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THE DOMESTIC IMPERATIVES AND EXTERNAL POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF AFRICAN DIPLOMACY AT THE THRESHOLD OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AND BEYOND

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INTRODUCTION

Since foreign policy has a domestic structure which crucially underpins the conduct of any country's external relations, conventional wisdom in foreign policy analysis makes it obligatory for scholars concerned with the study and analysis of African diplomacy, especially at the threshold of the twenty-first century, to address the imperative challenge and task of enhancing and facilitating prospects for a relatively painless transition by African states to good governance, enduring political stability and sustainable economic development. The problems and prospects of achieving these goals have to be situated and examined in the context not only of an informed projection of the shape and character of the wider international system in the twenty-first century but also of the preparedness and capacity of the African states to adapt congruently to the dominant values that shape the contours of state behaviour in the global system. There is no doubt that, for many decades, African states, individually and collectively —all victims of colonial treachery, exploitation and external strangulation — continue to suffer from the harsh consequences of European imperialism which cumulatively resulted in, and provide explanation for, their historic, shameful and embarrassing peripheralization and marginalization in the

supervision and management of the global order. In addition, domestically, they continue to experience painful and agonizing problems in their search for political stability, economic development and good governance. These domestic problems and preoccupation define the limit of expectation, the range of possibilities and the nature of leverages and constraints in the hands of those engaged in the conduct of foreign policy. Many of these problems have been exacerbated as much by gross administrative and economic mismanagement and authoritarian political leadership at home as by an insufficiently sensitive, if not outright hostile, international environment.

As the twentieth century draws to an end, it would seem that the greatest task of statesmanship facing African leaders is capacity-building for good (democratic) governance and better management of their national economy, bearing in mind not only the interdependent and mutually reinforcing relationship between good governance and development, and between economic development and a respectable and virile foreign policy in any country, but also the transparent reality of the whirlwind of democratization which has since 1989 been contributing positively and fundamentally towards modifying the political tune, issue-content and policy agenda of world politics.¹ In the final analysis, the overriding imperative in the conduct of foreign policy by African states is the adoption and implementation of tough domestic capacity-building programmes of action that would empower African leaders not only to confidently, maturely, realistically and meaningfully participate in the shaping of their international environment in the image of their known preferences and thus facilitate their congruent and painless adaptation to that wider environment but also to work together towards changing those specific features and practices existing in the present world order that neither serve nor protect their individual national and collective group interests.

The purpose of this paper is not only to identify and broadly address the imperative and problems of good governance, nation-building and economic development on the African continent but also, and perhaps more importantly, to show the bearing which capacity-building responses by the African states to these problems are likely to have on the prospects for an imaginative conduct of African diplomacy as the continent seeks to arrest and, hopefully, reverse the embarrassing and shameful spectacle of Africa's peripheralization and marginalization in the shaping, supervision and management of the global order at the threshold of the twenty-first century and beyond.

ON THE LEGACY AND TYRANNY OF THE PAST

It is arguable that slavery and colonialism systematically structured, if not determined, the present lamentable African condition, shaping and moulding it into an embarrassing reality of dependence and assigning to it a subservient and peripheral status in international role stratification as far as participation and meaningful involvement in the control, supervision and management of the world order are concerned. There is, of course, hardly any doubt that the failure of Africa's protests against and resistance to slavery in the eighteenth century and to colonial aggression in the nineteenth century resulted not from the absence of political will and determination but from the crudity and inferiority of the technology in the hands of the African people. Quite obviously, both slavery and colonialism left a deep and humiliating scar on the political face and psyche of Africa which no plastic surgery can fully remove. The story of how colonialism underdeveloped Africa in much of the twentieth century has been accurately and brilliantly told.² Similarly, the analysis of both the rape of the continent by the European powers and the potentialities of the artificial state boundaries for inter-state conflicts and irredentism in Africa has been systematically presented by African historiography. It is incontrovertible that the legacies of European colonization, by merely establishing and strengthening vertical cooperation and relations between African countries and their metropolitan masters at the expense of encouraging active horizontal cooperation among African countries, have stunted the growth and blunted the vitality of post-independence network and patterns of inter-state relations within Africa.

