south until his death in 1910. When the French and Spanish protectorates ended in 1956, Moroccan (Morocco became independent in 1956) nationalists of the Istiqlal party sent guerrillas deep into the desert to recover the provinces. By the end of 1957 they had pushed Spanish forces back into the coastal settlements of Villa Cisneros, El Aïoun, Tarfaya and Ifni. But in February 1958, a combined squad of Spanish and French forces evicted the Moroccans from the Sahara.

The late King Mohammed V persuaded Spain to evacuate the Tekna protectorate and Tarfaya in April 1958. The Ifni enclave was handed over to Morocco eleven years later. He did not drop his claims to the Sahara, and even wanted to annex Mauritania as well, claiming that all the territory from Tarfaya down to the Senegal river had been part of Morocco before the colonial era.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² Mercer, op. cit., p. 157

⁴⁰³ Ibid p. 203

Morocco, during this period even tried unsuccessfully to oppose the creation of the state of Mauritania, which finally became independent in 1960. Essentially, Morocco based her claims on the historical argument that the Saharaouis had recognized the spiritual and temporal authority of the Sultan, and that Moroccan Sultans had appointed caids in the region, and collected taxes. Spanish colonization, Morocco argued had thus occupied a territory inhabited by a people owing allegiance to the Sultan. Therefore, Spain should now withdraw, since imperial rule was no long legitimate and the territory should now become part of the Moroccan state.⁴⁰⁴

The discovery of phosphate deposits at Bou Craa in 1963 sharpened Morocco's position. Spain continued to resist Moroccan claims until Morocco successfully placed the question of the future of the Sahara on the UN agenda. The UN passed a resolution sponsored by Morocco, Mauritania and Algeria in 1970 that invited Spain to organise a plebiscite among the Saharaouis to determine the territory's future.

By 1974, the deterioration of Moroccan-Algerian relations, the emergence of Polisario and a changed Spanish policy precipitated Moroccan activity. The diplomatic campaign began in earnest in July 1974. In October, 1975, the International Court of Justice announced its advisory opinion declaring that there had been evidence of some allegiance to the Moroccan sultans but not enough to establish a clear claim of Moroccan sovereignty or override the principle of self-determination as defined by the UN.⁴⁰⁵ King Hassan swiftly organised the Green March. He assembled 350,000 unarmed volunteers on November 6, 1975, for the peaceful invasion that stopped at the mined defence-line manned by the Spaniards, some seven miles inside the border. It was called off on November 9, 1975.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid p. 209

⁴⁰⁵ ACR, 1975/76, pp. B 158 - B 161

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid p. B 161

The Green March was an expensive expedition. Policing the new territory required additional troops and increasing Moroccan defence budget from \$258 million to \$345.9 million.⁴⁰⁷ Few African nations can afford their defence programmes and Morocco is no exception.

From then on, a distinctive feature of the conflict became the ferocity of the battles. Losses on all sides were very high.

In reaction to a Polisario attack on French advisers working in iron-ore installations at Zouerate, Mauritania, in October 1977, France on October 27, flew 2,400 troops to Senegal. From there, they were dispatched to protect French nationals in Morocco and Mauritania.⁴⁰⁸

Overwhelmingly, more significant than the Spanish influence is that of France, which colonized Morocco and Algeria. Official French view is that of non-interference but in practical terms, it is decidedly pro-Moroccan. The French stand is particularly important because it explains the posture of the Francophone states, most of whom are currently aiding Morocco to dismantle the OAU.

The attack of October 1977 was also significant because Morocco threatened to exercise the "right of pursuit" if Polisario guerrillas were to violate Moroccan or Mauritanian frontiers.⁴⁰⁹ Despite continuing raids, the threat has not been carried out. Of course, the political consequences of such an assault would be incalculable and, presumably, has been carefully assessed in Rabat.

407 David Price, op. cit., p. 36

408 "Western Sahara, A changing war," Africa, No. 53, July 1978, pp. 36 - 39

409 Ibid

Algeria

Algeria has not made any formal claim to the Western Sahara. Algerian support for Polisario in the Western Sahara could be viewed as ideological.⁴¹⁰ Algerian leadership and Polisario are both progressive and Marxist-inclined. Algerian support for the Western Sahara cause can also be described as a wish to deny the Sahara to Morocco. Algeria has tried to convey the impression that Morocco's historical claim is weak and that Algeria could if she wished, make an equally strong claim.⁴¹¹

Algiers may not have forgotten the October 1963 border incident with Morocco when Morocco made attempts to claim the iron-ore deposits at Gara-Djebilet, south east of Tindouf.⁴¹² In 1969, the OAU settled the dispute and both countries agreed to the joint exploitation of the Tindouf deposits, but the agreement is yet to be implemented.⁴¹³

Since the conflict began, Algeria's relations with France - have deteriorated. The Western Sahara has precipitated French/Algerian animosity. In December 1975, five French tourists got lost in the Western Sahara. In December 1977, the UN and Algeria confirmed that they had been killed in a Polisario ambush.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁰ Boumedienne, in a speech on the 10th anniversary of the 1965 Algerian coup on June 19, 1975, spoke of self-determination as a basic element in Algerian political philosophy, and of the need for the Sahara people to decide their own destiny - even if they chose to live under Moroccan or Mauritanian rule. See ACR, 1975/76, p. B 157

⁴¹¹ Ibid

⁴¹² F. Trout, Morocco's Saharan Frontiers, Geneva, Bibliotheca Africana Droz, 1969, p. 77

⁴¹³ Saadia Touval, The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa, Cambridge, Massachussetts, 1972 p. 60

⁴¹⁴ Susan Morgan, "Mauritania and the Polisario", Africa, No. 70, June 1977 pp. 16 - 18.

French opinion towards Algeria started to harden. On May 1, 1977, the iron-mining centre at Zouerate was attacked, and two French nationals were killed and six others taken hostage.⁴¹⁵ This raid exacerbated existing tensions between Algeria and France. In October, two more French technicians were abducted by Polisario.⁴¹⁵ This brought relationship between France and Algeria to a breaking point. Following the abduction, Algiers expected Paris to negotiate with the guerrillas, thus legitimizing the Polisario. But Paris refused, expelled eight Polisario militants from France, and sent troops to Senegal and Mauritania in October, and in December ordered air strikes against guerrilla columns and supply points in Mauritania.⁴¹⁶

Faced with French military response, Algeria accused France of duplicity, neocolonialism, imperialism and a host of other sins. It could be argued that French intervention was approved by Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal and the Ivory Coast.⁴¹⁷ This deteriorating relationship also had repercussions within France. Algerian nationals began to be harassed in France.

Algeria retaliated with diplomatic protests and economic sanctions against France. This had no marked effect on French policy. France, even aggravated the issue by beginning to import Saudi oil instead of Algerian crude. French air sorties continued in May 1978, damaging and seriously demoralizing the Polisario.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵ Ibid

⁴¹⁶ Africa, No. 83, July 1978, p. 36

⁴¹⁷ Ibid

⁴¹⁸ Twenty-one French-speaking African countries set up a 'Pan-African security force' in 1978 with the sponsorship of France. For details see "Pan-African Trojan Horse?" Africa, No. 83, July 1978, pp. 23 - 28

In reply to Algerian criticism, France remarked that it was impossible to play a role in world affairs without taking some risks. She said French military action in Mauritania was because of France's deliberate support for those nations with which cooperation agreements had been signed. Referring to strong Algerian reaction, he said that while France wanted to have bilateral relations with Algeria, her policies in Africa could not be dictated by Franco-Algerian cooperation.⁴¹⁹

In support of that policy, on May 10, France agreed to supply Morocco arms worth about \$200 million. French instructors were also part of the package. France also made sure, she brought President Houphouet Boigny of Ivory Coast into the Sahara discussions because of his stature in the West African francophone community and the OAU.

Even the United States of America which is also pro-Morocco has also tried to squeeze Algeria because of the Saharan issue. In 1977, Algeria signed contracts with two United States companies which were to be implemented by December 1977. The United States government resorted to obstructionist policies to delay the take-off of the projects.⁴²⁰

Mauritania

Mauritania and Morocco partitioned the Western Sahara in 1975 and signed a defence pact ~~with Morocco~~ in 1977. That Mauritanian-Moroccan accord was in marked contrast to the mutual suspicion of the past. Morocco in 1956, claimed not only the Sahara but large areas of Mauritanian territory as well. Mauritania has historic tribal links with the Western Sahara. In the 11th Century, Mauritania and the Sahara were conquered by the powerful Berber tribes of Idala and Lemtuna who produced a combined fighting force, the Almoravides.

⁴¹⁹ The Financial Times, August 16, 1978.

⁴²⁰ The Financial Times, London, May 9, 1978

In the 12th century, the Almoravides subjected the whole of Morocco as well as the Arab empire in southern Spain.⁴²¹

Until 1960, when it became independent, Mauritania had no previous history as a nation-state. Hitherto, it had been a tribal community of Arabs, Saharan Berbers (Tuaregs), arabized Berbers, black Africans who are descendants of slaves. The north is predominantly Arab or Saharaoui, and the south predominantly African.⁴²²

The socio-economic system in the north may be described as nomadic. The south is settled and practices arable farming. The indigenous population of Mauritania and the Western Sahara are of the same ethnic stock.

The regime of President Ould Daddah was overthrown on July 10, 1978 and was succeeded by a group of officers led by Colonel Ould Salek.⁴²³ Polisario declared a cease-fire against Mauritania in an attempt to drive a wedge between Rabat and Nouakchott.⁴²⁴

France proposed some kind of Saharaoui province federated with Mauritania.⁴²⁵ Its location was reported to be part of the region claimed by Mauritania in the Western Sahara, known as Tiris el-Gharbiya. Salek renewed links with Morocco and in August 1978, Morocco and Mauritania declared their opposition to a new independent state, but neither excluded the possibility of a federated state with limited autonomy. However, Mauritania was later to relinquish all claims to the Western Sahara.⁴²⁶

⁴²¹ John Mercer, The Sahara, Allen and Unwin, London, 1976, p. 230

⁴²² Ibid, p. 231

⁴²³ Coling Legum, ACR, 1977/78, p. B 178

⁴²⁴ Ibid

⁴²⁵ David Price, op. cit., p. 46

⁴²⁶ See Coling Legum, ACR, 1979/80, Chapters on Mauritania, pp. B 561 - 571; Morocco pp B 81 - B 99. See also The Essay on Western Sahara, pp. A 103 - 110

Mauritania's army is estimated at about 15,000 strong, lacks training and is poorly paid.⁴²⁷ Mauritania's large arid spaces, weak army and fragile economy made it vulnerable to Polisario's sabotage attacks.

Due to her weaknesses, Mauritania had to seek common security with Morocco. After the Zouerate attacks on May 1, 1977, both governments signed a military assistance agreement on May 13, 1977 at Nouakchott.⁴²⁸ After the July attack on the presidential palace, six hundred Moroccan troops were sent to protect the installations at Zouerate after which Moroccan presence increased to thousands of troops.⁴²⁹

The cost of the war, economic sabotage, mismanagement, and the disastrous consequences of a seven-year drought all began to erode the position of President Ould Daddah, leading to the overthrow of his regime. His successor Ould Salek admitted that the coup was arranged with the knowledge of France and Morocco.⁴³⁰ He also revealed that the war with the Polisario had nearly broken Mauritania financially. By the end of 1977, Mauritania's external debt had reached \$467 million, and by April 1978, the Daddah regime had found it difficult even to pay army wages and civil service salaries.⁴³¹ On coming to power, the new regime negotiated \$35 million of emergency aid - \$15 million from Morocco and \$10 million each from France and Libya.⁴³²

Salek was slow to respond to Polisario's cease-fire offer. Morocco's first statement after the Mauritanian coup was to warn that Morocco would not accept any settlement that posed a threat to her frontiers.

⁴²⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1976/77 London, 1977.

⁴²⁸ Ibid

⁴²⁹ Africa, No. 83, July 1978, p. 36

⁴³⁰ Price, op. cit, p. 45

⁴³¹ Financial Times, London, August 17, 1978

⁴³² Ibid

While carefully spelling out his support for Mauritania's desire for peace, Morocco declared that she would not tolerate along her borders, a regime whose ideology differed from that of Morocco and Mauritania.⁴³³ Apparently, this was in reference to the widely-circulated French-inspired proposal of creating a Saharan mini-state that would be federated with Mauritania - the region known as Tirisel-Gharbia that was ceded to Mauritania by the Tripartite Declaration of November, 1975.⁴³⁴

By mid-1978, Mauritania was in a difficult position. On August 17, 1978 Salek said he was not opposed to a referendum in Tiris el-Gharbia.⁴³⁵ If a referendum were held, it would, of course, lead initially to frontier changes and would violate the conditions stated by Morocco in her first statement after the coup. Although a referendum may have appeased the Polisario and given Mauritania an allowance to withdraw from the war, Mauritania could become a sanctuary and transit zone for guerrillas striking at Moroccan targets, thus provoking Moroccan retaliation and hot pursuit into Mauritania.

And economically, Mauritania was in no position to continue the war, but she continued to vacillate between Morocco's hard line and Polisario's cease-fire offer. On the other hand, President Ould Salek reiterated his commitment to the joint defence pact and stated that he would not take any unilateral action without first consulting Morocco. On the other hand, his emissaries were meeting Polisario representatives in European capitals in exploratory talks.⁴³⁶

If Mauritania negotiated a separate agreement with Polisario, Morocco could well occupy the Tiris el-Gharbia where she already had 3,000 troops. The Moroccan government had in fact given that hint. Most Mauritanian's believed that drought and agricultural disasters were far more serious than the war.

433- Price, op. cit., p. 46

434 For details of the Tripartite Agreement see ARB, Vol. 12, No. 11 December 15, 1975 pp. 3836 - 3838

435 Price, op. cit., p. 45

436 Colin Legum, ACR, pp. 562

Even in a good year, only 1% of her land is cultivable and food imports have become a way of life. In 1977, for instance, only one tenth of the principal subsistence foods - millet and sorghum was harvested.⁴³⁷ Long years of drought have destroyed the nomadic socio-economic system. Only 23% of the population is now nomadic, compared to 78% in 1959.⁴³⁸ Nouackchott, the capital, is a squalid prospect as thousands of refugees sprawl around the capital in tents and shanty towns.

Mauritania, finally signed a peace treaty with the Polisario on 5 August, 1979 in Algiers. Each side renounced all territorial claims to the other's territory. A few days after Morocco unilaterally moved into the territory that had been administered by Mauritania.

Polisario

As with most militant groups in the developing world, the origins of the movements in the Western Sahara lie in the nationalist feelings of the Saharaouis who received higher education in Morocco, Spain and France. Between 1966 and 1973, the main nationalist groups were the FLS, MOREHOB and PUNS.⁴³⁹ None was effective because each lacked military support and were divided by internal squabbles and interstate rivalry.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of the Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario) dates its formation from May 10, 1973, at Nouackchott and its first recorded action was against Spanish troops at El Khanga, Tifariti, and Bir Bahlou on May 25, 1973.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁷ In 1977, for the second year running, the River Senegal failed to rise to a level sufficient to irrigate the traditional flood cultures in

⁴³⁸ Mauritania. See Africa, No. 70, June 1977. p. 18.
Arab News, Jeddah, September 24, 1978

⁴³⁹ Colin Legum, ACR, 1974/5, pp. B 80ff; 1975/76, pp. B 153 - 155. For history of these movements see David Lunn Price, The Western Sahara, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C. pp. 27 - 35

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid p. 31

During its second congress at Ain ben-Tili from August 25 to 31, it was decided that Polisario should seek an independent, non-aligned state.⁴⁴¹

Its twenty-seven point programme proposed, inter alia, scientific socialism, land reform, a mobilization of "the masses", and a charter for human rights and for the liberation of women.⁴⁴²

Polisario's first attempt to set up a Saharaoui state received political support from Mauritania and military aid from Libya. Two years after its formation, Polisario's links with Morocco and Mauritania were cordial. The Polisario's structure is rudimentary: there is a Provisional National Council but effective control rests with a seven-man Executive Committee, itself drawn from a twenty-one member Political Bureau.

Between May 1973 and November 1975, the liberation movement's activity was fitful, unco-ordinated, and consisted mainly of propaganda visits to desert settlements and long-range fusillades at Spanish garrisons. The Moroccan-Mauritanian partition and Algeria's opposition to it, produced a qualitative change in Polisario's activity. It resorted to the easier tactic of economic attrition against Mauritania, the weaker partner, and moreover because, Mauritania's size, emptiness, small army, and fragile economy made it a sitting target.

World Court Opinion

In December 1974, the UN General Assembly asked the World Court for an advisory opinion on whether Spanish Sahara was "a territory belonging to no one at the time of annexation by Spain in 1884 or whether it had legal links with Morocco or Mauritania."⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹ Ibid

⁴⁴² Ibid

⁴⁴³ ACR, 1975/76, p. B 158. For World Court Decisions see Documents Section under International Relations/OAU; The UN and Africa, ACR 1975/76, pp. 667 - 68.

The case was heard between 25 June and 30 July, 1975, after a preliminary hearing which began on 12 May. Morocco and Mauritania presented complementary claims, Morocco's concerning the north of the territory and Mauritania's the south. Morocco rested its case on 'undeniable' historic Moroccan sovereignty while Mauritania claimed that the Chingnitti peoples had once formed a political entity.⁴⁴⁴ Spain opposed both cases, maintaining that the territory had belonged to the nomadic tribes themselves before colonization.⁴⁴⁵ Algeria, like Spain, favoured self-determination for the area.

While waiting for the Court's judgement skirmishes between Moroccan and Spanish troops continued and Spain engaged Algeria in discussions about the territory's future.⁴⁴⁶ Morocco became frightened at the spectre of Spanish-Algerian-Polisario Front axis. Morocco refused to attend a UN-sponsored four-nation conference on the Sahara in September.

On October 1, 1975, Spain made it known to the UN that it would hold a self-determination referendum in the Sahara in the first half of 1976, regardless of the World Court's decision. On October 15, 1975, the UN mission to the Sahara reported that it had found an overwhelming sentiment in Western Sahara in favour of independence and against a take-over by Morocco and Mauritania.⁴⁴⁷ It favoured UN action to enable the people of the territory to decide their future in complete freedom; and recommended that the United Nations maintains a presence there to ensure peace during Spain's withdrawal.⁴⁴⁸ The mission comprised Ivory Coast, Iran and Cuba and had been sent by the UN Decolonization Committee. It had begun its fact-finding tour of the Western Sahara on the 12th of May, the same day, the World Court at Hague started preliminary hearings about the conflicting claims to the territory.

