

The African Style of Foreign Policy: Instruments of Diplomacy

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Introduction

The two terms, "foreign policy" and "diplomacy" are either misunderstood or even often misused in the science of international relations. There is also the tendency to employ both terms as synonyms. For instance, when we say: "the American diplomacy proved an utter disillusionment in China, or that British diplomacy of 'divide and rule' proved most disastrous for India", it is not the success or failure of diplomacy but of foreign policy of a given state; this is the more significant factor.

Unlike other foreign policy means, diplomacy is the official international activity of the state and its agencies. The function of diplomacy is to peacefully defend the national rights and interests of the state abroad and through negotiation, to ensure peaceful settlements of international and/or global problems and disputes. Whereas foreign policy is the "legislative" aspect of the problem of inter-state relations, diplomacy is its executive aspect. In this regard, foreign policy is the "general course pursued by a state in international affairs". Diplomacy is therefore an "integral organic part of foreign policy ... a totality of the practical measures, forms, means and methods used to implement foreign policy".¹

In a democratic state, whereas the matters of foreign policy are decided by the cabinet with the approval of the legislators, they are executed by the civil servants who make up the "diplomatic service", or individually called "diplomats". Theoretically, the diplomat is supposed to be non-partisan in states with multi-party democracy. As observed by H. Nicolson, the duty of the diplomat is

...to place his (her) experience at the disposal of the Government in power, to tender advice, and if need be, to raise objections. Yet, if that advice be disregarded by the Minister as representative of the sovereign people, it is the duty and function of the civil service to execute his instructions without further question.²

Writing on Ambassadors, K.M. Panikar observed:

Ambassadors have a double function. They are in a country to translate and give effect to the policies of the Home Government with the policies, attitudes of mind and the general conditions of the countries to which they are accredited.³

Similarly, "diplomacy, used in relation to international policies, is the art of forwarding one's interests in relation to other countries".⁴

Thus, the role of diplomacy is especially crucial for Third World countries. Virtually devoid of other tools of wielding influence in the global arena, most post-colonial states use the instruments of diplomacy to obtain their foreign policy objectives. This is for the simple reason that these states are weak in many respects: militarily, economically and even politically, and are therefore vulnerable to the dictates of the

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big powers. The majority of these weak states are found in Africa. Therefore, in the entire Third World, it is the African states that use most, the instruments of diplomacy to attain their foreign policy objectives; hence the "African Style of Foreign Policy" which this paper seeks to analyze.

Brief History of African Diplomacy

In terms of colonialism and the regaining of their independence, it is plausible to suggest that African countries are perhaps the youngest in the world. Historically, only Ethiopia, Liberia and Egypt can be said to have a long diplomatic experience in as far as modern diplomacy is concerned. The other countries' (Ghana being in the vanguard with 31 years of contemporary diplomatic experience) contemporary diplomatic history ranges from roughly 28 years to only ten years—with the regaining of Zimbabwe's independence in March 1980. This is in as far as contemporary diplomatic history of Africa is concerned.

This does not, however, mean that diplomacy in Africa started with the European colonization of Africa in the nineteenth century as apologists of colonialism would like us to believe. It can only be said that there has been total lack of studies in this field, as the 1973 research symposium in Bristol noted; that African diplomacy leads the "investigator onward into regions of inquiry which, until comparatively recently, were as little trodden by scholars as was the African continent by European explorers before the nineteenth century".⁵

It can also be argued that diplomacy and diplomats are not new to Africa. Their history can be traced to ancient Egypt and Carthage.⁶ And in pre-colonial Africa, there existed independent states which had to tackle international issues of war and peace; they had also to regulate political and economic relations with neighbouring and other states.⁷ For instance, in 1824, the king of Benin and his vassal from Anim (present city of Lagos), were among the first to recognize the independence of Brazil after it had liberated itself from Portuguese colonialism. They deposited their instruments of recognition through a special envoy. Thereafter, the ties between African states and Brazil gradually developed and grew stronger until they were ruptured by the European colonization of Africa.

Similarly, diplomatic relations between African and the United States date "from the very dawn of American independence".⁸ The Moroccan Sultan corresponded with George Washington after the latter became the first president of the US in 1776. This diplomatic correspondence culminated in the American - Moroccan treaty of 1787, a treaty that has ever since been in force. The Tunisian Government also concluded a similar treaty with the US in 1797. Liberian diplomatic relations with the US go back to 1816. Sultan Seyyid Said of Zanzibar also concluded treaties with the US in 1837. And at the beginning of this century, in 1903, the US established diplomatic relations with Ethiopia.⁹

During the colonial period, African states and peoples continued their participation in international life and practice: their national liberation movements became an integral component of the world revolutionary process.¹⁰ Encouraged by the Great October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, African people began turning from objects into subjects of international law even before the liquidation of colonialism in the continent. Their move in this direction was accelerated by the victory of the anti-Nazi coalition during World War II, the war which thousands of Africans participated in.¹¹