The result has been that inter-state relations among African states have usually been conducted and viewed largely through the jaundiced eyes of the European powers whose preferences and interests continue to generally influence and, in some cases, determine policy decisions of virtually every post-independence African leader. Generally speaking, that this has been more in the Francophone states of Africa than in the other ex-colonial territories on the continent where the policy of assimilation was never implemented explains the importance of paying attention to the cultural basis and content of foreign policy. While consequently drawing attention to the need by the African states to use the conduct of foreign policy for the advancement and enrichment of the African culture, it, perhaps more importantly, also points to the areas where much still remains to be done in the battle against the tyrannical consequences of colonial rule.

To say that the African condition of poverty, deprivation, underdevelopment and marginalization is rooted in nearly one hundred years of colonial domination is correct; but the observation does not tell the whole truth. Colonialism unquestionably linked and exposed Africa to Europe, for a long time, the nerve-centre of modern

civilization, industrialization and international diplomacy. Oppressive and exploitative as it was, colonialism was also, for the Africans, potentially a functional, though tedious, learning process. In addition, it was the channel of adaptation and socialization into the culture of modernization and westernization. That decolonization came sooner than expected is, in a sense, indeed a measure of the success of this learning process. The tragedy of the African situation is that African leaders have failed to maximally utilize the robust opportunity and advantage of political independence which came by in the 1960s as an instrument for effectively assuming a large measure of indigenous control over the management of their countries' affairs. To this extent, decolonization has had only a partial success. One argument, of course, is that it is naive to expect a political economy that has historically been hooked in an unequal and asymmetrical relationship to the apron-string of the metropolitan marauders for almost a century to be easily delinked after political independence. The point, however, is that there has not been a serious evidence of commitment and strategic planning on the part of most African leaders towards evolving a strategy for bringing an end, in the shortest possible time, to neo-colonial control by the departing European powers. And some of them who tried to do so were frustrated by the carefully coordinated actions of, and counter-response, by the forces of international capitalism under the full control of the Western powers.

One remarkable proposition anchored to, and indeed built around, the national liberation struggle against colonialism was that independence in one country could not be considered to have been achieved and would indeed be meaningless unless and until it was linked with the total liberation of the entire continent of Africa.³ Accepted and regarded as an article of faith, this proposition explains why decolonization and anti-colonialism had, until recently, stood on top of the foreign policy agenda of African countries and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) created by them in 1963 as an instrument for the conduct of African diplomacy *visa-vis* the rest of the world. It has been persuasively argued that preoccupation with both the political issues of decolonization and Apartheid, particularly in Africa, and the challenges and task of political order-building at home had not, for a long time, enabled most African leaders to address frontally the fundamental issues of economic growth and development at home, and of international economic cooperation and integration which the logic of the time demands in Africa and in the global system, much less to appreciate the linkage between good governance and development at home. The incremental but arguably symbolic shift in emphasis from politics to economics which began in the mid-1970s gathered enough momentum to lead to the holding in Lagos in 1980 of the first OAU Summit devoted to economic cooperation,

and subsequently to the creation by the OAU Heads of State and Government in Aixija in 1991 of an African Economic Community effective by the year 2000AD.⁴