444 Ibid

445 Ibid

446 Ibid

447 ACR, 1975/76, p. 8 159

448 Ibid

The World Court announced its opinion on the historic status of the Sahara territory at the time it was annexed by Spain in 1884, on 16 October.⁴⁴⁹ The opinion was advisory and had no binding force. By a vote of fifteen to one, the Court decided that neither Morocco nor Mauritania had been able to prove formal sovereignty over the country. Both, however, had shown that certain legal ties, involving tribes, existed in the Sahara. The Court decided that in 1884 Western Sahara was not *terrae nullius* (belonging to no one) and that Spain had taken it over by virtue of agreements with the local tribal chiefs.⁴⁵⁰

Morocco, had based its claims on the religious bonds of Islam and tribal allegiance to the Sultan of Morocco. The Court recognized the existence of these bonds, but said they did not amount to formal territorial sovereignty or "immemorial possession" as Morocco claimed.⁴⁵¹

In the case of Mauritania, the Court found there were many racial, linguistic, religious, cultural and economic ties between the Chingnitti peoples of Western Sahara and what is now Mauritania. In particular, rights relating to migration through certain lands amounted to legal ties between nomadic tribes. But this, the Court said, did not prove the existence of one legal entity, or of allegiance, or of a tie of sovereignty.⁴⁵² The Court also noted that the failure of Morocco and Mauritania to resolve the overlapping nature of their claims indicated the difficulty of unravelling the relationships which existed in the region in 1884.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁹ ADR, 1975/76, p. C 67

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid

⁴⁵¹ Ibid

⁴⁵² Ibid

⁴⁵³ Ibid p. C 68

The Court also found that the ties which existed between Western Sahara and Mauritania and Morocco in 1884 did not amount to sovereignty and did not affect the right of the present-day inhabitants of Spanish Sahara to self-determination.⁴⁵⁴

Morocco and Mauritania, turned the ruling around and announced that the World Court's recognition of the ties between their respective countries and the Sahara legitimized their claims and settled the dispute authoritatively. Within hours of the World Court's decision, King Hassan broadcast to his nation, calling for a peaceful march of 350,000 civilians into Spanish Sahara to reclaim the territory. He said: "No tyrant, not even one totally devoid of faith, would dare to give an order to fire on 350,000 persons without arms."⁴⁵⁵

Transition of Power

For reasons unrelated to developments in the Sahara, Spain's response proved to be vacillating and unpredictable. All along, Morocco's pressure on Spain had calculated Madrid's unwillingness to mark the last years of the ageing General Franco's rule with a colonial war. As the crisis reached a vital point, it coincided with Franco's last days. General Franco died on 20 November.

Spain's Government was in a state of transition and uncertainty as it tried to head off the Moroccan march. The result was a wavering line of policy. Eventually, Spain's internal difficulties worked to Morocco's advantage. On November 2, 1975, at an emergency meeting of the Security Council, Spain along with Algeria had warned Morocco that they would counter the proposed march with armed force.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵⁵ African Research Bulletin (ARB), Vol. 12, No. 10 November 15, 1975, pp. 3807

⁴⁵⁶ Washington Post, 19 October 1975.

But on 14 November, after three days of discussions, a settlement between Morocco, Spain and Mauritania was announced.⁴⁵⁷ Spain's final withdrawal from the territory was set for February 28, 1976.⁴⁵⁸ A joint provisional administration established by Spain, Morocco and Mauritania, with the co-operation of the Jemaa, would run the country until that date. Morocco and Mauritania would each appoint an assistant governor to aid the Spanish Governor-General.

Later, it was disclosed that Spain had kept a 35% interest in Fوسفات de Bu-Craa and handed over the remaining 65% to Morocco.⁴⁵⁹ On November 26, Hassan confirmed that Morocco would relax its pressure for the return of Ceuta and Melilla - at least until Spain recovered Gibraltar. He said it would be inadvisable for Spain to control both sides of the entry into the Mediterranean.⁴⁶⁰ Early in 1976, it was reported that the Sahara dividing line between Morocco and Mauritania would be established north of Villa Cisneros, following the 24th parallel from the coast to Bia-Nzan, then running south-east in a straight line to Amaigh.⁴⁶¹

The November agreement provoked a sharp Algerian response. Algeria said the settlement violated UN resolutions, the verdict of the International Court and the Saharan people's rights. Algeria conceded she had no claims on the territory but said she was concerned because developments in the area affected Algeria and no one knew where Morocco's claim to recover lost territory would end.

⁴⁵⁷ See Robert Rezette, The Western Sahara and the frontiers of Morocco, Nouvelles Editions Latines, Paris; Spain's intentions, pp. 133 - 137, Moroccan /Mauritanian intentions pp. 137 - 149.

⁴⁵⁸ ARB, Vol. 12, No. 11, December 15, 1975, p. 3839

⁴⁵⁹ African Confidential, Vol. 16, No. 25, December 19, 1975, pp. 1 - 2

⁴⁶⁰ See Price, op. cit., pp. 60 - 61

⁴⁶¹ ACR, 1975/76, p. B 162

Algeria said she had no aggressive intentions towards Morocco but Western Sahara was not Moroccan nor Mauritanian territory.⁴⁶² On November 25, King Hassan challenged Algeria to make war on Morocco.⁴⁶³

Mauritania's more hesitant approach to the Sahara situation contrasted sharply with Morocco's aggressive attitude. Although she participated willingly in the November settlement with Spain, Mauritania had provided no support for the Moroccan civilian march on November 6, 1975. Apparently, Mauritania was torn between the benefits to be gained from his comparatively recent alliance with Morocco and the remembrance of past support from Algeria, especially in 1972/73 when Mauritania left the franc zone and joined the Arab League.⁴⁶⁴ Morocco had forced the pace of events in November, and now Mauritania appeared uncertain about the former's course of action and even the extent of her own ambitions. The size of Mauritania's armed forces acted as a practical restraint. It was little more than evenly matched with Polisario.

The role of the Jemaa in expressing the wishes of the Saharaouis became a matter of heated controversy soon after the transition period began. Seventy-two of the Jemaa's one hundred and two members, had given their formal assent in writing to the November agreement signed in Madrid.⁴⁶⁵ Morocco, was to claim later, that this satisfied the UN requirement that the Saharaouis were consulted. But on November 28, sixty-seven of the members signed a declaration that the Jemaa was dissolved because it was no longer competent to speak for the Saharaouis.⁴⁶⁶

The UN had been singularly - effective in upholding the rights of the Saharaouis. On December 11, 1975, the General Assembly passed an Algerian-sponsored resolution calling on Spain to take immediate steps to assure the Sahara people's right to self-determination under UN auspices.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶² ACR, 1975/76, p. B 162

⁴⁶³ Ibid

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid

⁴⁶⁵ ACR, 1975/76, p. B 163

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid p. 164

⁴⁶⁷ For the Resolution see ACR 1975/76 Documents Section under International Relations/OAU; The UN and Africa; p. C53. See also African Research Bulletin, Vol. 17, No. 11, December 15, 1980.

The intensification of Algeria/Morocco conflict culminated in an armed clash at Amgala from January 27 to 29, 1976. Spain's last military units had left on 12 January, leaving one hundred and fifty officials behind to await the official end of Spain's ninety-two year rule in the territory on February 28, 1976. But Spain withdrew her administrators from the Sahara on February 26, 1976, two days early, to avoid responsibility for a special session of the Jemaa called by Morocco as an official farewell to the Spaniards and to vote an endorsement of the Moroccan-Mauritanian partition.⁴⁶⁸

On February 27, 1976, at Bir Lahlou, the Polisario proclaimed the Republique Arabe Sahraouie Democratique - Saharaouis Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).⁴⁶⁹

The role of the OAU in the Western Sahara dispute

The Western Sahara crisis, which is one of the factors that contributed to the first failure of an OAU Heads of State summit, once more brings into focus the fundamental problems that plague the OAU.

The implications of the failure of the August 1982, Tripoli summit must be viewed against the background, that the performance of the OAU is customarily judged by the record of the annual summit of its supreme organ - the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. The Assembly is the only institution established by the OAU Charter which is vested with decision-making powers and which has developed as a collective body whose resolutions provides guidelines for the foreign policies of OAU members. Though lacking any powers to enforce their implementation, ~~the Organization has usually exercised enough~~
~~weight to enforce its resolutions.~~

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, p. B 167

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid

the Organization has usually carried enough weight at least to discourage its dissenting members from flouting the consensus of a large majority.

The first time the OAU took official notice of the conflict in the Spanish Sahara was at the Rabat Summit, in 1972, when the Council of Ministers expressed its solidarity with the population of the Sahara, but without referring to any special group or liberation movement, and called on Spain to create a free and democratic atmosphere, "in which the people of the territory could exercise their right to self-determination."⁴⁷⁰

They requested Morocco and Mauritania to intensify their efforts vis-a-vis Spain to induce it to implement the UN call for a referendum under UN auspices.⁴⁷¹ The same policy was re-affirmed by the Council of Ministers in 1973⁴⁷² and again in 1974.⁴⁷³ The most striking feature of the 1974 resolution was the omission of any mention of Polisario which had already been in existence for a year and the shifting of the entire responsibility for decolonization to the UN.

No resolution on Spanish Sahara was adopted at the Kampala summit in July 1975, mainly because of the increased tension between Algeria and Morocco over the territory's future status. Mauritania's position, at that point in time, was still unclear. After Mauritania and Morocco both defied the OAU and UN by concluding a tripartite agreement with Spain on November 14, 1975, the Western Sahara became a central issue at the Council of Ministers meeting in Addis Ababa in February, 1976.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁰ Resolutions, Recommendations and Statements adopted by the Ordinary and Extra-Ordinary Sessions of the Council of Ministers. (Tenth to the Twentieth Ordinary Sessions) (Seventh Extra-Ordinary Session) (1968 - 1973) Vo. II,

⁴⁷¹ Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 1973, p. 277.

⁴⁷² Ibid
See ACR, 1974/5, pp. B. 137-141; 1975/76, pp. B 153 - 168

⁴⁷³ ACR, 1974/5, pp. B 137 - 141

⁴⁷⁴ ACR, 1975/76, pp. B. 153 - 168

There, the split between the supporters and opponents of Polisario assumed the proportions of the previous division over Angola. Algeria called for the recognition of the SADR proclaimed by the Polisario during the Council's meeting on February 26.⁴⁷⁵ Then, the Council of Ministers had "happily taken note of the proclamation for self-determination in Western Sahara".⁴⁷⁶ Morocco and Mauritania threatened to withdraw from the OAU if Polisario were recognised as a liberation movement. Seventeen members voted for recognition, nine opposed it and twenty-one abstained. The Council concluded that the question of recognition should be left to each OAU member to decide for itself.⁴⁷⁷ This decision infuriated Mauritania and Morocco.

The Republic of Benin submitted a draft resolution⁴⁷⁸ to the Council of Ministers conference at Port Louis preceeding the 1976 Summit. She expressed "grave anxiety over the seriousness of the situation prevailing in the Western Sahara", and drew attention to the "principle regarding the self-determination and independence of countries and peoples under foreign domination."⁴⁷⁹

When the debate of Benin's resolution began to show signs of wrecking the whole conference, Nigeria proposed that an extraordinary session of the Assembly should be convened to consider the problem.⁴⁸⁰ Though, this suggestion was accepted no date for such a meeting was mentioned.

The February 1977 meeting of the Council of Ministers, at Lome, formally accepted the Polisario as a bona fide liberation movement.⁴⁸¹

475

Ibid

476 Ibid

477

Ibid

478 For the text of the resolution see Documents Section p. C 43

479 Ibid

480 ACR, 1976/77, p. A 71

481 For the resolution see Documents Section ACR, 1977/78 p. C 59.

Morocco and Mauritania withdrew from all OAU activities, following the presence of the Polisario at the meeting.⁴⁸² This, in effect, led to the cancellation of the special summit scheduled in April, to debate the Saharan question. However, this did not dampen the eagerness of Mali and Nigeria to keep the issue on the OAU agenda. They became Algeria's strongest supporters in the attempt to get a special summit finally organized.

Gabon prevented the Polisario from attending the July 1977 summit meeting in Libreville.⁴⁸³ Morocco and Mauritania were there and the special summit on the Sahara was fixed for October in Lusaka.⁴⁸⁴ Zambia later backed out and another venue was sought for the summit.⁴⁸⁵ This time, it was scheduled to hold from 24 to 30 March, 1978 at Libreville.⁴⁸⁶ Morocco and Mauritania insisted on a quorum of at least half the forty-nine member-states, but only seven indicated their willingness to attend and none had offered to help finance it.⁴⁸⁷

At the Monrovia summit in 1979, the OAU accepted the proposals made by the OAU Mediation Committee on the Western Sahara, calling for a ceasefire to allow a referendum on self-determination and proposed a "neutral force to supervise the ceasefire."⁴⁸⁸

In July 1980, at the OAU summit in Freetown, the SADR made the first bid for admission into the OAU.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸² See Colin Legum, ACR, 1976/77 p. A 75

⁴⁸³ Ibid

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid

⁴⁸⁵ Le Monde, 8 November, 1977

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸⁸ For text see Documents Section, ACR 1979/80 p. C 18

⁴⁸⁹ For the Declaration of SADR, See Documents Section ACR 1976/77, pp. C115f
See "Rocky Road to Gadaffi's summit", Africa Now, August 1982.

The twenty-six member-states that had recognized the fledgling republic proposed that the SADR be admitted into the Organization under Article 28 of the OAU Charter, which requires only a simple majority for an "independent sovereign African state" to be voted into membership.⁴⁹⁰

Morocco countered that the SADR was not a genuine sovereign state and that a decision on this interpretative matter required a two-thirds majority under, Article 27 of the OAU Charter.⁴⁹¹ She threatened to leave the OAU with a handful of conservative African states that supported her if the SADR was admitted.

The summit accordingly back-tracked, shelving the issue of the SADR's admission and taking comfort in a Moroccan promise to cooperate with the OAU's ad-hoc committee on the Sahara, which had been appointed the year before at the Monrovia summit in July 1979.⁴⁹² Confronted with a Moroccan boycott, the committee had tried to hold talks in Monrovia in December 1979.⁴⁹³ Morocco had contemptuously refused to cooperate with the committee.

The Secretary-General of the OAU, Edem Kodjo, at the 18th OAU Summit conference at Nairobi in June 1981, urged the Assembly of Heads of State to settle the Western Sahara crisis.⁴⁹⁴ As for the issue of recognition, he pointed out that it required strict adherence to the OAU Charter.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁰ See African Research Bulletin, (ARB) Vol. 19, No. 2, March 15, 1982

⁴⁹¹ Ibid

⁴⁹² See essay on Western Sahara in ACR 1979/80 pp. A 103 - 110

⁴⁹³ Ibid

⁴⁹⁴ African Research Bulletin, Vol. 18, No. 6, July 15, 1981, p. 6060

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid

"Time is running out," he pleaded, "and we must find a solution to this problem as quickly as possible".⁴⁹⁶

King Hassan of Morocco suddenly declared that he would agree to a referendum but did not give details of who would control the referendum.⁴⁹⁷ Neither did he mention the ad hoc committee's other recommendations for a ceasefire and the return of all troops to barracks.⁴⁹⁸

The Polisario said Hassan's move was just a device for legitimising Morocco's illegal occupation of the Western Sahara.⁴⁹⁹ The question of recognition which had threatened to split the OAU at the Freetown summit was now quietly forgotten. Moroccan diplomacy had succeeded.

Even if King Hassan had been sincere, the difficulties of holding a fair referendum on Western Sahara - of deciding who should vote for a start - are formidable. There was no agreement, for instance, as to how exactly, the territory of Western Sahara should be defined, nor equally important, as to who was to vote. The OAU had left those ends loose. Morocco would have definitely liked to base the referendum on the census taken by Spain before her departure, since this would be weighted toward "those areas settled by Moroccans."⁵⁰⁰ The Polisario, in contrast, wanted the polls to include the Saharan refugees who have fled to Algeria, and who support the guerrillas' struggle for independence.⁵⁰¹

Estimating the population of the Western Sahara is an equally formidable exercise. Since the first time of the first European contacts with the area in the 15th century, only one census has ever been compiled.⁵⁰²

496

Ibid

497 Ibid p. 6068

498

Ibid

499

Ibid

500

Ibid

501

Price, op. cit. p. 8

502

Ibid.

The census which was conducted in 1973/74 gave population figures in the Spanish Sahara at 74,500.⁵⁰³ This figure is now generally believed to be an underestimate because, since 1975, population movement has increased well beyond the traditional tribal limits and urbanization has attracted permanent settlers from northern Morocco.⁵⁰⁴ It is difficult at the moment, to estimate exactly the number who have become refugees as a result of the Sahara drought and war.

What Morocco had evidently feared with good reason was that, at that Summit, the Polisario was going to capitalize on increasing international acceptance of the SADR by making a successful application for membership of OAU. In the event, Hassan turned the tables on the Polisario by announcing that he had accepted the long-standing OAU proposal for a referendum in the disputed territory.

The Committee, meeting at Nairobi, on August 26, 1981, agreed on a programme for a cease-fire in the Western Sahara (fighting was still raging between Morocco and the Polisario) and a referendum among the inhabitants of the former Spanish colony.⁵⁰⁵ It also agreed that Morocco and the Polisario would confine their armed forces to their bases while an OAU peace-keeping force formed by the OAU/UN moved in with an interim administration which would carry out the referendum to establish whether the Saharan people want integration with Morocco or independence.⁵⁰⁶

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- 503 Censo 1974 (1975): Gobierno General de Sahara
 504 Africa, No. 59, July 1976, p. 33
 505 ARB, Vol. 18, No. 6, July 15, 1981, p. 6068
 506 Ibid

This committee went further to resolve the issue of who would be eligible to vote in the referendum by stating that all Saharaouis listed in the 1974 census conducted by Spanish authorities, who had attained the age of 18 or above should be eligible.⁵⁰⁷ It also tackled the problem of the Saharaouis who had fled the war-torn territory to neighbouring countries vis-a-vis their participation in the referendum.⁵⁰⁸

Morocco not only refused to negotiate directly with the Polisario Front but said that the referendum would confirm Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara. Morocco said she could not compromise Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara.⁵⁰⁹

But the OAU failed to implement the recommendations of the committee. Even financing the referendum was left to the UN.

In June 1981, the Secretary-General had received a formal request from the Foreign Minister of the SADR to admit his country into the organization.⁵¹⁰ At the 38th ordinary session of the Council of Ministers on February 22, 1982, the SADR was admitted into the OAU as a full member-state.⁵¹¹ Eighteen ministers joined Morocco in storming out of the meeting in protest.⁵¹²

The August 1982 Tripoli Summit.⁵¹³

The 19th OAU Summit that was scheduled to hold in Tripoli, Libya from August 5 to 8, 1982, was postponed for lack of quorum. For the first time ever in the chequered history of the OAU; an Assembly of Heads of State summit failed to hold. For the first time an acceptable compromise formula could not be found.

⁵⁰⁷ National Concord, 31 July 1982

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid

⁵⁰⁹ ARB Vol 18, No. 6, July 15, 1981 p. 6068

⁵¹⁰ "OAU Secretary-General, interview with Africa Now; Africa Now, August 1982, pp. 18 - 19

⁵¹¹ ARB, Vol. 19, No. 2, March 15, 1982, p. 6353

⁵¹² Ibid

⁵¹³ For a diary of events of the OAU's efforts to hold its annual summit in Tripoli see "How Tripoli reached stalemate," West Africa, No. 3392, 9th August 1982, pp. 2029 and "OAU: the quest for the quorum", West Africa, No. 3393, pp. 2089 - 2091.

The thirty-one heads of state that had turned up in Tripoli set up a six-nation contact group to liaise with the countries that did not turn up to iron out differences and fix another date for a fresh summit.⁵¹⁴

The controversy surrounding this summit emanates from two factors - the admission of the SADR into the OAU and the prospects of a radical Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, taking over as the next Chairman of the OAU.

This drama started as far back as the last summit held in Nairobi, Kenya, when it was announced that Libya would host the next summit. This decision was in accordance with the OAU tradition of rotating the hosting and chairmanship of the Organization summit in an alphabetical order.

Some members, notably Sudan and Egypt threatened not to attend the summit if ever hosted by Libya.⁵¹⁵ They believed that Libya was supporting rebels bent on destabilising their governments.⁵¹⁶ Some frowned at the presence of Libyan troops in Chad. Gaddafi promptly removed his troops from Chad.⁵¹⁷

The mini-summit which was designed to clear all hurdles, especially those created by the contested admission of the SADR, had to be cancelled. By ordering the mini-summit to "state clearly and expressly that the February decision to admit the SADR is null and void with no effect and consequently inexistent",⁵¹⁸ Morocco rendered the mini-summit irrelevant. What else was there to discuss?

⁵¹⁴ New Nigerian, 10 August 1982; Daily Sketch, 9 August 1982

⁵¹⁵ For a summary of the events leading up to the Summit, see "The OAU, Daggers drawn in Tripoli", Africa, No. 131, July 1982, pp. 20 - 23. See also "OAU and the Tripoli affair", Punch, 12 August 1982.