While some progress appears to have been made in the creation and strengthening of the institutional structure for international economic cooperation among the African countries, little concrete achievement has resulted from the various capacity-building measures so far undertaken for a number of reasons. One of them is the diminishing productive capacity of the economy of virtually every country on the African continent. It is customary to explain the persistent and seemingly permanent crisis in the economy of African states by drawing attention to the hostility of the international economic system created by the Western powers at the end of World War II and supervised largely by the two Bretton Woods Institutions (the World bank and the International Monetary Fund) under the firm control of the industrialized and developed Western powers. But it will also be honest to draw attention to bad management, bad economic and social policies, neglect or agriculture, a wasteful public sector, lack of executive capacity and institutionalized corruption, which collectively, have derailed development trains in most African states, particularly by shifting the focus of economic policy activities from production to distribution of the "national cake". And, in the final analysis, the burden of external debt on many African States, oppressive as it is, would have been nothing to worry so much about if external loans and credits had been wisely invested and prudently utilized to improve the productive capacity of the economy rather than to largely finance consumption, including conspicuous consumption, as has been the case in many African countries. Generally, national economic policies in many African countries have had disastrous consequences on the conditions of the people and have created a profound respectability crisis for these countries abroad, in addition to weakening the collective capacity of African states to play, under the auspices of the OAU, a meaningful role in the conduct of global diplomacy.

The Cold War which ended in 1990 also had a tyrannical impact on Africa. It wholesomely strait-jacketed most African states into a foreign policy of non-alignment with the US-led Western camp and the USSR-dominated Eastern camp in an international system characterized by a loose bipolar structure of power. But non-alignment which, strictly speaking, has a military connotation is virtually a defence and security concept. This explains why most African states joined the Non-Aligned Movement and are playing an active role in it while remaining preponderantly economically aligned to the West.⁵

Unfortunately, the policies of bipolarity brought competitive superpower intervention into Africa and created a new but oppressive burden of insecurity for African countries as the Cold War arena was subsequently extended to the continent.

What the extension of the Cold War front to Africa achieved, but which was not in the interest of African countries, was that it was more often the competing global strategic interests of the superpowers rather than the objective local interests of the African countries that dictated superpowers' competitive moves in Africa. And this naturally should give cause for concern to the African leaders, not because they naively expect the African foreign policy of the two superpowers to be based on, and governed by, altruism but because issues and problems in Africa were routinely and instinctively viewed by both the US and the USSR from the jaundiced lenses of superpower competition and rivalry for strategic advantages in the international system as a whole.

In the post-1960 international politics in which African states, as new actors, have at best been marginally and peripherally involved, it is arguable that East-West schism paradoxically and ironically allowed the new African states, like other states in the Non-Aligned Movement, to play the West against the East and reap the alleged inherent reward and advantages of bipolarity. True enough, at the height of the Cold War, the Third World which includes Africa mattered, with the two superpowers, the USSR and the US, using their spheres of influence in Africa and in the South generally to fight their ideological battles. But the argument that Africa mattered is naively and deceitfully simplistic. With the advantage of hindsight, it has become obvious that, for Africa states, the advantages of Cold War competition were tactical and short-lived. Africa was merely being used as a pawn by both the East and the West to the detriment of its development. As a Cold War adversary to the US, the Soviet Union did little to assist in building and strengthening the economy of its African friends, while it undoubtedly concentrated assistance on strengthening the military capacity of its African friends against counter-revolutionary forces allegedly instigated by reactionary capitalist powers from the West. The collapse of the "command" economy of the Soviet Union, which precipitated the disintegration of the federation in 1991, shows clearly that it is strategically unwise for a national development planning strategy to subordinate building the country's economic capacity to enhancing its military strength. Doing so amounts, in effect, to putting the car before the horse, which was by and large what the USSR did at home and in most African states.

Unfortunately, in the international economic system in which all African countries have to operate, the major institutional actors, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the London Club and the Paris Club, are controlled and dominated by the Group of Seven industrialized and developed countries led by the United States. Coincidentally, the principal and leading leaders and donors are these same countries and private agencies and organizations within those financial

institutions. The now-defunct East-West schism made little or no dent on the capacity of the Western powers to manage and supervise the conduct of international financial and economic transactions under the rules which largely protect their interests, particularly in trade liberalization and *laissez-faire* deregulation of the national economy, as recent developments have shown. The harsh economic situation brought about by the World Bank's structural adjustment policies and invariably imposed on African countries is only one aspect of the tyranny of the Bretton Woods institutions dominated by Western capitalist powers. Another aspect of the World Bank tyranny has been succinctly summarized as follows:

In broad terms adjustment policies as laid down by the World Bank represent the Western capitalist conception of how markets and African economies should be controlled and these views are imposed on countries that have little capacity to resist, are heavily in debt to those who impose such views, are over-dependent on aid from the same sources, and consequently find they are obliged to accept World Bank prescriptions no matter what their real political instincts suggest. Furthermore, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), some of which have brought about qualified improvements, are designed to make small African economies fit into a Western conceived and controlled world economic pattern. It is a pattern, moreover whose end result must also mean greater economic penetration of African economies by external market forces over which Africa can exercise almost no real influence because, quite simply, it does not possess the economic clout to do so. This, also, is what the provision of aid has always been about.⁶

STRUCTURAL LIMITATIONS, CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS

Throughout much of their post-independence history, virtually all African states have continued to suffer from the endemic disease of political and governmental instability arising from both the problems of nation-building in ethnically and religiously differentiated societies and from the conception of politics as a zero-sum game in which the gains of one actor are exactly equal to the losses of the other actor. Regrettably, dialogue and consensus-building have been scarce commodities in the political handbags of Africa's various elites, particularly in countries under one-party dictatorship or authoritarian military rule. The spectacle of military

intervention and rule, which prominently characterizes Africa's authoritarian governance, has added another problem to the challenges which face nation-building efforts as well as the conduct of foreign policy and management of international affairs in most African countries. Quite obviously, political instability creates very serious problems for the conduct of external relations for any country. In the first place, it creates opportunity for foreign intervention in the domestic affairs of the crisis-ridden country. And there are numerous examples in Africa that drive home this contention.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, political crisis diverts much-needed urgent attention away from the crucial preoccupation with economic growth and development to the unproductive investment of valuable time and scarce resources on the resolution of the crisis, which invariably puts the actual conduct of foreign policy largely in the service of the management of the crisis rather than in the service of the advancement of the numerous interests of the nation in the international system.

In the context of the New World Order which has virtually replaced the Cold War since 1990 and has, in fact, creditably extolled, venerated and enthroned democratic governance, market-economy doctrine and respect for human rights as its central guiding values, authoritarian military rule emerging from and associated with praetorian political intervention has become anachronistic. Some have even plausibly argued that there is now an emerging right to democratic governance.⁷ Democratic transition to civil rule has, therefore, become necessary, essential and imperative for those African countries ruled by the military if a painless adjustment and adaptation to the political culture and climate of the New World Order is to be effected, as it should.⁸ Admittedly, the transformation to democratic governance has made some progress in many African states in the last four years, with the replacement of a one-party system by multi-party competition and the conduct of elections supervised, observed or closely monitored by foreign personnel and institutions.⁹ However, in some countries, including Nigeria, where the military does not appear to be in a hurry to transfer political power to elected civilians and has, in fact, aborted the half-heartedly planned transition to democratic governance, the foreign policy implications of such reluctance or refusal to transit to democratic civil rule are now transparently clear.

In Nigeria, for example, the reaction and response of the major Western powers and international financial institutions, particularly the World Bank and the IMF which they control, have been not only to impose limited sanctions targeted at the military and selected individuals who have been the beneficiaries of continuing military rule but also to use their considerable influence in the two Bretton Woods institutions to deny loans and credits to military or authoritarian regimes and refuse

to give them a clean bill of economic health usually demanded by both the London Club of credit commercial banks and the Paris Club of Western creditor countries as a condition for debt rescheduling and relief.¹⁰