⁵¹⁶ For information about some of these accusations see for examples "Sudan: Danger lurks in the shadows", Africa, No. 124, December 1981 and Ibid: Egypt: Conflicting signals, pp. 22 - 24. See also "Egypt-Libya: Sadat versus Gaddafi", Africa, No. 73, September 1977, pp. 22 - 25

⁵¹⁷ See Ibid, "Chad: Hanging in balance", pp. 19 - 20.

⁵¹⁸ See National Concord, 22 July 1982, p. 2

If the OAU cannot unequivocally, endorse the rights of the SADR to statehood, what moral justification does she have to urge the Western Five Contact Group,⁵¹⁹ working on Namibia to hasten the process of Namibia's independence? Or is African imperialism not as bad as European colonialism? Will the OAU de-emphasise UN insistence on self-determination for the Western Sahara and seek strong UN support for independence for Namibia. As President Nyerere⁵²⁰ pointed out during the Nigerian civil war and as this writer has re-iterated, when it comes to African affairs, African actors must not be seen as being more equal than other international actors. Africa and Africans must be seen as fine examples of whatsoever goals or objectives, Africa is seeking.

The SADR is now recognized by over half of the OAU member-states and about fifty-three countries of the world,⁵²¹ yet the OAU has fought shy of its responsibilities. This crisis over the Western Sahara reflects the deficiency of the internal political mechanics of African states.

Nigeria, for example that has been brandishing herself, since the advent of her petro-naira, suddenly became a victim of her own rhetorics and limitations. Instead of marching to Tripoli, in defiance of anti-continental forces, she chose to stay at home to await a quorum to be formed. Nigeria suddenly became afraid that the OAU would "collapse over her head".⁵²² "Since when is a power afraid to have his house collapse on his head? Isn't a power expected to hold up his house and prevent the collapse of the house?"⁵²³

⁵¹⁹ See Chapter on Angola in this work.

⁵²⁰ See Chapter on Nigerian Civil War in this work

⁵²¹ Nigerian Standard, 12 August 1982, p. 3

⁵²² Sunday Concord, 15 August 1982, p. 3

⁵²³ Ibid

Normally, when instability starts brewing in African states due to corruption and inefficiency of leaders, all the blame go to "imperialists and neo-colonialists".⁵²⁴ The West has succeeded in making Colonel Gaddafi and Libya take its place. Now, Sudan that has been eaten up with corruption, maladministration and economic mismanagement, blames Libya for all her woes, calling on the West and the United States in particular to help her and allying with Egypt to tip the balance of power against Libya. To turn the attention of Sudanese from pressing domestic problems, President Nimeiry of Sudan sees Libyan troops perpetually massed at the border, ready to pounce on Sudan. In the process, unprecedented problems are created for this continent and the OAU. As a case in point, Egypt and the Sudan have provided the United States in return for huge funds and aid, with military bases and their troops have participated in military exercises with the American troops.⁵²⁵ This increases the prospects of the United States of intervening and influencing affairs on the African continent. The Reagan administration fears that Gaddafi may influence socio-economic order, political order on the continent to the detriment of their economic and political interests. And it has found useful friends like Sudan and Egypt who also think along the same lines.

⁵²⁴ For a detailed and brilliant analysis of this phenomenon see Ruth First, The Barrel of a Gun, London, Penguin, Chapter One.

⁵²⁵ On July 8, 1982, Chester Crocker, US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "We want to help African nations threatened by Gaddafi's diplomacy. In our fiscal year 1982 budget, this administration added substantial funds for military assistance to Tunisia and Sudan... we are seeking ways to help with economic and military support for others who are similarly threatened". See Africa Now, No. 16, August 1982 pp. 16 - 17

Maybe, Africa will do well to learn a lesson from the Falklands:⁵²⁶ nations must not go seeking external escapades to divert attention from real social, political and economic internal difficulties. African states hate to confront domestic problems. They either pretend such problems are non-existent or seek martyrs abroad.

Generally, Libya's seeming belligerency is obviously directed at the excesses of the exploitative advanced nations.⁵²⁷ If she experiences brushes with some African nations, it is because such countries have allowed themselves to be manipulated by the advanced nations. Gadaffi's chairmanship does not carry a world difference since all major OAU decisions are taken not by the chairman solely but by the congregation of African Heads of State.

Besides, there is nothing in the Organization's statutes or conventions which prescribes a particular line of politics for its chairman. Whatever his faults - and every African leader has his - Gadaffi is indisputably a lesser evil to African interests than Western neo-imperialists. This distinction should have been appreciated by the African leaders who stayed away from the summit. On this score, a lesson should be learnt from the recent Israeli invasion of Lebanon.⁵²⁸ The whole Arab world and the PLO

⁵²⁶ See "The Falklands War," Newsweek, 7 June 1982, pp.24-31, p.32.

⁵²⁷ For more details on this line of argument see "Africa needs Libya" Africa, No.131, July 1982.

⁵²⁸ In the aftermath of the Israeli invasion, generally, African opinion like the one stated, is that it could also happen to Africa. "For us in Africa, Lebanon is a big warning of what frightful scenario may develop in the continent. Already, South Africa, bubbling with American and British-backed economic and military confidence, has admitted invading Angola. It is organizing subversive activities in Mozambique." See "Are we prepared for Lebanon?", Punch, 24 August, 1982, p.3.

were humiliated because conservative Arab states like Saudi Arabia think Israel is a lesser evil than Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran.

Leadership, albeit radical, revolutionary or reactionary is momentary and ephemeral in nature. What is permanent and important in the African equation is the OAU. The primary objective of the OAU at the time it came into being, was to lay a solid foundation for African unity, by providing a forum and an all-weather communication channel for the settlement of disputes. The spirit of the OAU is very important, more important than individual states and individual heads of state. That spirit must be protected.

And this OAU spirit is in its Charter. It should never have gone down in history that the OAU reached a deadlock over the issue of decolonization and self-determination. The issue of the SADR, should not in the first place, have been a subject for discussion, much less for conferences and committees. An OAU Charter Review Committee in May, 1982, adopted a report re-iterating the inviolability of state frontiers inherited at the time of independence.⁵²⁹ This principle is one of the guiding principles of the OAU.

Article 28 of the OAU Charter says: "Any independent sovereign African country may at anytime notify the secretary-general of its intention to adhere or accede to this charter."

⁵²⁹ New Nigerian, 27 May, 1982, p.12.

"The secretary-general shall, on receipt of such notification, communicate a copy of it to all member-states. Admission shall be decided by a simple majority of the member-states. The decision of each member shall be transmitted to the secretary-general who shall, upon receipt of the required number of votes, communicate the decision to the state concerned."⁵³⁰

The secretary-general adhered strictly to the provisions of the charter in admitting the SADR. Those states like Nigeria, who say it is the manner of admission they quarrel with,⁵³¹ do not seem to be able to find an excuse for staying away from the summit. Even if they had a case, it would simply be a procedural one, and need not split the OAU or spoil a summit.

It is the "Unity" in the title of the OAU which distinguishes it from a more routine alliance of states like the Organization of American States in Latin America. That word still gives it on occasion radical motivation. This split over the Western Sahara could be traced to the posture and character of the three main blocks that came together to form the OAU.

The blocks developed as an immediate reaction to the involvement of African states in the Congo and Algerian crises.⁵³² In the process

⁵³⁰ Ian Brownlie, op.cit. p.5.

⁵³¹ Sunday Nation, 15 August 1982, p.5. See also "OAU, Nigeria and the SADR question," The Nigerian Chronicle, 24 August 1982, p.7.

⁵³² See Jon Woronoff, Organizing African Unity, Metuchen, New Jersey, Scarecrow Press, 1973, pp.211-237 and I.W. Zartman, International Relations in the New Africa, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1966 for these developments and analyses of this period.

of defining their position on the two crises, the groups found themselves competing also for the true interpretation of African Unity. Despite their antagonisms, the groups insisted that African Unity was incompatible with the maintenance of rival blocks.⁵³³

In 1963, in order to secure the participation of all the continent's independent states, it was necessary for the more radical Pan-Africanists to go at the more realistic pace of the majority which then obtained. While recognizing the need for unity, they were not unaware of the obstacles to be overcome for its achievement. The African peoples did not emerge into nation-hood under uniform conditions - they maintain different political systems, have diverse economies and social orders rooted in a dizzying range of cultures and traditions.

The OAU's charter was very much modelled on that of Monrovia group, limiting any possibility of more than national unity, giving the OAU the aspects of a heads-of-state trade union.⁵³⁴ Unity through regional groupings rather than "continental" approach became conventional wisdom in the years that followed, and the OAU concentrated on supporting liberation movements.

The establishment of the Organization formally ended the conflict over interpretation: Yet while there was agreement on the need for reconciliation, the underlying dispute was left unresolved.

⁵³³ See I Wallerstein, Africa: The Politics of Unity; an analysis of contemporary social movement, New York, Random House, 1967, pp. 107 - 110.

⁵³⁴ For tendencies which have arisen as a result of this see Zdenek Cervenka, The Organization of African Unity and its Charter, Prague, Academia Nakladatelstvi, Ceskoslovenske Akademie Ved, 1962.

In the circumstances of the 1960's⁵³⁵ Nkrumah's insistence that Unity should be based on a commitment to transfer sovereignty to continental institutions had no chance. The debate on the alternatives of integration or diplomatic co-operation which his policies precipitated, was in fact, only one manifestation of a recurring dispute. Essentially, the question was one of criteria: what were to be the qualifications for membership of an organisation charged with fulfilling the objectives of Unity?

As Catherine Hoskyns had pointed out the OAU Charter contained "curious ... principles and purposes which combined very conservative statements designed to protect the status quo in intra-African relations with radical commitments to the outside world."⁵³⁶

Thus the Brazzaville and Monrovia Groups secured a commitment by all member states to the principles of sovereignty (Article IIc and III(i) and the condemnation of political subversion and assassination, Article III (v), while the Cassablanca Powers were reconciled to a diplomatic rather than a political structure for the Organization by an equally binding commitment to the final eradication of colonialism in Africa, Article II(d) and III, VI and an affirmation of non-alignment with regard to all blocs" (Article III(vii))⁵³⁷

⁵³⁵ Zartman, op. cit., pp. 68 - 171; See also James Mayall, Africa, The Cold War and After, London, Elek Books, 1971, p. 118

⁵³⁶ Catherine Hoskyns, "Pan Africanism and Integration," in A. Hazlewood (ed, African Integration and Disintegration: Case Studies in Economic and Political Union, London, Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 71

⁵³⁷ Ian Brownlie, op. cit., p. 3

What the compromise did in effect was to shelve the question of definition which had been the cause of so much ideological friction, on the axiomatic ground that all Africans were united by the simple fact of being African.⁵³⁸ The exclusion of the white South was used to validate this otherwise vacuous proposition.

But were all other African regimes equally acceptable as members of the organization, the debate over interpretation re-appeared in the guise of a debate over legitimacy first when President Olympio of Togo was assassinated on January 13, 1963. President Grunitsky, Olympio's successor was one of the two African heads of state that failed to sign the Charter. Of course, in the end, Togo was admitted.

King Hassan of Morocco did not sign in protest against OAU recognition of Mauritania. Despite its radical reputation, the Cassablanca Group, had from the start attempted to reconcile an oddly disparate set of interests. Morocco, which had summoned the original conference had been primarily concerned to secure diplomatic support for her claim to Mauritania.⁵³⁹ The UAR was concerned with gaining African support in the Middle East conflict.

Now, the crisis over the admission of the SADR into the OAU raises the same old questions. The OAU would do well to accept the provisions of its Charter and allow the SADR take its place in the OAU.

⁵³⁸ Cf. Ali Mazrui, Towards a Pax Africana: A Study of Ideology and Ambition, Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1967, Chapter 3 and on the concept of "We are all Africans", pp. 42 - 58

⁵³⁹ Moroccan claims to "Greater Morocco" included all of Mauritania, most of Mali and a large slice of Algerian Sahara. This formed the basis of Moroccan domestic policies for a long time and were officially abandoned only in 1969. See Robert Rezette, op. cit., pp. 35 - 70 for a Moroccan inspired history of "Greater Morocco".

Her rights to statehood cannot be negotiated. The Organization must let Morocco understand it will not tolerate African colonialism. All member states must endeavour to attend the re-scheduled summit and all the future ones irrespective of the venue or chairman.

The temptation to have a "progressive" OAU has recurred over the years,⁵⁴⁰ and the idea has been reinforced as the balance within the organization has swung from the conservative majority of 1963 to the even division which crystallised around the time of the Angola crisis in 1976. The OAU must remain - moderates and radicals, together - African unity is what the OAU is about. Intra-Arab conflicts and rivalries made the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the PLO exit from Lebanon possible.⁵⁴¹ There are lessons here for Africa, as it surveys the confused state of its own organization after Tripoli.

No matter what has been said about the OAU, an alternative has never been found. Africa needs the OAU to assert its political and economic independence. It needs the OAU to make an impact on the international system.

⁵⁴⁰ On relations between the OAU and other African organizations see I. Wallerstein, "The Early Years of the OAU; The Search for Organisational pre-eminence," International Organization, Autumn 1966, pp. 774-778.

⁵⁴¹ See "The Legacy for the Lebanon," The London Observer, 22 August 1982. See also "Iran - Iraqi War," Nigerian Observer, 20 July, 1982, p. 3.

CHAPTER SIX

Conflicts in Africa⁵⁴² today reveal one of the crippling deficiencies of the OAU. Nowhere else today is the Organization's weakness more clearly exposed than in matters involving Africa's collective security and the resolution of fratricidal conflicts within each state or between member-states.

The Angolan crisis brought this out vividly. The programme for Angola's independence was known well in advance.⁵⁴³ Yet the OAU did virtually nothing to fill the political and military vacuum which in the prevailing circumstances, Portugal's chaotic withdrawal and the interne-cine rivalry between the Angolan nationalist movements was bound to create. Predictably, that vacuum sucked in foreigners.

An African Task Force may have successfully kept the combatants off in the Nigerian civil war. And as has been pointed out earlier on, a strong African involvement or presence right from the onset may have prevented the 1966/67 pogrom which led to the conflict itself.

With an African force patrolling the Ethiopian/Somalian borders, the latter might be forced to accept the fact that the era of expansionism and partition of the African continent is gone. In doing that, the OAU will be demonstrating a n . intention to enforce the solemn pledge of OAU member states to respect the borders existing on their achievement of independence.

⁵⁴² See Appendix IX for a table of major conflicts.

⁵⁴³ See the chapter on Angola in this work.

One year after its inception, the OAU established a Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration whose mandate was to mediate between disputing states.⁵⁴⁴ In part, this was an acknowledgement of the ominous threat posed to African unity by intra-African quarrels. Today, there are volatile conflicts in every sub-region of Africa. The upshot of this situation is that a number of African states have diverted scarce resources to the purchase of military ware⁵⁴⁵ for mutual destruction, instead of strengthening unity and concentrating on the priority areas of social and economic development.

Surprisingly, African states go cap in hand, begging for aid and loans for economic development with few positive responses these days. But they suddenly become credit-worthy when they are up in arms against one another for the destruction of their own people. As a case in point during the 1977/78 Ogaden war, entire settlement projects that were established with the help of the UN, Ethiopia's resources and that of various friendly governments estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars were wrecked.⁵⁴⁶ Farms, industries, roads and schools were also destroyed.⁵⁴⁷ And it must not be forgotten that both Ethiopia and Somalia are now and then ravaged by drought.

⁵⁴⁴ For text, see Ian Brownlie (ed.) Basic Documents on African Affairs, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971, pp. 10-16.

⁵⁴⁵ See Africa Now, July 1982, pp. 21 for some recent major arms deals in Africa.

⁵⁴⁶ Africa, No. 79, March 1978, p.20.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

The OAU cannot be an exclusive club for the protection of the personal interests of incumbent Heads of State. When threatened with internal revolt, no matter how justified, Africa's leaders conveniently by-pass the OAU to appeal for military help either from individual African states or even foreign powers. An outstanding example of the former is the Senegal/The Gambia dalliance that led to the merger of the two states?⁵⁴⁸ Dr. Jawara, the head of state of the Gambia could not entertain any thoughts of relinquishing his post.

Zaire's wolf cry during the Shaba invasion brought client Western and reactionary African regimes rushing to save the regime of corrupt and decadent Mobutu Sese Seko.⁵⁴⁹

Yet, when it suits them, African Heads of State invoke the OAU Charter, whose cornerstone they repeatedly say is the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a member state. This was the case with the Nigerian civil war. The Federal authorities used that ploy to delay OAU involvement in the conflict and to make the Organization's participation peripheral.

⁵⁴⁸ See Daily Sketch, November 17, 1981, p.2.

⁵⁴⁹ See Nzongola-Ntalaja, "The Continuing Struggle for National Liberation in Zaire," The Journal of Modern African Studies, 17, 4, 1979, pp.595-614; C. Kabwil, "Zaire: the Roots of the Continuing Crisis," The Journal of Modern African Studies, 17, 3, 1979, pp.381-407. See also Colin Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1977/78, pp. B 589 - B 603.

What is the logic behind a principle which allows one member or a handful of members of an organization to intervene at will in the internal political affairs of another member but denies the same right to the organization as a whole. Excluding serious armed revolts within African states, to ensure justice for all the parties in any important national dispute, outside intervention should be the exclusive responsibility of the OAU.

Security is not in its entirety a military product. It comprises social, economic and political ingredients as well. As has been said before, Africa must understand the term 'political stability' to mean a state of natural balance involving social and political equity for the composite population of any African state. The foreigner sees Africa only as a promising terrain for investments.⁵⁵⁰ His concern is not for stability based on justice, but for a state of political immobility, achieved by means, fair or foul, with a view to ensuring minimum disturbance of his economic and political interests. Thus arms to put down opposition are readily supplied to African governments by foreign nations whose own governments are wise enough to recognise the merit of not only accommodating justifiable dissent but actually paying 'leaders of opposition' fixed annual salaries.

Most armed revolts in the continent arise from attempts to correct social injustice. The prevailing pattern of things in Africa today, leaves any individual Head of State the power to invite external support for his

⁵⁵⁰ Jagdish N. Bhagwati, ed., Economics and World Order: From the 1970s to the 1990s, New York, Macmillian 1972. See also James O'Connor, "International Corporations and Economic Underdevelopment," Science and Society, 34, Spring 1970, pp. 42-60.

regime, however corrupt or unpopular, and de facto powers of intervention in his neighbours affairs than the entire OAU. This trend has far reaching political implications for continental politics. Witness the recent Senegalese mission to the Gambia to put down a coup. Besides jeopardising the human rights of the ordinary citizen, it means among other things that individual African leaders can decisively influence the political fortunes of any state, while the OAU remains a helpless spectator.

It has to be re-iterated that anxiety to support Heads of State, politically threatened in their states, must be matched by a similar concern to see that those leaders conduct their affairs properly. It is difficult to justify the existence of some forty-nine supreme individuals with unrestricted freedom of action both in national and intra-African politics, and yet deny the necessity for the establishment of an effective pan-African vehicle to supervise and where necessary to moderate their activities.

The present situation, which leaves the settlement of serious African disputes to hang on chance intervention by a handful of African leaders is simply absurd. Africa's sovereign nations must surrender a little bit of their independence in favour of a stronger OAU. If the OAU is to survive meaningfully it must begin now to take national initiatives to tackle the dangerous situations developing all over the continent.