Like democratic governance, the issue of human rights has moved to the top of the international agenda and, for many Western powers, satisfactory progress in the observance and actualization of human rights protection has become an essential condition necessary for the maintenance and sustenance of good relations between them and other countries, particularly in Eastern Europe and Third World countries." Human rights protection is an issue which policy makers in Africa have to address, for there is absolutely no doubt that unless they actualize respect and protection for human rights in the conduct of their domestic affairs, they run the risk of international hostility in the conduct of their external relations. It is, of course, on record that there has been in existence since 1985 an African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights drawn up in Banjul, The Gambia, under which the OAU members commit themselves to protection of human rights.¹² But it is arguable that the new concern of human rights, which flows from the armoury of liberal democratic values which are not only highlighted and venerated by the New World Order, but are also shielded protectively by virtually all the Western powers that matter a great deal, is likely to help to strengthen the commitment by the African states to the obligations already undertaken by them under the Banjul Charter. Empirically demonstrating respect and support for and actualizing observance of human rights and fundamental freedom have become, as they should, an absolutely necessary strategy on the public policy agenda of any country that treasures having the good ears of and healthy relations with the most influential powers in the New World Order. This is particularly so for countries in Africa and the rest of the Third World that are excessively dependent on the major powers, and have little or no clout of their own not only for the conduct and management of their external relations but also for processing and responding to the demands of their citizens at home.

As one would expect, African states, in the conduct of their external relations, have not, like the older members of the international system, relied solely on the historical tradition of bilateralism. They have supplemented bilateral with multilateral channels in the conduct of their international diplomacy. They have, therefore, not only become members of the major international organizations, particularly the United Nations, but have also cooperated to establish the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which is perhaps the most prestigious and inclusive organization for the supervision, management and conduct of African diplomacy.¹³ This capacity-building instrument for the management of the continental order, despite all its weaknesses, has, over the years, had a sobering influence and therapeutic effect on

the management of some intra- and inter-state conflicts, but has proved hardly relevant to the search for solutions to other conflicts on the continent. And it is doubtful if OAU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, established in 1993, would significantly improve the regional organization's record in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, hi any case, despite its financial weakness resulting from non-payment of annual dues by many members, the OAU remains a rallying point for African states. And having been so perceived and evaluated, it is, quite understandably, being politically supported by the UN-based international community and its most prominent member-states. There is, of course, no doubt about the need to strengthen the institutional structure of the OAU by, for instance, expressly endowing its Secretary-General with political power similar to that enjoyed by the UN Secretary-General under Article 99 of the UN Charter. This calls for an amendment of OAU's Addis Ababa Charter which is, in any case, overdue if the continental organization is to meet the more pressing challenges of conflict prevention and resolution.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OF AFRICAN DIPLOMACY

At the threshold of the twenty-first century, there has been a most-welcome transformation in the structure and character of the post-1945 international system into which 50 of the 53 African nation-states were born as sovereign states in the 1960s. The Cold War came to an end in 1989, and, with the peaceful disintegration of the Soviet Union, the reassertion of real independence from Moscow by the countries of Eastern Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent reunification of Germany, the growing expansion of democratic space and culture, the gradually continuing globalization of the frontiers of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the increasing world-wide acceptance of the market-economy doctrine and *laissez-faire* deregulation of the economy, there has now emerged what is increasingly being accepted and referred to as a New World Order.¹⁴ Some have, of course, argued that the New World Order does not represent a fundamental shift away from the old political order and that it still has "an old world odor" (sic).¹⁵ In any case, the New World Order has continued to stabilize itself. Perhaps, the most important beneficiaries of this sudden but most welcome development have been the United Nations and the United States.¹⁶ Foreign policy makers in African states must take cognizance of this development and fashion out a foreign policy that is congruently adaptive and responsive to this reality in contemporary international life.

Whether one conceives of the structure of the New World Order on the eve of the twenty-first century as one of unipolarity or multipolarity, the basic facts on the ground are that bipolarity has ceased to exist and the US remains the only superpower, not in a hierarchically structured international system, *a la* Roman Empire, but in a world order in which at least six other powers (Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, China and Japan) have components of national power which confer on them respectability as critical and influential actors in the management of the global order.¹⁷ There is, of course, no doubt that with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the loss of its superpower status and the creeping but incremental and universal acceptance of key economic and political values that advance the actualization of the global village, the carefully laid out strategic plans both by Moscow and Washington for security associated with the Cold War overhang have become anachronistic and require a new re-thinking. Third World countries, including those in Africa, are potential beneficiaries of the vastly improved climate of global security which, for instance, by inducing and precipitating less investment of resources on arms and armaments by the major powers, creates necessary conditions for the release of resources and the conversion of some of those resources so released for use for social and economic development purposes in the less developed countries in Africa in particular and in the Third World in general.

The reinvigoration of the United Nations which either resulted from the collapse of the Cold War or has accompanied the emergence of the New World Order is a most welcome development for all nations, including those in Africa whose leaders have placed the world organization at the centre of their multilateral diplomacy. There are signals that the political paralysis which historically characterized the operation of the Security Council through the frequent use of "open" and "hidden" veto power by the permanent members of the Council has come to an end. The rapprochement between Russia and the US which facilitated and instigated the ending of the Cold War, and subsequently benefitted from it, has definitely laid the ground for consensus-building as a way of reaching agreement in the Security Council, in the existing circumstances, the goal of the foreign policy of African states should be to work towards institutionalizing the processes of consensus-building among not just the five permanent but all the fifteen members of the Security Council. But, as it has been well said, Africa has to clearly define the way in which it will have to cooperate with the UN in the New World Order and avoid letting the rest of the world decide what it thinks is best for Africa. As the influential weekly news magazine, *West Africa*, rightly suggested, "what Africa should try to ensure is that the new UN system is not used selectively in controlling developing countries. If this happens the Security Council may end up becoming a rubber stamping body

with countries singled out (rightly or wrongly) for reprimand and retribution by the powerful nations and subjected to international action. The powerless countries will thus be left without genuine and effective recourse to justice".¹⁸

As mankind moves towards the twenty-first century, the foreign policy of African states should continue to place the United Nations at the centre of its multilateral diplomacy, while recognizing both its limitations as a centre for harmonizing the different and often conflicting interests of its members and coming to terms with both the differential capacity of its members to influence its direction and policy outcomes and the fact that the world organization cannot be stronger than its members are collectively willing to allow it to be. It is in this context that the first step in arresting the increasing marginalization of Africa can be taken by the African states themselves by working hard to ensure representation of Africa on the permanent membership of the Security Council whenever expansion of membership to reflect wider representation and the crucially relevant post-1945 changes in the global system takes place.¹⁹

The point had earlier been made that the US is the only remaining superpower - a superpower *sui generis* that has, particularly since 1990, demonstrated great capacity to provide effective leadership, through the United Nations, to the international community. Of course, any state could decide to agree or disagree with the United States; but no state can ignore Washington. For Africa and other Third World countries in particular, there has to be a clear recognition of the fact that the political, economic, financial and military tentacles of the United States are deep and are spread very widely all over the world, and reach many crucial international financial institutions whose activities are of great importance and consequences to them as less developed countries (LDCs). This observation does not necessarily carry with it the implication that African states have no choice but to routinely and mechanically know-tow to the wishes and dictates of the American government in the conduct of their foreign policy. What it suggests is that prudence demands that foreign policy should tactically adjust and adapt to the realities on the international arena which a state, as an actor, may not necessarily like but has to live with and accommodate. More importantly, all states so disadvantaged by the existing realities must collaborate to effect appropriate changes, bearing in mind that, in an interdependent global village that stands at the threshold of the twenty-first century, an important task of foreign policy is strategic planning aimed at shaping the character of the international arena and removing hindrances that excessively constrain the conduct of one's own foreign policy.