One factor that has undermined most of African attempts at unity so far, is the notion that common action is incapable of transcending either colonial experience or the personal friendships of Africa's leaders. Leaders who vehemently oppose the establishment of a supra-national military organ, are nevertheless quick to accept similar suggestions on the simple instigation of outsiders and conclude defence pacts with foreign powers and

neighbouring states with the specific purpose of fighting internal insurrection.⁵⁵¹

To be properly evaluated, Africa's development must be seen in its wider context. African states need as much security as they need economic progress. One without the other is meaningless. South Africa, for example, has never given Angola the opportunity since independence to embark on any meaningful economic programme or tap her huge natural resources.

"I can see no security for African states unless leaders like ourselves have realised beyond all doubt that salvation for Africa lies in unity. If we are to remain free, if we are to enjoy the full benefits of Africa's enormous wealth, we must unite to plan for our total defence and the full exploitation of our human and material resources, in the interest of all our people."⁵⁵²

It is against this background that this work sets out proposals and machinery for a stronger OAU, with political and military apparatuses to guarantee the human rights of African citizens within their respective states and to protect its member-states.

Before setting out a frame-work for African security, the often-used and much bandied concept of "African unity," will be examined. What is this African unity that could provide a springboard for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and provide a bastion for continental efforts. What components of this 'unity' can be exploited in the process of peace-making?

⁵⁵¹ Africa, No.83, July 1978, pp. 23-24.

⁵⁵² Kwame Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1964, p.7.

The OAU and African Unity

Given the dissension so often reflected in OAU proceedings, the continuing commitment by African states to the Organization has to be explained. What has this to do with the ideals of brotherhood and solidarity, to which Africa bound itself with the signing of the Charter in May 1963?⁵⁵³ Although the idea of Unity was already an established leit-motif in African politics when the majority of African states achieved independence, its exact meaning has never been worked out. Nevertheless, 'African unity' has become a very important political myth⁵⁵⁴ in African diplomacy. 'African unity' has come to be interpreted as the politics of maintaining and sustaining African brotherhood and solidarity, including the existence of the OAU itself, thus enabling the Organization achieve its purposes.

Article 11(i) of the OAU Charter enumerates the following purposes:

- (a) To promote the unity and solidarity of the African states;
- (b) To co-ordinate and intensify their collaboration and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;
- (c) To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence;
- (d) To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and
- (e) To promote international co-operation

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See Proceedings of the Summit Conference of Independent African States, Vol.1, Section 1, Document SCIAS/Plen/3, May 22, 1963, Addis Ababa, May 1963.

⁵⁵⁴

In this work, myth is used in the sense adopted by H.B. Lasswell, i.e. "the fundamental assumptions prevalent - in this case in Africa - about political affairs." It consists of the symbols invoked, not only to explain, but also to justify specific power practices. The term 'myth' is not interpreted as necessarily imparting a fictional, false, or irrational character to these symbols See N. Leites et al (eds), Language of Politics; Studies in Quantitative Semantics, 1949, pp.9-10.

having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁵⁵⁵

While most of Africa was under colonial rule, the idea of unity undeniably exercised a strong appeal to African nationalists and emerged as an instrument of considerable political potency in the struggle for independence.⁵⁵⁶ It took three years of inter-state rivalry before African statesmen were able to arrive at a working definition of African unity - the formation of the OAU. A detailed description of the emergence of the so-called Casablanca, Brazzaville and Monrovia Groups, whose rivalries formed the prelude to the establishment of the OAU cannot be undertaken here.⁵⁵⁷ What is of interest is that the process of reconciliation between them, has a continuing relevance for the OAU's role in African affairs, for it involved reaching an agreement on an official definition of Unity which is still in use. The background of colonial status, shared in one way or the other by all, gave meaning to African aspirations.

The Casablanca block led by Nkrumah adopted a "maximalist" position under which political integration was seen as the only legitimate way of securing African independence and achieving the final liberation of the continent. It urged a close union of states with a centralized executive,

⁵⁵⁵ Ian Brownlie, op. cit., pp. 2-9.

⁵⁵⁶ See Tom Mboya, Freedom and After, Boston, Little Brown and Co., 1963, p.4.

⁵⁵⁷ For this see Ruth C. Lawson (ed.), International Regional Organization; Constitutional Foundations, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1962, pp. 304-306.

a consultative assembly, planning and development ministries, and an African high command.⁵⁵⁸

The Monrovia Group, led by Nigeria strongly favoured a gradualist policy on unity and preferred functional cooperation to unification. It preferred emphasis on pluralism, consultative rather than executive organs, the forming of a development bank, a private investment guarantee fund, and stepped-up activities in the field of education, labour, and social welfare before political union.⁵⁵⁹

The thirteen countries of West and Equatorial Africa forming the Brazzaville Group while not rejecting a loose association of states, preferred to maintain their ties with France and European Common Market and to develop the regional African and Malagasy Organization for Economic Cooperation.⁵⁶⁰

Despite their antagonisms, all three groups insisted, on the face of it, that African Unity was incompatible with the maintenance of rival blocks.⁵⁶¹ By eliminating rival sources of authority, the OAU has been

558 The platforms of this and the other groups are discussed at length in Alex Quaison-Sackey, Africa Upbound: Reflections of an African Statesman, New York, Frederick Praeger, 1964 pp.91-97. See also Kwame Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite, New York, Frederick Praeger, 1964, pp.61-65.

559 "Pan-African First Steps," The Economist, Vol.199, No.6140, April 29, 1961, pp.454-456.

560 See Thomas Hodgkin and Ruth Schachter, "French Speaking West Africa in Transition," International Conciliation, No.528, May 1960, pp.375-436; Virginia M. Thompson and Richard Aloff, The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa, Stanford University Press, 1960.

561 Stephen Goodspeed, The Nature and Function of International Organization. New York, Oxford University Press, 1967, p.599.

instrumental in containing inter-African conflict. This is why the debacle over Western Sahara should not be allowed to degenerate into a situation where 'progressives' and 'moderates' will go their separate ways to create their own organizations.

The threat of exclusion from the OAU is a restraining influence on African diplomacy and has made many African states make concessions.⁵⁶² Given the overriding importance of establishing a framework within which African diplomacy could be peacefully conducted, it has always been a major objective of the OAU to prevent the re-establishment of rival bodies based on more exclusive criteria.⁵⁶³

If recurring crises are inherent in the situation, so also are the pressures for settlement, particularly given the common vulnerability of African regimes to divisive internal ethnic politics and externally aided subversion. Because African states are socially heterogeneous, administratively weak and hence politically volatile, they are more vulnerable than others to subversion and political warfare.⁵⁶⁴

The Organization itself, as its name implies, asserts a natural affinity between African states. Discord is as natural as harmony for African as for other states and therefore affects the functioning but not

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ See Adda B. Bozeman, Conflict in Africa: Concepts and realities, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1976.

the philosophy of the OAU. Although the Charter appears to place greater emphasis on co-operation and anti-colonialism than peace-making, the primary function of the OAU, is in fact, to uphold the peace.

In several instances, it is the appeal to OAU principles - particularly, to the incompatibility of armed conflict and Unity - rather than the mediatory efforts of the institution itself, that lead to settlement. In the Morocco/Algeria border conflict in 1963 and the conflict between Somalia and her two neighbours, Kenya and Ethiopia in early 1964, for instance, the initiatives which eventually led to normalisation of relations between the disputants, were taken by individual African Heads of State, who used the symbolic authority of Unity myth and the appropriate OAU resolutions to urge settlement.⁵⁶⁵

This emphasis on order, however necessary in itself, has nonetheless produced negative effects. The OAU has become, so to say, a trades union of rulers who manipulate the powerful myth of Unity to keep themselves in power without regard for either liberty or justice. Thus the Nigerian civil war was seen as a threat to the whole continent and a de-humanised people were sheperded back into the Nigerian fold in the name of African unity. However, it can be argued that the accepted interdependence of justice and order, and yet the tension between them is as much a feature of the OAU as it is of any other international organization.⁵⁶⁶ But the

⁵⁶⁵ See B. Andemicael, Peaceful Settlement Among States. Roles of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, UNITAIR PX No.5, New York, 1972 for details.

⁵⁶⁶ Norman Hill, International Politics, New York, Harper and Row, 1963, pp. 313-328.

problem is particularly acute as in the case of the Western Sahara, because membership of the Organization is also a powerful symbol of legitimacy.

The Nigerian civil war, too, reveals the beauty of the myth of African unity. Once the conflict was resolved on the basis of the principles of African unity, the same principles of African unity were reiterated as the basis of reconciliation between Nigeria and the four states which had recognised Biafra.

One thing must be emphasised: the fact that the concept of African unity is subject to periodic challenges and debates within the OAU does not invalidate the myth. It is true that the principles of African unity are often more honoured in the breach than in the observance, but the fact that they are acknowledged is equally important.

The symbolic importance of African Unity in OAU diplomacy must be sustained. It is doubtful whether any society can dispense with myths, not just because they "represent both the sum of ancestral traditions," but because their transmission "is equivalent to the more or less official 'education' of a modern society."⁵⁶⁷

The Nature and Function of International Organization

For a clearer understanding the working of the OAU, international organizations are going to be discussed briefly.

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Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, 1960, pp. 31-32.

International organizations are created to enhance political and national security on the one hand, and economic and social welfare on the other.⁵⁶⁸ The pursuit of political and national security involves the organization in the prevention or suppression of armed conflict in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Economic and social welfare problems are undertaken whether or not problems in these areas are related to the peace or not. An organization, depending on its type, may or may not have both of these objectives as its goals.

An international organization consists of sovereign independent states voluntarily joining in a common pursuit of certain goals. It rests upon less secure foundations than a national state. A charter or constitution must be created and agreed to by states that wish to pursue objectives within a formal organization. The problems involved in reaching agreement among individual states on the details of an international document are monumental. The utmost care is taken not to infringe on the 'domestic jurisdiction' or sovereign interests of member states. Differences in political, economic and social systems must be reconciled somehow.

An international organization can succeed only when supported by member-states. An international organization can do no more than depend upon the good faith of its members to respect its policies and decisions.

⁵⁶⁸ For a detailed discussion of international organizations, see among others, Stephen Goodspeed, The Nature and Function of International Organization, New York, Oxford University Press, P. Reuter, International Institutions, New York, Frederick Praeger, 1961.

Some have sought to develop an international order in which the security of each state relates to the combined forces of the organization. This is the theory of collective security⁵⁶⁹ which is a system designed to provide protection for all by cooperative effort. In essence, it involves the promise by sovereign member states of an international organization, to come to the aid of any member, under certain circumstances, that is threatened or attacked.

The fact that the national state is the basic unit of representation erodes the effectiveness of international organizations. To understand the difficulties confronting the development, function, and successful operation of an international organization, the forces underlying the state system will be examined.

Sovereignty:⁵⁷⁰ is one of the most compelling problems of national and inter-state organization. The concept probably entered the vocabulary in its current usage in feudal times when it represented a relationship between persons, an individual subservient to his sovereign overlord. In 1576, Jean Bodin first introduced the term into the literature of political science and defined it as "the supreme power of the state over its citizens and subjects, unrestrained by law."⁵⁷¹ With some modifications and inter-

⁵⁶⁹ This subject is discussed extensively in Iris J. Claude Jnr, Swords into Plowshares; 3rd ed. New York, Random House, 1964, pp. 211-223.

⁵⁷⁰ Quincy Wright, Problems of Stability and Progress in International Relations, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1953, p. 51.

⁵⁷¹ Morton A. Kaplan and Nicholas DeB Katzenbach, The Political Foundations of International Law, New York, John Wiley, 1967, pp. 135-172.

pretations, the essential features of this definition have persisted down to the present. The activities of a state are not legally subject to the control of any higher or external authority. In other words, there is no legal power within the state that is superior to it, there can be but one sovereignty in the state, and therefore every person or organization or group is subject to the sovereign will of the state. State sovereignty is absolute, universal, permanent and indivisible.

Applied to international relations, the legal theory of sovereignty has been considered to mean the right of a state to manage all its affairs, whether internal or external, without control from other states.⁵⁷² Dependent territories are dwindling but the tendency to treat sovereign states as less than sovereign is also evaporating.

Many see this concept of sovereignty as a rigid barrier against the spread of internationalism and peaceful relations between states. The idea of unlimited authority for a state to exercise its will unchecked by any superior or external control lies at the core of the development of true international organization.

It cannot be argued that international law and agreements legally contracted with other states restrict state sovereignty since limitations imposed by international law and treaties and conventions are not legally binding because they are voluntary limitations, self-imposed, unenforceable by any higher authority, and can be denounced by the sovereign state at

⁵⁷² Clyde Eagleton, International Government, 3 ed., New York, The Ronald Press Company, 1957, pp. 19-23.

its leisure.⁵⁷³

Today, despite the need for good faith in inter-state relations and the development of complex interrelations among states, each state, in the final analysis, seeks to be its own interpreter of international obligations and maintains the right to determine its own standards of international conduct. Such extreme freedom of sovereign action negates international cooperation and destroys the fundamental obligations of membership in an international organization.

Equality: The doctrine of state ~~sovereignty~~^{equality} reinforces the legal notions of absolute sovereignty and independence. From the time of Grotius, there has been the claim that all independent states are equal before the law.⁵⁷⁴ "No principle of general law is more universally acknowledged than the perfect equality of nations As no nation can prescribe a rule for others, none can make a law of nations."⁵⁷⁵ But in *realpolitik* there is not an equal capacity of rights. In 1935, the Permanent Court of International Justice made an important distinction when it referred to equality in law and equality as follows. "Equality in law precludes discrimination of any kind; whereas equality in fact may involve the necessity of different treatment in order to attain a result which

⁵⁷³ See Clyde Eagleton, *op.cit.*, pp.28-50. See also O.J. Lissitzn, "International Law in a Divided World," International Conciliation, No.542, March, 1963.

⁵⁷⁴ J.L. Brierly, The Law of Nations, 4th ed., New York, Oxford University Press, 1948, p.77.

⁵⁷⁵ Edwin Dickinson, The Equality of States in International Law, Cambridge University Press, 1920, p.335.

establishes an equilibrium between different situations."⁵⁷⁶

Though the doctrine of equality before the law implies that the law once made will be applied impartially, there persists a confusion over the meaning of equality of rights. Small states in particular interpret the latter to mean equality of influence. The UN Charter in Article 2 confirms the sovereign equality of its members. But in practice, the Charter recognises the fact that all members of the UN are not equal in their capacity for rights by granting permanent membership on the Security Council to certain states. Furthermore, although there are ten non-permanent members on the council, their voting position could be non-effective unless there is unanimity among the Big Five. Current international practice dictates that all states are equal for some purposes but not for all purposes.

Power politics:⁵⁷⁷ Like national politics international politics contain the forces inherent in any quest for power. National foreign policy seeks to gain security and prosperity for the state. On the international scene, power is most frequently exercised through the leadership and the persuasion of a few major states. International relations are not necessarily determined exclusively by force, though. But when considerations of law and justice stand challenged, when rival

⁵⁷⁶ Sir Alfred Zimmern, The League of Nations and the Rule of Law, London, Macmillan, 1936, p.91; F.P. Walters, A History of the League of Nations, Vol. 2, London Oxford University Press, 1952, p.111.

⁵⁷⁷ For further reading on Power politics see F.H. Hinsley, Power and the Pursuit of Peace, London, Cambridge University Press, 1963; G. Schwazzenberger, Power Politics, 2nd ed., London, Stevens and Sons, 1951; J.G. Stoessinger, The Might of Nations, New York, Rondon House, 1961.

aspirants for leadership find no common ground, when compromise and reason have been exhausted, the ultimate decision will be determined by the amount of power possessed by the competing states. Actual use of armed strength in war substitutes military for political power, but even the threat of force itself is a very real element of the latter.

Power politics therefore buttresses the continuous relationship between independent states, each recognising no superior authority. The policy of a state may proceed further from the desired objectives of security and prosperity to gain regional, continental or even inter-continental hegemony.

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Nationalism is the conviction of a group of people that they possess certain distinguishable characteristics associated with the feeling of belonging to one nation. Nationalism recognizes the nation-state as the ideal form of political organization and nationality as the source of all creative cultural energy and economic well-being. The supreme loyalty of man is therefore due to his nationality, as his own life is supposedly rooted in and made possible by its welfare.

Nationalisations are created when certain positive characteristics evolve to serve to differentiate one nationality from another. Certain elements such as religion, language, customs and traditions, common origin, territory, and political form contribute to the formation and delineation of nationality. Though all nationalities contain some of these elements, they rarely possess all of them.

⁵⁷⁸ On the subject see H. Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, New York, Macmillian, 1945.

Nationalism is the most potent force existing today for incurring tensions, inflaming hatreds, and augmenting the sovereign ideal of a strong, independent national state. It could become compulsive and aggressive leading to conflict and imperialism in international affairs. It could keep peoples apart by overemphasizing national differences, raising the nation above all others on the basis of these differences. Streaked with an extremist interpretation of unlimited national sovereignty and stimulating exclusive and indiscriminate devotion to the nation, it stands in the final analysis, as a barrier to international cooperation, thereby making the task of international organizations more difficult.

The Problem of Security ⁵⁷⁹

Having discussed the factors that impede the functioning of international organizations, the nature and character of security will be examined to provide an insight to the problems that also beseege international organizations in their quest for international peace and order.

Security is an essential precondition of an ordered human existence. Governments must provide a secure environment to enable people pursue economic and social goals without undue anxiety and fear.

The idea that a group of like-minded individual entities is more effective in safeguarding security collectively than individually is very old. In the Hobbesian view, man's escape from a "state of nature" into the allegedly more secure environment of organized society brought some relief from ' continual fear and danger of violent death; some improvement

⁵⁷⁹ See George Liska, International Equilibrium: A Theoretical Essay on the Politics and Organization of Security, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1965.

in the life of man, which had hitherto been 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.'⁵⁸⁰ To Hobbes, the innate aggressive nature of man creates insecurity, and the consequent quest for security leads to the creation of a social and political system - the leviathan - capable of enforcing order and stability.

It came to be accepted that "collective security" requires the creation of a legal and structural apparatus capable of giving institutional expression to its basic principles.⁵⁸¹

One of the problems which has plagued all attempts at collective security, starting from the League of Nations, and which still remains unsolved is the total lack of coercive power. As a consequence, collective security needs a degree of centralization of transnational power which cannot be easily achieved by states intoxicated with concepts of national interests, sovereignty, sovereign equality of states which in the final analysis result in the dispersal of power.

Nation-states have both internal and external functions; the first in relation to their own citizens and the second in relation to other states and non-state actors on the international scene. Maintaining external security provides a deceptive picture - to defend the state against possible attack, to make provision for such contingency, and to maximize the states' position in relation to that of potential aggressors. The concept may be simple but its application is incredibly complex.

⁵⁸⁰ Sabine, op.cit, p.201.

⁵⁸¹ Inis Claude, op.cit, p. 238.

The community of states, is, in fact, a hierarchy, though as has been pointed out, theoretically and legalistically equal. The order is determined by the capability and power potential of individual states. The definition of capability in this context is equally complex. Tangible factors, such as numbers and quality of population, area, location, population density, actual and potential economic power, access to raw materials, can be assessed with relative ease. On the other hand, intangible elements like political traditions, social structure and morale are much more difficult to define in precise terms.

Generally, states find security in combining with other states, which on the whole share some of their values and most of their interests. As a case in point, the systems of regionalized collective self-defence which have grown out of the alliance institutions on both sides of the divide in Europe have served to stabilize the military and political position, thus contributing to the consciousness of security in both camps.⁵⁸²

Nevertheless, it is extremely hazardous to accept that security depends on arms and alliances. But all the same, it is true that the security of states can only be guaranteed by stable alliance systems which must be credibly armed. Force retains considerable validity in the international system.

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See Robin Remington, "The Warsaw Pact," Yearbook of World Affairs, 1973 pp. 53-171 and Philip Windsor, "NATO's twenty-five years," The World Today, May 1974, pp. 181-187.

While it is true that, in the long run, a government which presides over a completely unstable and insecure society cannot guarantee the external security of the state, it is equally true that a secure and stable society cannot develop in an atmosphere of complete international insecurity, because the very existence of the state may be at risk. Internal and external security interact continuously. Without external security, policies designed to create and maintain social cohesion cannot succeed. On the other hand, excessive preoccupation with external security sets up internal stresses which could be damaging to the political and social fabric of the state. The problem is to seek a realistic balance.

One difficulty faced by regional alliances is that some of their members have interests outside the area covered by the alliance, which divert their resources. A good example is provided by the Arab members of the OAU who also belong to the Arab League. Some of the partners may become sceptical at the prospect of being drawn into disputes simply by being allied to states with too wide a range of interests. The feelings of some of the black African states of the OAU vis-a-vis certain Arab states like Libya, and the fears of some Arab states vis-a-vis Iran provide fairly typical examples of this kind of situation. This kind of fear overlooks a vital aspect of alliance theory: the national interests of allies are never completely identical. Only those who regard politics in terms of irreconcilable absolutes look for this total identity of interests. Even among allies, adjustment of interests is a very involved and delicate process and compromise is almost always the result of political bargaining.

Security now, is no longer restricted to the realm of the military. Security has now assumed broader connotations which have to include social and economic problems.⁵⁸⁴ Peace, these days, is not just threatened by the existence or application of military force. International peace and security are also threatened by the existence of poverty and lopsided economic arrangements.⁵⁸⁵ As a matter of fact, the social and economic dimensions of security now compete for primacy of place with the military. "The gravest threat to international peace today," President Arap Moi of Kenya contends, "is not military aggression, but the impulses that spring from hopeless poverty."⁵⁸⁶

For the most part, Africa today is a collection of nations in shambles. It is the poorest of the poor regions. Its 362 million people have the world's shortest life expectancy (47 years), its highest birthrate.⁵⁸⁷ The population explosion far outpaces the growth in local food production. The continent is strewn with an apocalyptic array of natural and man-made disasters: drought, disease, tribal slaughters, famine, coups, banditry and graft. Tribal strife, civil wars and invasions have claimed more than 6 million lives since 1960.⁵⁸⁸ All the turmoil on the continent has put an estimated 150 million Africans on the brink of starvation.⁵⁸⁹ And there are about 50 million refugees.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁴ "A Survival Summit," Newsweek, October 26, 1981, pp. 30-41.

⁵⁸⁵ Joan Edelman Spero, The Politics of International Economic Relations, London, George Allen and Urwin, 1977, pp.89-130; pp. 192-244.

⁵⁸⁶ Newsweek, July 19, 1982, p.20.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid, p.21.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid, p.22.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

As a result, seeking peaceful solutions to conflicts and organizing security involves seeking solutions to economic problems as well. African security must go hand in hand with economic development.

Economic Development in Africa

Economic development is an increase in the per capita income of a nation. In other words, a general growth in the prosperity of a nation. The key to this development lies in four fundamental factors: population, natural resources, capital formation and technology. In order to achieve the substantial improvement in the level of income, there must be a proper combination and co-ordination of the four key factors of population, natural resources, capital formation and technology.

In most Western minds and in those of the majority of African elites development equals modernization. It means the build up of factories and cities and mechanisation and chemicalisation of agriculture, the extension of drug and surgery-based modern medicine to all. It means the development of a consumer society of one kind or another, either on American lines with the apotheosis of the privatised individual, or on Soviet lines with more emphasis on social responsibilities. It means modern armies equipped with the most devastating technological weapons available.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁹¹ Paul Harrison, The Third World Tomorrow, Middlesex, England, Penguin Books, 1980, p.23.

The history of African nations has been that of political slavery as well as economic colonialism. The colonialists directed the economic affairs of their dependent territories in a manner that ensured excessive reliance on the metropole for the material well-being of colonies.⁵⁹² Exports were directed to the metropole. Imports were from the metropole. Agriculture was developed so as to provide basic raw materials for the factories of the master nations. Formal education in colonies was in accordance with the practice of the colonising nations. Over the years, African states came to rely excessively on the Western or advanced nations for their economic development. Therefore, any discussion on economic dependence and self-reliance must be centred around strategies which can ensure that the four key factors to economic development are harnessed and co-ordinated in such a way that they could provide effective instruments to development without resort to industrialised nations.

Natural Resources

Many African nations are endowed with a great deal of natural resources such as minerals and fertile land for agricultural purposes. Unfortunately, they lack the political leadership to harness these resources to the betterment of African peoples.

For example, successive governments in Nigeria have paid lip service to the development of agriculture in order to feed her teeming population. Experience has shown that efforts have been completely misdirected and in consequence, the country is importing a great deal of food.

⁵⁹² Timothy Shaw and Malcolm Grieve, "Dependence or Development: International and Internal Inequalities in Africa," Development and Change, The Hague, July 1977, pp. 377-408.

Farming for export was the mainstay of colonial Nigeria, whose modest viability was based on palm oil, rubber, cocoa and groundnuts. Now, apart from the little cocoa she exports, Nigeria is a net importer of all the rest. One big palm-oil firm established pipe-lines a quarter of a century ago, to run its product on to ships. It has now reversed the pumps, and brings out of ships, the palm-oil it so profitably grows in Malaysia.⁵⁹³

Wiping out export agriculture might arguably be a perfectly sensible policy for many African nations. Nigerian export agriculture, for example, put money straight into the countryside, and was the mainstay of thriving indigenous communities. Now it is dead, and the communities it supported are dying.

Many development economists have now pointed out the inevitability of the most fundamental yard-stick of economic health, "food first" programme to Africa.⁵⁹⁴ They maintain that only a clear focus on basic food production can avert disaster in Africa. In the past, African governments have all but ignored subsistence farming. Such neglect brought particularly severe food shortages to twenty-two Black African nations in 1980⁵⁹⁵ and the threat of equally devastating famine hovers as an endemic menace.

⁵⁹³ The Economist, 23-29 January, 1982, p. 17.

⁵⁹⁴ Paul Harrison, op.cit., p.125.

⁵⁹⁵ Newsweek, July 19, 1982, p. 22.

Capital formation

Capital formation as one of the key factors to economic development has posed a lot of problems for African nations. They are poor and do not have enough money for subsistence and consequently they do not have enough savings with which to undertake capital projects for development. This is one of the great vicious circles that African nations must break if they are to achieve economic independence.

Unfortunately, capital accumulation is now lop-sided in some of the relatively rich African states like Nigeria. And the irony of it is that most Africans prefer to have their savings in Western capitals than in their home countries where such savings could be used for purposes of development.⁵⁹⁶ Because of the inability of African nations to save for development no real development takes place without the help of developed nations.⁵⁹⁷

Population

Africa is heavily populated. It is a cardinal factor in economic development that the more a nation is, in terms of population, the more would be its gross domestic product if it is to achieve a high rate of economic development.

⁵⁹⁶ Late Emperor Haile Selassie was reported to have stacked billions of dollars in Swiss banks. Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko has neatly tucked away about \$4 billion in a Swiss account. For details see "Mobutu's empire of graft," Africa Now, March 1982.

⁵⁹⁷ Cf. Varindra Tarzie Vittachi, "Time to Think Small," Newsweek, June 5, 1978, p.54.

Many workers in Africa do not have specialised training and therefore cannot make any meaningful contribution to the economic development of their nations. In order to develop, African states must pay particular attention to training their manpower resources.

Technology.

Allied to the problem of manpower development is technology. Presently some schools of economic thought believe that technology is the very essence of economic development and therefore a nation without technology could never develop.⁵⁹⁸

In order to acquire technology, African nations must be prepared either to go the Japanese way which entails a lot of sacrifices and dedication to duty or develop technologies of their own. Africa must face up to the fact that racial discrimination is not a skin but a technological issue. Without committed political leadership, no nation can direct its citizens and secure adequate technology for its own use.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that if Africa was to acquire economic development, it must go back to the basics. Instead of the present development 'from above', it must tackle the problems of technology and capital formation. The present arrangements whereby African nations advocate for a change in world economic order which, in most cases, boils down to a re-arrangement of the present pricing system,⁵⁹⁹

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See Paul Baran, The Political Economy of Growth, New York, Monthly Review, 1968, Ralph G. Hawtrey, Economic Aspects of Sovereignty, London, Longmans, 1962, p. 151.

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See Joan Spero, op.cit., pp. 284-290.

is not enough.

If Africa is to develop and achieve economic dependence and self-reliance, there must be a structural re-organization of the economies of all African nations in such a way that excessive reliance will not be placed on the goods produced by Western nations. Such a structural arrangement involves hardship on the part of those concerned. It involves capital formation; it brings a re-ordering of priorities and moral values and in addition, dedicated political leadership.

African states must bear in mind that security is a costly and complex business, so that the factors that are involved are many and varied. They include economic strength, capability to invent and manufacture weapons and other goods or the means to import them, the cohesiveness of the political system, the level of education and the state of technology.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The need has always been felt for a pan-African force. The idea of an African High Command, for example, emerged out of tentative plans first sketched during 1960 in Cairo and Accra,⁶⁰⁰ at a time when African leaders were dissatisfied with the United Nations' attitude in the Congo and were turning their minds to the possibility of a joint African expedition; distinct from the United Nations force, in order to prevent the secession of Katanga.⁶⁰¹

In December 1960, President Kwame Nkrumah threatened to withdraw Ghanaian and other African contingents to form an African High Command if the United Nations failed to secure the immediate release of Patrice Lumumba, the evacuation of all Belgian troops, and the disarming of Colonel Mobutu's units and other particularist forces.⁶⁰² In a conference at Casablanca in January 1961, five African states - the United Arab Republic, Morocco, Ghana, Guinea and Mali - with representatives of the Algerian revolutionary government and Ceylon, declared their intention of withdrawing from the Congo and of forming an African High Command and Consultative assembly.⁶⁰³

⁶⁰⁰ Kwame Nkrumah, Challenge of the Congo: A Case Study of Foreign Pressures in an Independent State, London, Thomas Nelson, 1967, pp.51-57.

⁶⁰¹ About the Congo crisis, including the secession of Katanga see Crawford Young, Politics in the Congo: Decolonisation and Independence, Princeton University Press, 1965.

⁶⁰² Kwame Nkrumah, op.cit, p.53.

⁶⁰³ See Peter Calvocoressi, World Order and New States: Problems of Keeping the Peace, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1962, pp. 175-177.

At the second regular meeting of Ministers held in Lagos in 1964, Ghana and Guinea again strongly urged the creation of an African army and high command, arguing that only such a force could have "properly intervened" in the rash of border disputes, mutinies, and coups.⁶⁰⁴ But such wide differences developed as to who would pay for the force, what country would command it, and under what circumstances it would act and on whose request, that no decision could be reached other than to pass the matter on for consideration to the ensuing heads of state conference. Of the various proposals on the subject of an African force, one that seemed likely to commend itself to the gradualists was for such a force to consist of regional contingents or arrangements, rather than a centralized body.⁶⁰⁵

Army mutinies in then Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda following the Zanzibar coup in January 1964, followed by appeals from the three states for British forces to restore order, and the French intervention in Gabon when President Leon Mba was temporarily unseated,⁶⁰⁶ put the OAU in an embarrassing situation. President Nyerere summoned an emergency meeting of Ministers in Dar es Salaam. Using the meeting as a device to cloak his retreat from an awkward political position, Nyerere appealed to the OAU to help find some way by which the British troops could be replaced.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁴ I. Wallerstein, Africa: The Politics of Unity: An analysis of contemporary social movement, New York, Random House, 1967, p. 70.

⁶⁰⁵ Cf. Proceedings of the Summit of Independent African States, Vol. 1, Section 1, Document SCIAS/Plen/3, May 22, 1963, Addis Ababa, May 1963.

⁶⁰⁶ Cf. I. Wallerstein, "The Early Years of the OAU: The Search for Organizational Pre-eminence," International Organization, Autumn 1966, pp. 774-778.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

Their continued presence, he said, compromised his country's independence and Africa's non-alignment.⁶⁰⁸ Nyerere never directly mentioned a joint military force. His comment that "it may well be that Africa can find from Africa a means of assisting Tanganyika in the task of maintaining law and order"⁶⁰⁹ seemed to imply this. "Problems arising from the mutiny of Tanganyika troops should be dealt with in a way which will foster and not harm the common objective of African unity,"⁶¹⁰ he concluded. Although Uganda and Kenya were reported to be intent on handling the aftermath of their mutinies without the intervention of an African force, the conference closed with the appointment of a twelve-nation committee to consider the training of an African force.⁶¹¹

The establishment of an African force was a tenuous affair and never materialised. The desirability, role and organization of such a force were the central areas of differences among African states. Regrettably, not even the emergence of many military governments in Africa succeeded in narrowing down these differences.⁶¹²

In 1978, in the aftermath of the Shaba invasion,⁶¹³ twenty-one French-speaking African states decided that in the face of what they perceived as threats to their territorial integrity and internal stability, they would

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁶¹⁰ Norman J. Padelford, "The Organization of African Unity," International Organization, Vol. 16, No.2, 1962, p. 537.

⁶¹¹ See The New York Times, February 13 and 15, 1964.

⁶¹² For other attempts at organizing security in Africa, see for example, "ECOWAS Defence Pact Fears, Africa, No.107, July 1980 pp.33-36.

⁶¹³ "The Fallout in Zaire, Newsweek, June 5, 1978, pp. 10.21.

set up a 'Pan-African security' force.⁶¹⁴ These actively sought and obtained the support of France.

According to one of the proponents, Leopold Senghor, the idea hinged on two main issues: the belief that Africa was faced with the threat of "international Communism;" moderate African regimes were threatened "by a Communist-inspired plot to replace such regimes with Marxist governments." To overcome these difficulties, this group of states believed, the assistance of the West was needed.⁶¹⁵

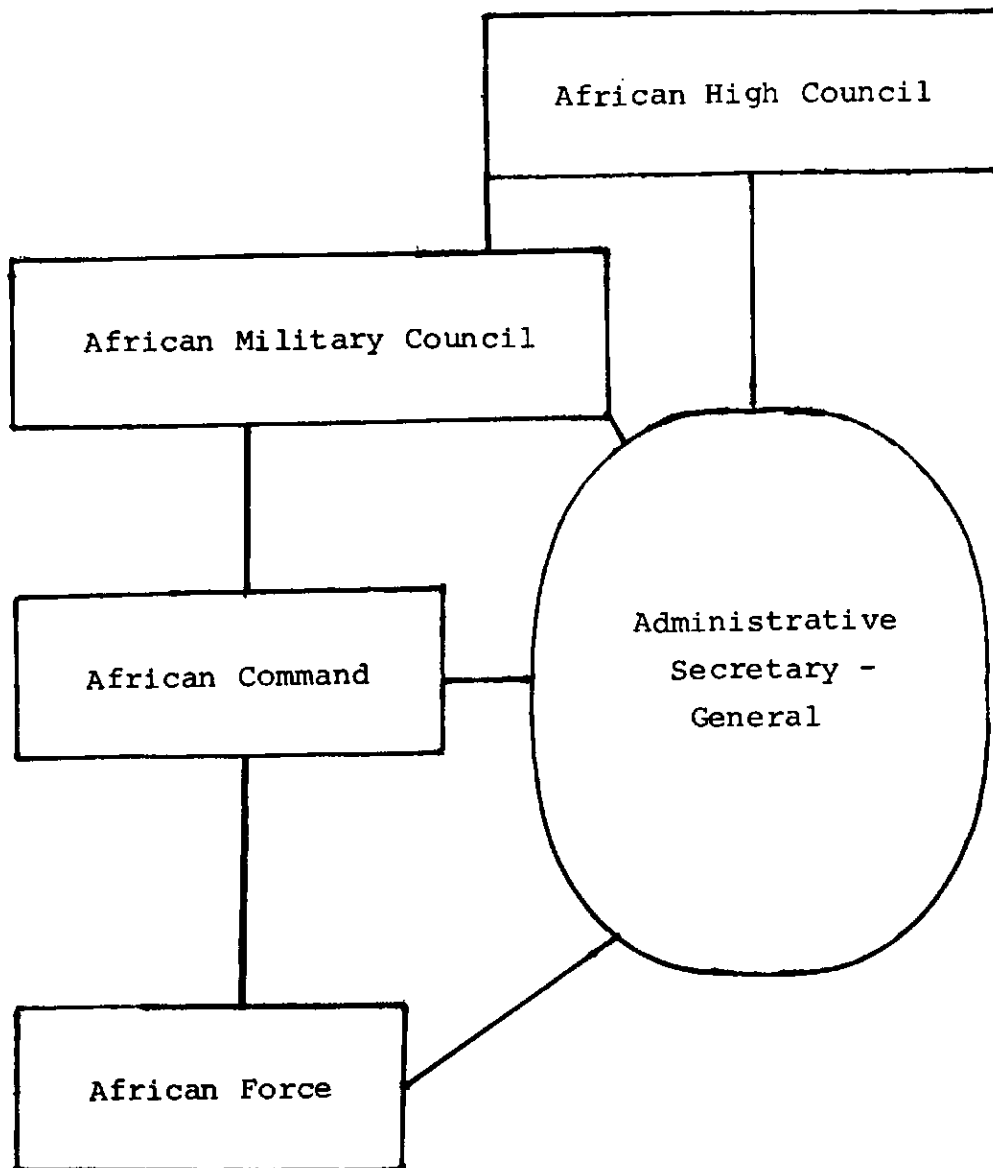
Some African states strongly opposed the idea of establishing a Western-backed 'Pan-African security force.' The argument was that such a force could be a cover for increased direct military activities by foreign powers in Africa and could endanger the yet fragile independence of the continent. Besides, it could be used by the West to prop up unpopular regimes and escalate the East-West ideological conflict on the continent.⁶¹⁶

The creation of a pan-African peace-keeping vehicle must not merely emanate from a wish to keep alien powers out of African affairs and the objectives should not include that of protecting the incumbency of heads of state. Nor should it be done so that the United Nations will be spared the occasion to intervene.

⁶¹⁴ "Pan-African Trojan Horse?" Africa, No.83, July 1978, p.28.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.



This will be the highest organ in the set-up and like the Assembly of Heads of State, will consist of all African Heads of State. As has been noted earlier, most conflicts have political roots and therefore require political settlements.

The Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration^{§17} as presently constituted in the Charter, should be abandoned. As in other instances, this body was placed on a voluntary basis so that no state can be compelled to accept its offer of assistance. While the African Force moves in to keep the peace, this Council will set in motion the necessary processes to bring about lasting and effective political settlement.

617 The Protocol establishing the Commission was signed at Cairo on July 21, 1964. For text see Ian Brownlie (ed) Basic Documents on African Affairs, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971, pp. 10-16.

The history of the conflicts studied and the OAU itself reveal that the crux of the issue is always political and in itself leads to the establishment of peace-keeping operations. Ranging from the most violent to the most pacific, the resolution of a conflict depends on the ability of the warring parties to reach an agreement.

This issue of settlement seems to be the most difficult of the whole issue of peace-keeping. Therefore, the creation of an African Force must not in any way diminish the need and importance of the process of political settlement. Though partially successful in maintaining a state of relative non-violence, once the aggression has been repelled by force, or the lesser violence halted through partial accord, the military aspect of peace-keeping do not in themselves lead to settlement. All too often it turns out that the peace so anxiously sought proves to be a precarious and temporary truce, a kind of respite in which the warring parties re-focus animosities and interests rather than establish conditions for long-term harmony and growth. The success and effectiveness of any peace-keeping vehicle will be in direct proportion to the degree of political accord that underlies the conflict. The OAU must, to all intents and purposes, lay as much emphasis on the political as the military. More efforts, in fact, should be directed towards seeking political solutions to conflicts.