Since the disappearance of structural bipolarity, it is arguable that the policy of non-alignment, embarked upon by many small states, particularly in the Third World, and pursued with vigour in response to the prevailing East-West schism, has now

become anachronistic, particularly with the subsequent folding-up of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact, the fundamental transformation in the character, nature and *raison d'être* of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the reapproachment between Russia and the United States. The logical response, which flows from this argument, is for the African states to withdraw from the Non-Aligned Movement, call for its dissolution, remove non-alignment as a fundamental and guiding principle of their foreign policy and accordingly delete the provision of non-alignment in the OAU Charter. The argument in support of the charge of anachronism against non-alignment as a policy and as a movement is certainly neither irrefutable nor irrebuttable. The title "Non- Aligned Movement" may have become anachronistic and an inappropriate nomenclature; but there is hardly any doubt that the forum which the Movement has, for many years, provided for many states to exchange views and hopefully reach a common understanding and agreement on issues of common interest to them remains relevant and indeed cries for preservation, particularly when it is realized that international institution-building for the regularization of contacts among nation-states as actors in world affairs remains somehow underdeveloped on the eve of the twenty-first century.²⁰ Capacity-building for the conduct of multilateral diplomacy certainly requires that greater attention be given to institutionalized process of consultation, discussion and negotiation among actors in the search for solutions to common problems. African leaders must, therefore, continue to support the creation of new and the strengthening of already existing international machinery for the conduct of the increasingly complex multilateral diplomacy.

The collapse and disappearance of bipolarity and the reactions of the Western powers to the changes and developments flowing from it in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have raised for the African countries the prospects of increasing abandonment and deepening neglect by the Group of Seven industrialized and developed countries that have started pumping financial and technical assistance to the countries of Eastern Europe and the defunct Soviet Union in order to expedite and stabilize the process of transition in those countries to the market-economy regime, *laissez-faire* deregulation of the economy and democratic governance under a competitive multiparty politics. The fear entertained by the African leaders that the well-established historic neglect of Africa by the Western powers stands the risk of further exacerbation is well-founded, just as there is some compelling logic in the reaction and response of the Western powers to the new situation in Europe, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. For African countries, the lesson that needs to be learnt and internalized is that the newly heightened competition for aid and investment requires that greater attention be paid to the creation of a better political and economic climate at home for attracting foreign aid and investment.

The greatest challenge that collectively faces all African states and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) is how to arrest and reverse the marginalization of Africa in the supervision, regulation and management of the world order. Essentially, a function and an indication of weakness, underdevelopment and dependence, Africa's marginalization can and must be addressed on two fronts. Individually, each African state has to begin this task by putting its house in order. The goal of political order building in a heterogeneous society of different ethnic and religious configuration that exists in most African countries is stability and good governance. Political stability and democratic governance provide the structure and foundation upon which a lasting and just peace can be built. Undoubtedly, the best guarantee of peace is economic security and development; but unless there is domestic peace, development (both economic and social) will be virtually impossible. Ultimately, probably the most important indicator of the national power of any country is the strength of its economy. Thus, one of the greatest challenges facing African leaders is to move the economy, over which they preside, away from the deepening crisis which has resulted from bad economic policies, poor management, wasteful public expenditures, institutionalized corruption and insufficient attention to agriculture. The need to improve and expand the productive capacity of the African economy has become an overwhelmingly imperative. For, with a strong economy, African states are bound to strengthen their individual capacity for playing a more influential role in international affairs and, collectively, begin the challenging but herculean task of arresting the continent's continuing peripheralization in the management of the world order.

Arresting and reversing Africa's marginalization certainly also require collective action and strategy by African states. Since the end of World War II, there have been indications that the age in which individual nations act alone is, by and large, virtually over. Its anachronism has become pronounced, particularly since the late 1950s when the movement towards political and economic integration gathered momentum in Europe and had a spill over and demonstration effect on other areas of the globe. There is now clearly no doubt that cooperative integration, by extending the territorial focus of loyalty for the performance of specific functions, improves the collective capacity of the cooperating national units to realize their common interests. In varying degrees, it is this type of reasoning that informed the call by Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah, for the establishment of a continental government for Africa in the early 1960s; the search for an appropriate institutional framework for economic cooperation in West Africa that led to the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 and the decision of the African Heads of State and Government, under the OAU auspices,

to approve, in 1991, the Treaty for the creation of an African Economic Community with effect from the year 2000.