It should be emphasised that the creation of an African Force constitutes only one aspect of the vast resources for maintaining continental peace and security at the disposal of the OAU. Availability of forces to keep the peace is only one aspect of a scheme that will help establish the OAU as an effective peace-keeping vehicle. Other fields should be explored

and utilized. The field of preventive diplomacy,⁶¹⁸ up to date, has been practically ignored. Perhaps this may not be a consequence of the failings of the Organization but the tendency of nation-states to believe that force is the only means of establishing their rights. They only resort to an international organization only after they have exhausted all their own means of settling their dispute. This fact brings out the importance of the surrender of some sovereignty by member-states in this scheme.

As long as the OAU remains a regional organization, it will be able to settle disputes effectively and carry out peace-keeping operations only to the extent that member-states give it the legal authority and the physical and fiscal means to do so.

The OAU has demonstrated a limited capacity for peace-making. The continent should not be content simply to keep what peace it has and restore it when it is broken. Africa must devote its highest statesmanship to building the peace it does not yet have.

Hitherto, the practice within the OAU has been to reserve condemnation for aggression when it is perpetrated by non-member states against member nations.⁶¹⁹ Not that aggressions have been unknown between member-states. The emphasis of OAU mediation between disputants has been to uphold the best African traditions of settling quarrels whenever they occur and not

⁶¹⁸ For a detailed discussion of preventive diplomacy see Inis J. Claude, Swords into Plowshares, 3rd ed., New York, Random House, 1964, Chapter 14.

⁶¹⁹ See "Tanzania/Uganda: Nyerere warns Amin," Africa, No.91, March 1979, p.23-24.

inflame the mood with denunciations.

This method not only serves to create false impressions but also begs the issue in certain circumstances. The Western Sahara is a good case in point. If Morocco had been denounced, albeit mildly or diplomatically, right from the word go, the conflict could not have assumed its present dimensions. At times, advocating settlements on the basis of 'African brotherhood and Unity' only serves to shelve the issue and postpone the evil day. The word settlement could be deceptive and misleading. For instance, pressing the SADR and Morocco to negotiate for a settlement could give Morocco the impression that the sovereignty of the SADR is negotiable. Denouncing Morocco's claim over SADR first and then asking both parties to settle gives all the parties involved a clearer picture of the objective to be sought, and the issues involved and the ones at stake.

This style of African diplomacy should be diluted with periodical condemnations when the occasion arises. An OAU condemnation will serve as a psychological deterrent.⁶²⁰

The Military structure will consist of the African Military Council, African Command and the African Force, all responsible to the African High Council, with the Secretary-General overseeing and coordinating.

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Maybe if the OAU had denounced President Nyerere for permitting Ugandan exiles to operate from Tanzanian territory, President Idi Amin, despite his idiosyncracies could not have invaded Tanzania. On his own part, Nyerere was angered that no African state condemned Idi Amin for invading Tanzania. For a fuller discussion see New African, January 1979 p.11.

The African Military Council

The African Military Council will comprise all Defence Ministers of OAU member-states. This body will direct and supervise the planning and organization of the African Force.

The African Command

All Heads of Army, Naval and Air-Force Chiefs of member-states shall constitute the African Command. This organ will be responsible for the planning, organization and training of the African Force. It will also direct strategic and logistic operations of the African Force in combat. Command of the African Force will be rotated among member-states in an alphabetical order, on a four-year basis, which will not be subject to renewal.

The African Force

Each member-state will be compulsorily required to contribute two Military Divisions and a Police Contingent of division strength. Each state will be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of its own troops.

The African Force will undertake peace-keeping missions when called upon by the OAU, preferably with the consent of the Host State(s) to facilitate the maintenance of peace or the re-establishment of continental order by setting up an OAU "presence" whether armed or not, entrusted with one or more of the following tasks:

1. Observation and determination of facts, in cases of alleged killing or brutalization of any group of citizens in a state;
2. Maintenance of law and order in a state if continental peace and security are threatened when so requested by the government of that state; (this in no way includes the circumstances of a coup)
3. Observation of the situation on either or both sides of a ~~sub~~border;
4. Supervision or observation of a cease-fire.

The Force will be specially trained, equipped, officered and motivated to undertake the defence and protection of Africa and also provide essential services in emergency situations. Officers, soldiers, airmen and ratings will not be forced to join the national contingents. Only officers and men who volunteer to join, and qualified civilians who seek voluntary enlistment, should be recruited to serve. Adequate opportunities and facilities should be provided for the force to train and carry out military exercises in the territories of member-states.

Planning, organization and training will take place before major deployments, therefore it would be possible to devise and use common commands, approved uniform weapons, common languages and common political education on the needs and problems of Africa, in the general preparation of the peace force. The Force will have special rules and regulations which correspond with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the very nature of the Force itself.

With the advice of the African Military Council and African Command, the African High Council will apportion the kind of equipment to be contributed by member-states depending on the military strength and arms specialty of each member-state.

Military and political motives apart, the establishment of this force will have social side effects. Joint action, occupation and objectives may break down prejudices and bitterness. The 'we' feeling might inject a new impetus into Africa, promoting friendly and peaceful relations and understanding between the varied peoples of Africa.

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Financing OAU peace-keeping

The legacy of debt left over from the United Nations Congo operations and recent African experience with its peace-keeping forces in Chad have shown that the general question of financing the peace-keeping activities of an international organization has become a major and sore issue clouding all discussions of strengthening the general capabilities of international organizations.

In the first case if the issue had been pressed to an inevitable and inescapable conclusion, the Soviet would have abandoned the United Nations permanently.⁶²¹ The Soviet Union refused to be involved in the payment of the expenditure incurred by the United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Congo. Her argument was that the peace-keeping forces had been illegally sanctioned by the General Assembly instead of the Security Council and

⁶²¹ For this see R. Simmonds, Legal Problems Arising from the UN Military Operations in the Congo, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1968.

should be paid for by those Powers which had created and whose purposes they were serving.⁶²²

However, it should be noted that financial crisis is nothing else but the reflection of an institutional or more precisely a crisis in the competence of an international organization. Like the first, the second case also illustrates this point. It was later revealed that the Zairean contingent of the OAU peace-keeping force to Chad was funded by the United States of America, while the Senegalese contingent was funded by France.⁶²³

The creation of a pan-African force cannot be useful without discussing how to finance such a force. Already, OAU finances are in critical state with member-states owing the body some \$25 million.⁶²⁴ As a result, paying OAU staff and keeping the administrative machinery of the Secretariat in motion has become a serious problem. This year, the Secretary-General, Edem Kodjo had to divert some \$1 million intended for refugees to relieve the situation.⁶²⁵

A document on budgetary arrears by member states presented to the 38th Session of the Council of Ministers in Addis Ababa in February 1982, held alarming statistics.⁶²⁶ The Central African Republic is the greatest defaulter with arrears of nearly \$1 million going as far back as 1965.⁶²⁷

⁶²² Ibid.; See also James Boyd, UN Peace-Keeping Operations: A Military and Political Appraisal, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1971, pp.44-81.

⁶²³ "Peace troops for Chad," Africa, No.124, December 1981, p.38.

⁶²⁴ Africa, No.131, July 1982, p.25.

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ See "Faults and defaulters," Africa, No.131, July 1982, p.25.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

Egypt, currently owes the Organization the largest amount, \$3.7 million.⁶²⁸ Sudan and Morocco are also in the million-dollar league. Sudan has not paid since 1980 while Morocco has not paid for 1981-1982.⁶²⁹ Tunisia has not paid since 1965.⁶³⁰

Other states owing less but substantial sums since 1980-81 fiscal year include: Chad, Comoros, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius and Somalia.⁶³¹ Roughly the same countries' default on payments to OAU special funds such as the one on Namibia.⁶³²

Relevant OAU documents show that most of these states have never failed to avail themselves the opportunity to participate in OAU meetings and activities since they acceded to the Charter and have also fully exercised their voting rights. The Central African Republic for example has one of the most impeccable attendance records.

With the exception of Chad, the defaulting states cannot claim any mitigating economic circumstances. States in bad economic straits like Djibouti and East Guinea, both extremely poor nations do not default. And these defaulting states have insisted on taking up their full quota of personnel in the OAU and its specialized agencies.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² Ibid.

Now, there are two major problems in connection with the financial straits of the OAU. The problem of chronic deficit should be settled once and for all to ensure that the Organization remains on a solid financial basis, and to ensure that a future method of financing the Organization and its peace-keeping activities is worked out. That is to say, it is a question of settling the past and thinking of the future in the present.

Regarding past deficits, all defaulting nations should settle their debts. To avoid such penury crippling the OAU in the future, a member-state should automatically lose its voting rights in the organization if it is more than three years in the arrears. Also, the participation of such a state in the specialized agencies and some OAU activities will be restricted. It must be realized that the negative possibility of sabotaging the activities of the Organization by refusing to participate in expenditure is practically and politically almost as effective as the positive possibility of sabotaging the workings of the OAU by anti-African activities.

A combination of regular special assessments and voluntary contributions would do for peace-keeping activities. The experience of the United Nations Secretary-General with the United Nations Forces in Cyprus highlights the inadequacies of purely voluntary financing. In the days of U-Thant, the cost of UN peace-keeping in Cyprus was \$6.59 million yearly, while the United Nations Cyprus account was \$8.38 million in debt.⁶³³

⁶³³ Arthur Lee Burns and Heathcote, Peace-keeping by UN Forces: From Suez to the Congo, New York, Praeger, 1963, pp. 203-209.

The special assessment will take into consideration the status of individual states. The oil-rich ones like Libya, Algeria, Nigeria etc. could be grouped together to head the list. And the assessment too must be sympathetic to the plight of poverty-stricken states crumbling under high energy bills and also the beleaguered frontline states whose economies are being sabotaged and ravaged by South Africa. Or a special account, for peace-keeping efforts could be established with pre-fixed ceiling agreed upon and a special scale of assessment developed. This hypothetical fund could be further augmented through voluntary contributions from states and individuals. This would serve as a stand-by monetary reserve and provide the Organization with sinews for peace-keeping undertakings.

Contributing to peace-keeping is above all, a political problem which reflects the philosophy that each member state has on the particular conflict. African states must realize that the stakes are high. If the principle of collective security does not go along with the principle of collective responsibility and all means to foster it deployed, no tangible results will be achieved.

There is no realistic alternative to the OAU. If the OAU were not in existence, something like the OAU would have had to be created. Africa needs peace as a base for social, economic and political development, and even for international recognition. Therein lies the case for African Unity: "If the destiny of Africa as a whole is the common cause of each individual state ... then we (can) ... make common cause against the vast economic and social problems of confronting the whole continent" 634

8. Alex Quaison-Sackey, Africa Upbound: Reflections of an African Statesman, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1964, p.34.

APPENDIX I

General Report of the Goodwill Mission of the Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa to the Angolan Nationalists, Leopoldville, July 13-18, 1963

The Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa at its meeting in Dar es Salaam on July 1, 1963, at the express wish of the two main Angolan Nationalist Movements (FNLA and MPLA) and following the recognition by the Government of Congo (Leopoldville) of the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE) decided to send a Goodwill Mission consisting of the Heads of Delegations of Algeria, Congo (Leopoldville), Guinea, Nigeria, and Uganda, members of the aforementioned committee - to Leopoldville in order to help reconcile the various Angolan Nationalist Movements.

The Goodwill Mission in the discharge of its functions of reconciliation, was to bear in mind the following principles laid down by the Coordinating Committee as the basis of the future activity of the Committee in extending assistance, financial or otherwise, to the Nationalist Movements of non-independent Africa:

- (a) In considering aid to any given colonial or dependent territory, the relation, concern and interest of the immediate neighbouring independent African countries with contiguous boundaries must be taken into consideration as well.
- (b) Independent countries geographically contiguous to a given non-independent territory because of their local knowledge and proximity, should play a vital role in the advancement and progress of that territory to the goal of liberation and independence.

- (c) As a condition of assistance the Committee should insist on the creation of one Common Action Front in each territory.
- (d) In case of failure to get a Common Action Front the Committee should reserve the right of selection and recognition of the movement entitled to assistance.
- (e) The Committee should insist that Movements themselves be broad based internally and have effective following or popular support within the territory.
- (f) The Common Front must submit a statement of account at regular intervals to the Committee.
- (g) In the case of a Liberation Movement operating in an independent country, the host country should be given the right of supervision.
- (h) Where an independent State is used as a base for the purpose of liberation of a colonial territory, care must be taken to evolve such a policy of action as would not lead to the destruction of the sovereignty and independence of that State or prejudicing its security.

Sittings

The Goodwill Mission assembled in Leopoldville on Saturday, 13th July, 1963 in an informal meeting and suggested a provisional agenda.

The Goodwill Mission then adjourned to meet again next day, Sunday, 14th July, 1963, at 10 a.m. when it elected the leader of the Nigerian Delegation. Hon. Jaja Wachaku, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations of the Federation of Nigeria was its chairman and agreed on the following agenda:

1. Election of Chairman
2. Chairman's explanation of the purpose of the Goodwill Mission to the Angolan Nationalists.
3. Hearing of statements by Angolan Nationalists -
 - (a) FNLA
 - (b) MPLA
4. Receiving views of the Congolese Government
5. Conclusions and Recommendations.

At this meeting the Goodwill Mission also agreed to coopt Senegal as a member considering that Senegal is a member of the Standing Committee on General Policy.

On Monday, 15 July, the meeting of the Goodwill Mission was opened with the Chairman's speech in which he explained the purpose of the mission to the Angolan Nationalists. This portion of the meeting was open to the public. The text of the Chairman's speech is hereby attached.

After the Chairman's opening remark, the meeting adjourned for a short period to enable the public to withdraw. After the withdrawal of the press and members of the public, the mission resumed sitting in private session and took up the third item on its agenda. The Goodwill Mission spent the whole of Monday on this item. When it resumed on Tuesday, 16 July, it continued with the same item and later took up item four of the agenda and heard the views of the representatives of the Government of the Republic of Congo (Leopoldville).

On Wednesday, 17 July, the Goodwill Mission considered the evidence it heard and agreed on the basic conclusions and recommendations. After deciding on the form in which its report and findings should be presented, the Committee adjourned in order to allow time for the drafting of the findings and conclusions.

The Goodwill Mission resumed on Thursday, 18 July, and after approving its report and findings, invited the representatives of the Angolan Nationalist Movements to their closing session. The press was once more admitted when the findings and the recommendations of the Goodwill Mission were read to the Angolan Nationalists.

Hearings

Invitations were issued to the following organizations to give evidence before the Committee:

- (a) FNLA, led by Mr. Holden Roberto;
- (b) MPLA, led by Dr. Agostinho Neto.

In giving his evidence, Mr. Holden Roberto was supported by a number of persons who represented the organization in Dar es Salaam, as well as leaders from different parts of Angola. Dr. Agostinho Neto declined to give evidence on behalf of the MPLA on the grounds that a new front, the FDLA, of which he was the President, had been formed. The Committee was not, however, prepared to listen to him in this capacity as its mandate clearly stated that it was to help reconcile the two known Angolan Nationalist Organizations which gave evidence at Dar es Salaam.

During its meeting the Goodwill Mission received a letter from a Mr. da Cruz seeking an opportunity to speak on behalf of the "Provisional Steering Committee of the MPLA."

The request was considered and the views expressed were heard in the presence of other Angolan nationalists. Dr. Agostinho Neto, who was present was invited to comment on the points made by Mr. da Cruz, and answered the questions from members of the Committee in connection with the MPLA and the strength of its political and military following.

The views of the Government of the Republic of Congo on the liberation of Angola were expressed by the Minister of Justice, His Excellency Mr. Justin Bomboko and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Mabika-Kalanda.

Summary of Evidence

The Goodwill Mission heard evidence of the FNLA from the time it was formed by the two political parties, UPA and PDA. The developments that followed the revolution in Angola were explained as well as the formation of the Revolutionary Government of Angola in exile which was recently recognized by the Government of the Republic of Congo (Leopoldville). The Committee heard evidence of the scope of activity and the extent of the following of the FNLA. Information about the organization's fighting strength was given as well as the territory of Angola it had under its control. The Goodwill Mission was informed of the efforts that the FNLA was making to give more Angolans military and other training.

The Goodwill Mission was informed that there had been a split in the MPLA, that a good number of the few people who have received military training under the auspices of that organization had either gone over to the FNLA, left the MPLA, or those still with the MPLA are not involved in any military action. There was evidence of the strength and following of the MPLA and compared with that of the FNLA, the MPLA's support and following seemed rather small.

The Congolese Government gave the Goodwill Mission the reason which led it to recognize the Revolutionary Government of Angola in exile and also informed the Mission of the support it was giving to the Angolan Nationalist Organizations towards the liberation of their country.

Conclusion

The Goodwill Mission, after considering all the facts available to it, came to the following conclusions:

- (1) that the Fighting Force of the FNLA for the liberation of Angola is by far larger than any other, is the most effective, and indeed the only real fighting front in Angola.
- (2) that the best channel for extending aid to the fighters for Angolan Liberation is through the Government of the Republic of Congo (Leopoldville).
- (3) that the continued separate existence of another minor front such as the MPLA is detrimental to the rapid achievement of independence by the Angolan peoples.
- (4) that it is necessary for the FNLA to continue the leadership that has so far proved effective.

Recommendations

The Goodwill Mission agreed to the following recommendations:

- (1) that all aid from Africa and/or foreign countries to the Angolan Nationalist Front should be channeled through the Government of the Republic of Congo (Leopoldville) in cooperation, of course, with the Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa.
- (2) that the FNLA should be the only fighting front for the Liberation of Angola.
- (3) that the organization of other fronts in Angola should be discouraged and the present fighting force of the MPLA should join the FNLA.

- (4) that units and persons who have received military training for the liberation of Angola should be requested to seek admission into the FNLA Fighting Front.
- (5) that all African Governments be requested not to entertain or offer help to other organizations in their territory who claim to be working for the liberation of Angola.
- (6) that the Goodwill Mission requests the Council of Ministers of OAU at its next meeting in Dakar to recommend to all independent African States to accord recognition to the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile as this is a very effective and positive action against Portugal, and for the speedy liberation of Angola.

APPENDIX II

January Coup, 1966: Casualty List

<u>Military men</u>				<u>Region of Origin</u>
1.	Brigadier Ademulegun	-	Comdr, 1 Bde	West
2.	Brigadier Maimalari	-	Comdr, 2 Bde	North
3.	Colonel Mohammed	-	COS (Army)	North
4.	Colonel Shodeinde	-	2IC, Def Academy	West
5.	Lieutenant-Colonel Unegbu	-	QMG (Army)	East
6.	Lieutenant-Colonel Pam	-	AG (Army)	North
7.	Lieutenant-Colonel Largema	-	CO, 4 Bn, Ibadan	North
8.	An unidentified soldier	-	NMTC	?

Civilians

9.	Alhaji Sir Tafawa Balewa	-	Prime Minister	North
10.	Chief Okotie-Eboh	-	Fed Minister of Finance	Mid-West
11.	Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello	-	Premier, North	North
12.	Chief Akintola	-	Premier, West	West
13.	Mrs Ademulegun	-	Wife of Comdr, 1 Bde	West

N B

1. Major Adegoke was shot and killed by the troops of the 4th Battalion, Ibadan - West
2. Second Lieutenant Oduh was shot and killed by 2Lt Tijani Katsina both of them operating on Major-General Ironsi's side. - East

APPENDIX III

Minutes of the Meeting of Nigerian Military Leaders Held in Ghana on 4th and 5th January, 1967

The Supreme Military Council held its meeting in Ghana on the 4th - 5th January. Those present were:

Lt-Col Yakubu Gowon
Colonel Robert Adebayo
Lt-Col Odumegwu Ojukwu
Lt-Col David Ejoor
Lt-Col Hassan Katsina
Commodore J. E. A. Wey
Major Mobolaji Johnson
Alhaji Kam Salem
Mr. T. Omo-Bare

Secretaries

Mr. S.I.A. Akenzua ... Permanent Under-Secretary, Federal Cabinet Office
Mr. P.T. Odumosu ... Secretary to the Military Government, West
Mr. N.U. Akpan ... Secretary to the Military Government, East
Mr. P.D. Lawani ... Under-Secretary, Military Governor's Office,
Mid-West
Alhaji Ali Akilu ... Secretary to the Military Government, North.

Opening

The Chairman of the Ghana National Liberation Council, Lt-General J. A. Ankrah, declaring the meeting open, welcomed the visitors to Ghana and expressed delight that Ghana had been agreed upon by the Nigerian Military leaders as the venue for this crucial meeting. He considered the whole matter to be the domestic affair of Nigeria, and as such, he refrained from dwelling on any specific points.

The General, however, expressed the belief that the Nigerian problems were not such that cannot be easily resolved through patience, understanding and mutual respect. Throughout history, he said, there has been no failure of military statesmen and the eyes of the whole world were on the Nigerian Army. He advised that soldiers are purely statesmen and not politicians and the Nigerian military leaders owe it as a responsibility to the 56 million people of Nigeria to successfully carry through their task of nation-building. Concluding, the General urged the Nigerian leaders to bury their differences, forget the past and discuss their matter frankly but patiently.

2. Lt-Col Gowon invited the Nigerian leaders to say a "joint thank you" to their host, and all said thank you in unison in response to Lt-General Ankrah's address.

3. At this point the General vacated the conference table.

Importation of Arms and resolution renouncing the use of Force:

4. Lt-Col Ojukwu spoke next. He said that the Agenda was acceptable to him subject to the comments he had made on some of the items. (A copy of the Agenda with Lt-Col Ojukwu's comments is attached to these minutes as Annex A). Lt-Col Ojukwu said that no useful purpose would be served by using the meeting as a cover for arms build-up and accused the Federal Military Government of having engaged in large scale arms deals by sending Major Apolo to negotiate for arms abroad. He alleged that the Federal Military Government recently paid £1 million for some arms bought from Italy and now stored in Kaduna. Lt-Col Ojukwu was reminded by the Military Governor, North and other members that the East was indulging in an arms build-up and that the plane carrying arms which recently crashed on the Cameroons border was destined for Enugu. Lt-Col Ojukwu proposed that if the meeting was to make any progress, all the members must at the outset adopt the resolution to renounce the use of force in the settlement of the Nigerian dispute.

5. Lt-Col Gowon explained that as a ^fformer Chief of Staff, Army, he was aware of the deficiency in the country's arms and ammunition which needed replacement. Since the Defence Industries Corporation could not produce these, the only choice was to order from overseas and order was accordingly placed to the tune of £3/4 million. He said to the best of his knowledge the actual amount that had been paid out was only £80,000 for which he signed a cheque on behalf of the General Officer Commanding. The £80 million about which so much noise has been made was nothing but a typographical error in the Customs in recording the payment of £80,000. As to why these arms were sent up to the North, Lt-Col Gowon referred to lack of storage facilities in Lagos and reminded his Military colleagues of the number of times arms and ammunition had been dumped in the sea. This was why, he said, it became necessary to use the better storage facilities in Kaduna. The arms and ammunition had not been distributed because they arrived only two weeks previously and have not yet been taken on charge. After exhaustive discussion to which all members contributed and during which Lt-Col Ejoor pointed out that it would be necessary to determine what arms and ammunition had arrived and what each unit of the Army had before any further distribution would take place, the Supreme Military Council unanimously adopted a Declaration proposed by Lt-Col Djukwu, that all members:

- (a) renounce the use of force as a means of settling the Nigerian the Nigerian crisis;
- (b) reaffirm their faith in discussions and negotiation as the only peaceful way of resolving the Nigerian crisis; and
- (c) agree to exchange information on the quantity of arms and ammunition available in each unit of the Army in each Region and in the unallocated stores, and to share out such arms equitably to the various commands;

(d) agree that there should be no more importation of arms and ammunition until normalcy was restored. The full text of the Declaration which was signed by all members is attached as Annex B to these minutes.

Re-organisation of the Army

6. The Supreme Military Council, having acknowledged the fact that the series of disturbances since 15th January 1966, have caused disunity in the army resulting in lack of discipline ~~and~~ public confidence, turned their attention to the question of how best the Army should be re-organised in order to restore that discipline and confidence. There was a lengthy discussion of the subject and when the arguments became involved members retired into secret session. On their return they announced that agreement had been reached by them on the re-organisation administration and control of the Army on the following lines:-

(a) Army to be governed by the Supreme Military Council under a Chairman to be known as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Head of the Federal Military Government.

(b) Establishment of a Military Headquarters comprising equal representation from the Regions and headed by a Chief of Staff.

(c) Creation of Area Commands corresponding to existing Regions and under the charge of Area Commanders.

(d) Matters of policy, including appointments and promotion to top executive posts in the Armed Forces and the Police to be dealt with by the Supreme Military Council.

(e) During the period of the Military Government, Military Governors will have control over Area Commands for internal security.

(f) Creation of a Lagos Garrison including Ikeja Barracks.

7. In connection with the re-organization² of the Army, the Council discussed the distribution of Military personnel with particular reference to the present recruitment drive. The view was held that general recruitment throughout the country in the present situation would cause great imbalance in the distribution of soldiers. After a lengthy discussion of the subject, the Council agreed to set up a Military Committee, on which each Region will be represented, to prepare a statistics which will show:

- (a) Present strength of Nigerian Army;
- (b) Deficiency in each sector of each unit;
- (c) The size appropriate for the country and each Area Command;
- (d) Additional requirement for the country and each Area Command.

The Committee is to meet and report to Council within two weeks from the date of receipt of instructions.

8. The Council agreed that pending completion of the exercise in paragraph 7 further recruitment of soldiers should cease.

9. In respect of item 3 (b) of the Agenda, implementation of the agreement reached on 9th August, 1966, it was agreed, after a lengthy discussion, that it was necessary for the agreement reached on 9th August by the delegates of the Regional Governments to be fully implemented. In particular, it was accepted in principle that army personnel of Northern origin should return to the North from the West. It was therefore felt that a crash programme of recruitment and training, the details of which would be further examined after the Committee to look into the strength and distribution of army personnel had reported, would be necessary to constitute indigenous army personnel in the West to a majority there quickly.

Non-Recognition by the East of Lt-Col. Gowon as Supreme Commander.

10. The question of the non-recognition by the East of Lt-Col. Gowon as Supreme Commander and Head of the Federal Military Government was also exhaustively discussed. Lt-Col. Ojukwu based his objection on the fact, inter alia, that no one can properly assume the position of Supreme Commander until the whereabouts of the former Supreme Commander, Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi, was known. He therefore asked that the country be informed of the whereabouts of the Major-General and added that in his view, it was impossible, in the present circumstances, for any one person to assume any effective central command of the Nigerian Army. Lt-Col. Ejoor enunciated four principles to guide the meeting in formulating an answer to the question of who should be Supreme Commander. These were the:

- (a) Problem of effective leadership;
- (b) Crisis of confidence in the Army;
- (c) Disruption in the present chain of command;
- (d) Inability of any soldier to serve effectively in any unit anywhere in the country.

Lt-Col. Gowon replied that he was quite prepared to make an announcement on the matter and regretted that a formal announcement had been delayed for so long but the delay was originally intended to allow time for tempers to cool down. He reminded his colleagues that they already had the information in confidence. After further discussion and following the insistence by Lt-Col. Ojukwu that Lt-Col. Gowon should inform members of what happened to the former Supreme Commander, members retired into secret session and subsequently returned to continue with the meeting after having reached an agreement among themselves.

11. At this point, the meeting adjourned until Thursday 5th January. The Communique issued at the end of the first day's sitting is attached as Annex D.

The power of the Federal Military Government, vis-a-vis the Regional Governments

12. When the meeting resumed on the 5th January, it proceeded to consider the form of Government best suited to Nigeria in view of what the country has experienced in the past year (1966). Members agreed that the legislative and executive authority of the Federal Military Government should remain in the Supreme Military Council to which any decision affecting the whole country shall be referred for determination provided that where it is not possible for a meeting to be held the matter requiring determination must be referred to Military Governors for their comment and concurrence. Specifically, the Council agreed that appointments to senior ranks in 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 Statutory Corporations must be approved by the Supreme Military Council. The Regional members felt that all the Decrees or provisions of Decrees passed since 15th January, 1966, and which detracted from the previous powers and positions of Regional Governments should be repealed if mutual confidence is to be restored. After this issue had been discussed at some length the Council took the following decisions:-

The Council decided that:

(i) on the re-organisation of the Army:

- (a) Army to be governed by the Supreme Military Council under a chairman to be known as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Head of the Federal Military Government.
- (b) Establishment of a Military Headquarters comprising equal representation from the Regions and headed by a Chief of Staff.
- (c) Creation of Area Commands corresponding to existing Regions and under the charge of Area Commanders.
- (d) Matters of policy, including appointments and promotion to top executive posts in the Armed Forces and the Police

to be dealt with by the Supreme Military Council.

(e) During the period of the Military Government, Military Governors will have control over Area Commands for internal security.

(f) Creation of a Lagos Garrison including Ikeja Barracks.

(ii) ~~Non~~ appointment to certain posts:

The following appointments must be approved by Supreme Military Council:-

(a) Diplomatic and Consular posts.

(b) Senior posts in the Armed Forces and the Police.

(c) Super-scale Federal Civil Service and Federal Corporation posts.

(iii) on the functioning of the Supreme Military Council: Any decision affecting the whole country must be determined by the Supreme Military Council. Where a meeting is not possible such a matter must be referred to Military Governors for comment and concurrence.

(iv) that all the Law Officers of the Federation should meet in Benin on the 14th January and list out all the Decrees and provisions of Decrees concerned so that they may be repealed not later than 21st January if possible;

(v) that for at least the next six months, there should be purely a Military Government, having nothing to do whatever with politicians.

A statement on the Supreme Military Council as attached as Annex C.

Soldiers involved in Disturbances on 15th January, 1966 and thereafter

13. Members expressed views about the future of those who have been detained in connection with all the disturbances since 15th January, 1966, and agreed that the fate of soldiers in detention should be determined not later than end of January 1967.

Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference

14. The Council next considered the question of the resumption of the Ad Hoc Constitutional Committee and the acceptance of that Committee's recommendations of September 1966. After some exchange of views, it was agreed that the Ad Hoc Committee should resume sitting as soon as practicable to begin from where they left off, and that the question of accepting the unanimous recommendations of September 1966 be considered at a later meeting of the Supreme Military Council.

The Problems of Displaced Persons

15. The Council considered exhaustively the problems of displaced persons with particular reference to their rehabilitation, employment and property. The view was expressed and generally accepted that the Federal Government ought to take the lead in establishing a national Body which will be responsible for raising and making appeal for funds. Lt-Col. Ojukwu made the point, which was accepted by Lt-Col. Katsina, that in the present situation, the intermingling of Easterners and Northerners was not feasible. After each Military Governor had discussed these problems as they affected his area, the Council agreed:-

- (a) On rehabilitation, that Finance Permanent Secretaries should resume their meeting within two weeks and submit recommendations and that each Region should send three representatives to the meeting.
- (b) On employment and recovery of property, that civil servants and Corporation staff (including daily paid employees) who have not been absorbed should continue to be paid their full salaries until 31st March, 1967 provided they have not got alternative employment, and that the Military Governors of the East, West and Mid-West should send representatives (Police Commissioners) to meet and discuss the problem of recovery of property left behind by displaced persons. Lt-Col. Ejoor disclosed that the employment situation in his Region was so acute that he had no alternative but to ask non-Mid-Westerners working in the private sector in his Region to quit and make room for Mid-Westerners repatriated from elsewhere. Lt-Col. Ojukwu stated that he fully appreciated the problem faced by both the Military Governor, West, and the Military Governor, Mid-West, in this matter and that if in the last resort, either of them had to send the Easterners concerned back to the East, he would understand, much as the action would further complicate the resettlement problem in the East. He assured the Council that his order that non-Easterners should leave the Eastern Region would be kept under constant review with a view to its being lifted as soon practicable.

16. On the question of further meetings of the Supreme Military Council, members agreed that future meetings will be held in Nigeria at a venue to be mutually agreed.

17. On the question of Government information media, the Council agreed that all Government information media should be restrained from making inflammatory statements and causing embarrassment to various Governments in the Federation.

18. There were other matters not on the Agenda which were also considered among which were the forms of Government for Nigeria (reported in paragraph 12 above) and the disruption of the country's economy by the lack of movement of rail and road transport which the Regional Governors agreed to look into.

19. The meeting began and ended in a most cordial atmosphere and members unanimously issued a second and final communique a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Annex E.

20. In his closing remarks the Chairman of the Ghana National Liberation council expressed his pleasure at the successful outcome of the meeting and commended the decisions taken to the Nigerian leaders for their implementation. Lt-Col. Gowon on behalf of his colleagues thanked the Ghanaian leader for the excellent part he had played in helping to resolve the issues. The successful outcome of the meeting was then toasted with champagne and the Nigerians took leave of the Ghanaians.

21. The proceedings of the meeting were reported verbatim for each Regional Government and the Federal Government by their respective official reporters and tape-recorded versions were distributed to each Government.

Agenda for the Proposed Meeting of Heads of Governments to be held on
4th January, 1967.

1. Opening address by the Head of State of Host Country.
Comments by Military Governor, Eastern Nigeria:-
Better be deleted. If host wishes to make opening address this should entirely be his decision.
2. Response by Head of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Supreme Commander of the Nigerian Armed Forces.
Comments by Military Governor, Eastern Nigeria:-
Not acceptable.
3. Review of the Current Situation in Nigeria, with particular reference to:
 - (a) Organisation of the Nigerian Army;
 - (b) Implementation of the agreement reached on 9th August, 1966, in regard to the disposition of Army personnel.
4. Resumption of talks by the Ad Hoc Constitutional Committee. Acceptance of unanimous recommendations in September 1966.
Comments by Military Governor, Eastern Nigeria:
Should read "Acceptance and implementation of unanimous recommendations of Ad Hoc Constitutional Committee in September". "This along with 3(b) of draft agenda would inspire confidence and reassure of good intention."
5. Problems of displaced persons, with particular reference to:
 - (a) Rehabilitation;
 - (b) Employment;
 - (c) Property.
6. Arrangements for future meetings of the Supreme Military Council and the Federal Executive Council.
Comments by Military Governor, Eastern Nigeria:
Should read "Arrangements for future meetings."

7. Communique to become item 8)

Comments by Military Governor, Eastern Nigeria:

New item 7 should be - "Government information media."

N. B. - Alternatively, this item to read "Response" only.

Declaration on Use of Force

We, the members of the Supreme Military Council of Nigeria meeting at Accra on 4th day of January, 1967, hereby solemnly and unequivocally:

- (i) DECLARE that we renounce the use of force as a means of settling the present crisis in Nigeria, and hold ourselves in honour bound by this declaration.
- (ii) REAFFIRM our faith in discussion and negotiation as the only peaceful way of resolving the Nigerian crisis.
- (iii) AGREE to exchange information on the quantity of arms and ammunition in each unit of the Army in each Region, and also on the quantity of new arms and ammunition in stock.

LT.-COL. YAKUBU GOWON

LT.-COL. DAVID EJOOR

COL. ROBERT ADEBAYO

LT.-COL. HASSAN KATSINA

LT.-COL. ODUMEGWU OJUKWU

COMMODORE J. E. WEY

MAJOR MOBOLAJI JOHNSON

ALHAJI KAM SALEM

MR. T. OMO-BADE

Statement on the Supreme Military Council

The Supreme Military Council now meeting in Ghana has agreed on the following reorganization² of the Army:

- (a) The Army is to be governed by the Supreme Military Council the chairman of which will be known as Commander-in-Chief and Head of the Federal Military Government.
- (b) There will be a Military Headquarters on which the Regions will be equally represented and which will be headed by a Chief of Staff.
- (c) In each Region there shall be an Area Command under the charge of an Area Commander and corresponding with the existing Regions.

- (d) All matters of policy including appointments and promotions of persons in executive posts in the Armed Forces and Police shall be dealt with by the Supreme Military Council.
 - (e) During the period of the Military Government, Military Governors ~~will~~ will have control over their Area Commands in matters of internal security.
2. The following appointments must be approved by the Supreme Military Council:
- (a) Diplomatic and Consular posts.
 - (b) Senior posts in the Armed Forces and the Police.
 - (c) Super-scale Federal Civil and Federal Corporations posts.
3. Any decision affecting the whole country must be determined by the Supreme Military Council. Where a meeting is not possible such a matter must be referred to Military Governors for comment and concurrence.

Meeting of the Supreme Military Council of Nigeria held in Ghana on the 4th January, 1967.

Communique

A meeting of the Supreme Military Council of Nigeria was held in Ghana on the 4th of January, 1967. Present were:

Lt.-Col. Yakubu Gowon
Colonel Robert Adebayo
Lt.-Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu
Lt-Col. David Ejor
Lt.-Col. Hassan Katsina
Commodore J. E. Wey
Major Mobolaji Johnson
Alhaji Kam Salem
Mr. T. Omo-Bare.

The meeting which was held in a most cordial atmosphere was opened with an address by the Chairman of the National Liberation Council of Ghana, Lt.-General J. A. Ankrah.

The meeting discussed a number of issues and took decisions. These included a declaration renouncing the use of force as a means of settling the present crisis in Nigeria and holding themselves in honour bound by the declaration. They also reaffirmed their faith in discussions and negotiation as the only peaceful way of resolving the Nigerian crisis.

The meeting was adjourned to resume in the same venue tomorrow, 5th January, 1967.

Meeting of the Supreme Military Council of Nigeria held in Ghana
5th January, 1967.

Second and Final Communique

The Supreme Military Council of Nigeria resumed its meeting in Ghana on the 5th January and continued and concluded discussion of the remaining subjects on the Agenda. The Council reached agreement on all the 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 agreements were reached included the following:

- (i) Re-organization, administration and control of the Army.
- (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 set up 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 Governments 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 the end of 31st March, 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 recommendations 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 express profound regret for the bloodshed which has engulfed the country in the past year and avow to do all in their power to ensure there is no recurrence of the unhappy situation.

Members of the Supreme Military Council put on their profound appreciation and gratitude for constructive initiative and assistance rendered by the Chairman of the National Liberation Council, the Government and people of Ghana.

Source: Publication of the Federal Ministry of Information entitled:

"Meeting of the Nigerian Military Leaders held at Dedausi Lodge, Aburi, Ghana, 4th and 5th January, 1967".
Lagos 1967.