Experience, of course, has shown conclusively that it is not enough to establish an institutional structure for multilateral economic cooperation and collaboration; important as this may be as a starting point, it is more crucial to develop the political will to act in good faith and carry out the obligations which membership in the cooperative effort imposes. African states cannot act individually and succeed in arresting the continent's marginalization; but collectively through political collaboration and economic integration, there is much they could do at least in stalling and ultimately reversing marginalization. Bearing in mind the more recent lesson of history that trends towards integration are irreversible, the earlier African states more seriously and energetically address themselves to it, the better for the continent, as it marches towards the twenty-first century, determined not only to remove at last the "periphery-dress" it had for a long time worn but also to play a more influential role in the near-centre of international politics for the management of the world order. The task of so-doing is certainly herculean; but, as the Chinese say, the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND PRESCRIPTIONS

In Africa, foreign policy remains virtually an elite activity, which is hardly surprising. But as the democratic space expands on the continent and the virtue and values of competition deepen their roots in the new culture of democratic governance, democratic responsibility, public accountability and transparency, a wider spectrum of African citizens will come to understand the reciprocal linkage between what their leaders do domestically and externally in the conduct of public affairs. The mutual interdependence involved in the conduct and management of both domestic and external affairs would seem to compel the conclusion that, in the final analysis, at the heart of the politics of foreign affairs, as it is of domestic affairs, is the bread-and-butter issue of the welfare of the citizens. It flows from this premise that foreign policy has become too important to be left in the hands of only a small group of individuals and as an in-house game that only a few play, without popular participation and involvement, democratic responsibility, legislative control and glass-house transparency. If the strong wind of democratization that has been blowing in this last decade of the twentieth century successfully stabilizes itself in every African country as the continent transits into the twenty-first century, a domestic environment conducive and amenable to the conduct of a democratically responsible and responsive foreign policy would certainly emerge and not only make possible a

painless transition of Africa into the New World Order already emerging on the eve of a new century but also, and perhaps more importantly, help to improve the effectiveness of foreign policy conducted by African states.

Given the mutual and reciprocal interdependence between good and democratic governance, and economic and social development and the positive bearing which the achievement of economic security and development at home has on the conduct of foreign policy, particularly as a capacity-building measure for engineering and compelling international respect for a country's international behaviour, it is important for African states to pay great attention to the effective and efficient management of their national economy. It is on the foundation of a self-reliant and resilient economy that a meaningful, dynamic and virile foreign policy can be conducted and implemented. It is also on the same strong economic foundation that a lasting edifice of peace and stability can be erected and sustained.

What, therefore, are the prescriptions for an effective conduct and management of Africa's external relations as mankind moves towards the twenty-first century? A political consultant's prescriptions must include, and rate very highly, the following therapy:

- i. complete military disengagement from governance and immediate transition to good and democratic governance;
- ii. responsible, efficient, effective and honest management of the national economy, with greater attention paid to production and self-reliance;
- iii. strengthening the existing national and international institutional machinery for the conduct of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and ensuring linkages between them;
- iv. investing less on arms and armament not only because, in an increasingly democratizing international environment that is emerging at the threshold of the twenty-first century, the instruments of foreign policy expected to be more often used are dialogue and negotiation rather than force, but also, because the strength of the economy has virtually become a more important and critical index of the national power of any state than military might;
- v. understanding and appreciating both the strength and inherent weakness of the United Nations, supporting the organization and being fully involved in shaping its "new" role in the post-Cold War world order, conscious of the fact that it represents and remains the best instrument mankind ever invented for the maintenance of peace and management of world order and security;

- vi. ensuring that foreign policy remains a servant of, and subordinate to, domestic policy but never becomes its master, notwithstanding the interdependent linkages between them; and
- vii. since Africa's marginalization in the supervision and management of the world order is a function of weakness, excessive dependence, underdevelopment and abject poverty, the tough battle to arrest, and hopefully reverse, marginalization must begin at home in every African country, with each country demonstrating commitment and determination to put its house in order, strengthen its economic base and remain politically united.

ENDNOTES

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