APPENDIX IV

Resolution by the Consultative Assembly
and the Advisory Committee of Chiefs and Elders
of the Eastern Region giving mandate to Lt. Col. Ojukwu
to declare an independent state by the name of Biafra,
May 27, 1967

WE, The Chiefs, Elders, and Representatives of Eastern Nigeria, gathered at this Joint Meeting of the Advisory Committee of Chiefs and Elders and the Consultative Assembly, do solemnly declare as follows:

WHEREAS WE have been in the vanguard of the national movement for the building of a strong, united, and prosperous Nigeria where no man will be oppressed and have devoted our efforts, talents and resources to this end;

WHEREAS WE cherish certain inalienable human rights and state obligations such as the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness; the right to acquire, possess, and defend property; the provision of security; and the establishment of good and just government based on the consent of the governed;

WHEREAS in practical demonstration of these beliefs, our people settled in other parts of Nigeria, served their country in many capacities, and contributed immensely to the growth and development of Nigeria;

WHEREAS WE ARE LIVING WITNESSES OF INJUSTICES AND ATROCITIES COMMITTED against Eastern Nigeria, among which are the premeditated murder of over 30,000 of our innocent men, women, and children by Northern Nigerians, the calculated destruction of the property of our sons and daughters, the shameless conversion of 2,000,000 Eastern Nigerians into refugees in their own country, all this without remorse;

WHEREAS in spite of these facts, the government and people of Eastern Nigeria have persisted in their efforts to find a practical and just solution that would preserve the continued existence of Nigeria as one corporate unit and restore peace and confidence as demonstrated by the initiative of our military governor in getting all the military leaders together at Aburi, Ghana;

WHEREAS the hopes which the Aburi Agreement engendered have proved to be misplaced and have been destroyed by a series of acts of bad faith and distortions and finally by a refusal on the part of the "Lagos Government" to implement these and other agreements notwithstanding the fact that they were freely and voluntarily entered into;

WHEREAS the Federation of Nigeria has forfeited any claim to our allegiance by these acts and by the economic, political and diplomatic sanctions imposed against us by the so-called Federal Government;

AND WHEREAS the object of government is the good of the governed and the will of the people its ultimate sanction;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of these and other facts and injustices, we, the Chiefs, Elders and Representatives of all the twenty provinces of Eastern Nigeria, assembled in this Joint Meeting of the Advisory Committee of Chiefs and Elders and the Consultative Assembly, at Enugu this 27th day of May, 1967, hereby solemnly:

- (a) MANDATE His Excellency Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, to declare at the earliest practicable date Eastern Nigeria a free, sovereign and independent state by the name and title of the REPUBLIC OF BIAFRA.
- (b) RESOLVE that the new REPUBLIC OF BIAFRA shall have the full and absolute powers of a sovereign state, and shall establish commerce, levy war, conclude peace, enter into diplomatic relations, and carry out, as of right, other sovereign responsibilities.
- (c) DIRECT that the REPUBLIC OF BIAFRA may enter into arrangement with any sovereign unit or units in what remains of Nigeria or in any part of Africa desirous of association with us for the purpose of running a common services organization and for the establishment of economic ties.

- (d) RECOMMEND that the REPUBLIC OF BIAFRA should become a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, the Organisation of African Unity, and the United Nations Organization.
- (e) RECOMMEND the adoption of a federal constitution based on the new provincial units.
- (f) REAFFIRM His Excellency's assurance of protection for the persons, properties, and businesses of foreign nationals in our territory.
- (g) DECLARE our unqualified confidence in the Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, and assure him of our unreserved support for the way and manner he has handled the crisis in the country. So help us God.

Declaration of the Republic of Biafra

May 30, 1967

Fellow countrymen and women, YOU, the people of Eastern Nigeria:

CONSCIOUS of the supreme authority of Almighty God over all mankind,
of your duty to yourselves and posterity;

AWARE that you can no longer be protected in your lives and in your
property by any Government based outside Eastern Nigeria;

BELIEVING that you are born free and have certain unalienable rights
which can best be preserved by yourselves;

UNWILLING to be unfree partners in any association of a political or
economic nature;

REJECTING the authority of any person or persons other than the
Military Government of Eastern Nigeria to make any imposition of whatever
kind or nature upon you;

DETERMINED to dissolve all political and other ties between you and
the former Federal Republic of Nigeria;

PREPARED to enter into such association, treaty or alliance with any
sovereign state within the former Federal Republic of Nigeria and elsewhere
on such terms and conditions as best to subserve your common good;

AFFIRMING your trust and confidence in ME;

HAVING mandated ME to proclaim on your behalf, and in your name, that
Eastern Nigeria be a sovereign independent Republic.

NOW THEREFORE I, LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU, MILITARY GOVERNOR OF EASTERN NIGERIA, BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY; AND PURSUANT TO THE PRINCIPLES, RECITED ABOVE, DO HEREBY SOLEMNLY PROCLAIM THAT THE TERRITORY AND REGION KNOWN AS AND CALLED EASTERN NIGERIA TOGETHER WITH HER CONTINENTAL SHELF AND TERRITORIAL WATERS SHALL HENCEFORTH BE AN INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGN STATE OF THE NAME AND TITLE OF 'THE REPUBLIC OF BIARFA.'

AND I DO DECLARE THAT:

- i) all political ties between us and the Federal Republic of Nigeria are hereby totally dissolved;
- ii) all subsisting contractual obligations entered into by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria or by any person, authority, organization or government, acting on its behalf, with any person, authority, or organisation operating, or relating to any matter or thing, within the Republic of Biafra, shall henceforth be deemed to be entered into with the Military Governor of the Republic of Biafra for and on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Biafra, and the covenants thereof shall, subject to this Declaration, be performed by the parties according to their tenor;
- iii) all subsisting international treaties and obligations made on behalf of Eastern Nigeria by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be honoured and respected;
- iv) Eastern Nigeria's due share of all subsisting international debts and obligations entered into by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on behalf of the Federation of Nigeria shall be honoured and respected;

- v) steps will be taken to open discussions on the question of Eastern Nigeria's due share of the assets of the Federation of Nigeria and personal properties of the citizens of Biafra throughout the Federation of Nigeria;
- vi) the rights, privileges, pensions, etc., of all personnel of the Public Services, the Armed Forces and the Police now serving in any capacity within the Republic of Biafra are hereby guaranteed;
- vii) we shall keep the door open for association with, and would welcome, any sovereign unit or units in the former Federation of Nigeria, or in any other parts of Africa desirous of association with us for the purposes of running a common services organisation and for the establishment of economic ties;
- viii) we shall protect the lives and property of all foreigners residing in Biafra, we shall extend the hand of friendship to those nations who respect our sovereignty, and shall repel any interference in our internal affairs;
- ix) we shall faithfully adhere to the Charter of the Organization of African Unity and of the United Nations Organisation;
- x) it is our intention to remain a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations in our right as a sovereign, independent nation.

LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC OF BIAFRA!

AND MAY GOD PROTECT ALL WHO LIVE IN HER!

Source: C.O. Ojukwu, Biafra, Selected Speeches with Journals of Events, New York: Harper & Row, 1969, pp. 193-196.

APPENDIX V

OAU Communique issued at Kinshasa,
September 14, 1967

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government meeting at its First Ordinary Session in Kinshasa from 11th to 14th September, 1967;

Solemnly reaffirming their adherence to the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states;

Reiterating their condemnation of secession in any member state;

Concerned at the tragic and serious situation in Nigeria;

Recognizing the situation as an internal affair, the solution of which is primarily the responsibility of Nigerians themselves;

Reposing their trust and confidence in the Federal Government of Nigeria;

Desirous of exploring the possibilities of placing the services of the Assembly at the disposal of the Federal Government of Nigeria;

Resolves to send a consultative mission of six Heads of State (Mobutu, Tubman, Ankrah, Ahidjo, Diori, and Haile Selassie) to the Head of the Federal Government of Nigeria to assure him of the Assembly's desire for the territorial integrity, unity and peace of Nigeria.

APPENDIX VI

Treaty between Great Britain and Ethiopia
(Frontiers of British Protectorate on
Somali Coast) Signed by the Emperor Menelek II, and by
Her Majesty's Envoy at Addis Ababa, 14th May, 1897

Her Majesty Victoria, by the grace of God, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty Menelek II, by the grace of God, King of Kings of Ethiopia, being desirous of strengthening and rendering more effective and profitable the ancient friendship which has existed between their respective kingdoms:

Her Majesty Queen Victoria having appointed as her Special Envoy and Representative to His Majesty the Emperor Menelek II, James Rennell Rodd, Esq., Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, whose full powers have been found in due and proper form, and His Majesty the Emperor Menelek, negotiating in his own name as King of Kings of Ethiopia, they have agreed upon and do conclude the following Articles which shall be binding on themselves, their heirs, and successors:

ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA

(Art. 1 omitted)

Art. II - The frontiers of the British Protectorate on the Somali Coast recognized by the Emperor Menelek shall be determined subsequently by exchange of notes between James Rennell Rodd, Esq., as Representative of Her Majesty the Queen, and Ras Maconen, as Representative of His Majesty the Emperor Menelek, at Harrar. These notes shall be annexed to the present Treaty, of which they will form an integral part, so soon as they have received the approval of the High Contracting Parties, pending which the status quo shall be maintained.

APPENDIX VI (2)

(Arts. III to V omitted)

Art VI - His Majesty the Emperor Menelek II, King of Kings of Ethiopia, engages himself towards the Government of Her Britannic Majesty to do all in his power to prevent the passage through his dominions of arms and ammunition to the Mahdists, whom he declares to be the enemies of his Empire.

The present Treaty shall come into force as soon as its ratification by Her Britannic Majesty shall have been notified to the Emperor of Ethiopia, but it is understood that the prescriptions of Art. VI shall be put into force from the date of its signature.

In faith of which His Majesty Menelek II, King of Kings of Ethiopia, in his own name, and James Rennell Rodd, Esq., on behalf of Her Majesty Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, have signed the present Treaty, in duplicate, written in the English and Amharic languages identically, both texts being considered as official and have thereto affixed their seals.

Done at Adis Abbaba, the 14th day of May, 1897.

(L.S.) JAMES RENNELL RODD
(Seal of His Majesty the Emperor Menelek II)

APPENDIX VII

Convention between Ethiopia and Italy
settling the Frontier between the Italian Possessions
of Somalia and the Ethiopian Empire -
Signed at Adis Ababa, May 16, 1908

(Translation)

His Majesty King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy, in his own name and in the name of his successors, by means of his representative in Adis Ababa, Cavaliere Giuseppe Colli di Felizzane, Captain of Cavalry, and His Majesty Menelek II, King of Kings of Ethiopia, in his own name and that of his successors, desiring to settle definitively the frontier between the Italian possessions of Somalia and the provinces of the Ethiopian Empire, have determined to sign the following Convention:

ART. I The line of frontier between the Italian possessions of Somalia and the provinces of the Ethiopian Empire starts from Dolo at the confluence of the Dawa and the Ganale, proceeds eastwards by the sources of the Maidaba and continues as far as the Uebi Scebeli following the territorial boundaries between the tribe of Rahanuin, which remains dependent on Italy, and all the tribes to its north, which remain dependent on Abyssinia.

II. The frontier on the Uebi Scebeli shall be the point where the boundary between the territory of the Baddi-Addi tribe, which remains dependent on Italy, and the territory of the tribes above the Baddi-Addi, which remain dependent on Abyssinia, touches the river.

III. The tribes on the left of the Juba, that of Rahanuin and those on the Uebi Scebeli below the frontier point, shall be dependent on Italy. The tribes of Digodia, of Afgab, of Djedjedi and all the others to the north of the frontier line shall be dependent on Abyssinia.

...../2.

APPENDIX VII (2)

IV. From the Uebi Scebeli the frontier proceeds in a north-easterly direction, following the line accepted by the Italian Government in 1897; all the territory belonging to the tribes towards the coast shall remain dependent on Italy; all the territory of Ogaden and all that of the tribes towards the Ogaden shall remain dependent on Abyssinia.

V. The two Governments undertake to delimit on the spot and as soon as possible the actual line of the frontier as above mentioned.

VI. The two Governments formally undertake not to exercise any interference beyond the frontier line, and not to allow the tribes dependent on them to cross the frontier in order to commit acts of violence to the detriment of the tribes on the other side of the line; but should questions or incidents arise or on account of the limitrophe tribes, the two Governments shall settle them by common accord.

VII. The two Governments mutually undertake to take no action and to allow their dependents to take no action which may give rise to questions or incidents or disturb the tranquillity of the frontier tribes.

VIII. The present Convention shall, as regards Italy, be submitted to the approval of the Parliament and ratified by His Majesty the King.

Done in duplicate and in identical terms in the two languages, Italian and Amharic.

One copy remains in the hands of the Italian Government, and the other in the hands of the Ethiopian Government.

Given in the city of Adis Ababa, the 16th day of the month of May of the year 1908.

GUISEPPE COLLI DI FELIZZANO
(Seal of Menelek.)

APPENDIX VIII

Agreement between the United Kingdom and Ethiopia relating to certain matters connected with the withdrawal of British Military Administration from the territories designated as the Reserved Area and the Ogaden - London, 29th November, 1954

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Imperial Ethiopian Government;

Desiring to terminate the temporary arrangements provided for in Article VII of the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement signed at Addis Ababa on 9th December, 1944; and

Desiring to implement the provisions of the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty signed at Addis Ababa on 14th May, 1897, relating to grazing rights;

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

The full and exclusive sovereignty of Ethiopia over the territories which are set forth in the attached Schedule (hereinafter referred to as the territories), recognised by the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1897, is hereby reaffirmed. As from 28th February, 1955, British Military Administration for which temporary provision was made under the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 19th December, 1944, shall be withdrawn from the Reserved Area as defined in the Schedule to that Agreement and from that part of the Ogaden which is at present under British Military Administration. The Imperial Ethiopian Government shall, from that date, reassume jurisdiction and administration of, in and over the territories.

ARTICLE II

The right of tribes coming respectively from Ethiopia and the Somaliland Protectorate to cross the frontier for the purpose of grazing, as originally set out in the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1897 and the letters annexed thereto, is reaffirmed by the two Contracting Parties who shall take steps to ensure that as far as possible tribal grazing rights in the area shall be protected.

APPENDIX VIII (2)

ARTICLE III

Subject to the jurisdiction and administration of the Imperial Ethiopian Government and to their responsibility for the maintenance of public order, the facilities and powers set out below are hereby accorded within the territories by the Imperial Ethiopian Government as a special arrangement designed to meet the circumstances under which tribes from the Somaliland Protectorate utilise the territories for the purpose of grazing, which tribes are hereinafter called the tribes:-

(a) Without prejudice to the jurisdiction of the Imperial Ethiopian Government and whilst the tribes are in the territories, the tribal organisation consisting of the system of local authorities (Akils), tribal police (Illalos) and Elders, as set up and recognised by the Government of the Somaliland Protectorate, shall continue to function and the tribes may be given from time to time instructions on internal tribal and inter-tribal matters as appropriate from the Government of the Somaliland Protectorate; and the tribal organisation shall have the responsibility of maintaining law and order among the tribes. The tribal organisation shall not be used for political agitation within Ethiopia and nothing in this Agreement shall authorise political agitation by the tribes or members thereof. There shall be no more than 700 Illalos at any one time in the territories. Apart from the Akils, Illalos, Elders and Liaison Officer and such staffs as are or may be provided under sub-paragraphs (d) and (e) below, there shall be in the said territories no officials of, or appointed by, the Government of the Somaliland Protectorate except by agreement with the Imperial Ethiopian Government.

(b) Cases involving only persons who are members of the tribes or members of the tribes and the liaison officer or members of his staff shall, if so triable, be tried by Protectorate Courts sitting inside the Somaliland Protectorate. Cases involving both Ethiopians and members of the tribes shall be tried by Ethiopian courts but the British liaison officer referred to in sub-paragraph (d) below or a member of his staff shall have the right to be present in court. He shall be given an opportunity to provide any relevant information.

APPENDIX VIII (3)

(c) Without prejudice to the full powers of arrest in the territories on the part of the Ethiopian police, the Illalos shall have full powers of arrest over members of the tribes and any other person where such arrest is necessary to prevent the imminent commission by such person of a serious crime involving members of the tribes or the liaison officer or his staff, or the escape of such person immediately after the commission of a crime involving members of the tribes or the liaison officer or his staff. Any Ethiopian national arrested by Illalos shall be delivered for custody at the earliest opportunity to the Ethiopian authorities. Any person arrested by the Ethiopian police who, under sub-paragraph (b) of this Article, is to be tried by the Protectorate Courts, shall be delivered for custody at the earliest opportunity to the tribal authorities.

(d) There shall be a British liaison officer with the necessary staff appointed by the Government of the Somaliland Protectorate who may reside in and shall be permitted to move freely in the territories. The liaison officer and his staff shall hold themselves at all times available for consultation by the Ethiopian authorities, and their advice shall be sought by the Ethiopian authorities in the conduct of the latter's affairs with the tribes. While the tribes are in the territories the liaison officer and his staff shall be responsible to the Government of the Somaliland Protectorate for transmitting to the tribes the instructions of the Government of the Somaliland Protectorate referred to in sub-paragraph (a) above, and they shall promptly inform the Ethiopian authorities of the substance of such instructions. They shall also, as and when requested by the Imperial Ethiopian Government, transmit the latter's instructions on other matters when not directly or otherwise issued to the tribes by that Government.

(e) Medical, veterinary and educational services hitherto provided for the tribes within the territories may continue to be provided at the existing scale during the presence of the tribes in the territories, and the two Contracting Parties agree at the request of either to negotiate

APPENDIX VIII (4)

regarding the provision to the tribes of any expansion of or addition to these services including the provision of water supplies.

ARTICLE IV

Reciprocal facilities and powers corresponding to those provided for in this Agreement in respect of tribes from the Somaliland Protectorate shall, subject to corresponding obligations, be accorded to the Imperial Ethiopian Government in those areas of the Somaliland Protectorate which the Ethiopian tribes may enter pursuant to the provisions of Article II of this Agreement.

ARTICLE V

The provisions of this Agreement shall be subject to review at any time at the request of either Contracting Party. Unless otherwise agreed the Agreement shall remain in force for a period of fifteen years, at the end of which period, unless six months prior notice of termination shall have been given by either Contracting Party, it shall continue to remain in force until six months after the sending by either Contracting Party to the other of a notice of termination. The termination of this Agreement shall not affect the grazing rights referred to in Article II.

ARTICLE VI

This Agreement shall come into force on signature and shall replace the provisions relating to the territories in the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 19th December, 1944, including the Annexes and Schedules appended thereto and the provisions of the Protocol of 24th July, 1948 (not published). It is further agreed that all questions concerning the administration of the territories pursuant to the provisions of the aforementioned Protocol and Agreement have been disposed of by the present Agreement.

In witness whereof, the undersigned, being duly authorised hereto by their respective Governments, have signed the present Agreement.

Done in duplicate at London, this 29th day of November, 1954, in the English language.

ANTHONY EDEEN
AKLILOU

APPENDIX IX

Major African conflicts since 1945

<u>Figures are estimates</u>		
Malagasy revolt against French	1947-48	50,000 dead
Kenya war of independence (Mau-Mau revolt) v British	1952-60	15,500 Kenyans and 600 security forces killed
Algerian war of independence v France	1954-62	17,456 French killed, 51,800 French wounded Officially 141,000 Algerians killed Unofficially about 1m.
Sudan civil war, North v South	1955-72	Est. 500,000 killed and a million became refugees
Bamileke revolt in Cameroon (put down by French)	1957-62	20,000-plus killed
Congo (Zaire) civil war with mercenary involvement	1960-67	126 UN soldiers killed Congolese dead estimated between 50,000 and 100,000
Angolan war of independence v Portugal & Mozambique war of independence v Portugal	1961-75 1964-75	5,256 killed and 6,878 wounded were the official Portuguese losses in these two years
Eritrean war against Ethiopia	1961	80,000 estimated to have died on both sides
Guinean war of independence v Portugal	1963-74	PAIGC losses less than 1,000. Portuguese lost 1,084 killed and 6,000 wounded (officially)
Zimbabwe war of independence v British/Rhodesian governments	1964-80	20,000 killed on both sides
Namibia war of independence v South Africa and South Africa v Angola	1966-	2,000 killed and 3,000 wounded since 1976
Chad civil war	1966-	25,000 killed or more
Biafra-Nigeria civil war	1967-70	Between 600,000 and 1m believed to have died on both sides

APPENDIX IX (2)

Western Sahara war of independence v Spain v Mauritania and v Morocco	1973-76 No figures 1976 No figures 1976-80 No figures
Angolan civil war - MPLA/FNLA/UNITA	1975-76 20,000 killed on all sides
Libya/Egypt border war	1977 No figures
Ethiopia/Somalia Ogaden war	1977-78 30,000-50,000 killed on both sides
Tanzania/Uganda war	1978-79 4,100 soldiers and civilians killed on both sides.

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