It was after the war that African national liberation organizations remarkably stepped up their international activities. For instance, in October 1945, their leaders held a Pan-African Congress in Manchester, the sixth of such conference. They also addressed the United Nations as petitioners on several occasions. And of course they participated in the historic Bandung conference in 1955.¹² During the "internal self-government" period, some African states established bureaus for Muslim pilgrims in Sudan and Saudi Arabia, consular offices in Gabon and Fernando Poo, a trade mission with consular functions in London and a communications mission in Washington.¹³

In essence, the history of African diplomacy confirms that the post-colonial states in Africa cannot be divorced from their past; neither can they from international relations as a whole. More active involvement of African peoples in modern international diplomacy was facilitated by the collapse of colonialism. After regaining their independence, African states had the opportunity to pursue independent foreign policy. They also had the opportunity to choose the major objectives, principles and means of realizing them.¹⁴ It will be observed that their choice was to a great extent identical with that of other newly independent states of the Third World. There are, however, differences between the foreign policy of African states and the foreign policies of the Western capitalist powers and the socialist bloc-countries.

Salient Attributes of African Diplomacy

The salient objectives of African foreign policy can be summarized thus: efforts calculated at creating international conditions most suitable for the eradication of colonialism in those parts of the continent that are not yet free, i.e. Namibia and South Africa itself strengthening the political independence of post-colonial states, efforts aimed at economic emancipation coupled with accelerating socio-economic development, and attaining total equality for African states in world affairs. These objectives constitute part of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Charter.¹⁵ Continentally, the OAU is the major forum where the common problems of the African states are tackled. Globally, OAU member-states work in close collaboration with other Third World countries (through the non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the "Group of 77" and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries) in seeking solutions to the problems these states face in common, especially the North-South economic problems of trade, transfer of technology, commodity prices and terms and conditions of international aid.¹⁶

Certain foreign policy objectives and principles of African states, i.e. that of liberating Africa from colonialism and racism, permit the use of both peaceful means and force.¹⁷ This, however, has been only in theory, because over a quarter of a century of independence, the continent has witnessed armed conflicts and the threat and use of force. Nevertheless, in virtually all cases, African states have been to resort to armed struggle for purposes of liberating themselves against imperialist aggression, and racist provocations instigated by imperialist and reactionary forces, and mercenary attacks.

Suffice it to note that armed conflicts between neighbouring African states, deriving from the partition and repartition of Africa during the days of colonialism and from imperialist instigation are normally short-lived. Perhaps the only exception

was the Tanzania-Uganda war in 1978-1979.¹⁸ Otherwise up to 1977 there had been brief armed conflicts which often ended not in victory in the battle field, but in diplomatic compromise at the OAU negotiating table. Examples of such negotiations are too numerous to be covered in this paper. It is, however, worthy noting that the total duration of fighting in all inter-African conflicts is rather insignificant compared to the overall duration of peaceful foreign policy conducted by the post-colonial African states.¹⁹

The record of African foreign policy demonstrates that most African states, guided by OAU principles, have oriented their foreign policy toward renouncing aggression and the use of force, toward peaceful coexistence with their neighbours and other countries of the world and peaceful settlement of disputes.²⁰ This position was well articulated by Kwame Nkrumah, two years before the formation of the OAU. He stated:

We in Africa have a vested interest in peace ... There must be an enduring peace in the world to enable us the new emergent countries to consolidate our hard won freedom.²¹

From the outset, therefore, independent African states opted for peaceful means of foreign policy. Thus, an analysis of the role of diplomacy as an African Foreign policy instrument involves, among other things, an understanding of the forms of revolutionary struggle which V.I. Lenin propounded. According to him,

Marxism demands an absolutely *historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle ...²²

In the case of most of the new states of Africa, diplomacy has been the cardinal form of struggle on the international arena. Why? Because it is almost the only means of safeguarding their independence, and the only means of developing and fostering political relations with their neighbours and other countries beyond. Additionally, almost half of African states are categorized as being among the least developed in the world economically. Because of this, they cannot use other foreign policy means effectively. They are therefore left with diplomacy only which they try to use as widely as possible. There have been only a few cases of armed force.²³ And economic pressure in inter-African relations has been rather minimal.²⁴ Thus, the majority of African states use diplomacy as the most feasible and acceptable means of realizing their foreign policy interests. Moreover, domestically, diplomacy proves efficient in shaping the political sentiment of the people.

There are some additional significant factors that have made African states opt for diplomacy as the leading foreign policy means: the world socialist community, the world working-class and the national liberation movements. The development of African foreign policy has thus been greatly influenced by socialist foreign policy. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) program notes that socialist foreign policy

contrasts imperialism with a *new type of international relations*. The foreign policy of the socialist countries, which is based on the principles of peace, the equality and self-determination of nations, and respect for the independence and sovereignty of all coun-

tries, as well as the fair, humane methods of socialist diplomacy are exerting a growing influence on the world situation.²⁵

The intricate process of ensuring collective international action by the multiplicity of dissimilar post-colonial African States found its practical expression in the OAU. The formation of this international organization, the largest regional grouping in the world (in terms of constituent members) was in the eyes of the government of the Soviet Union.

One of the greatest political achievements of African peoples Having united, for the first time in history on a continent-wide scale, African countries gained the opportunity to jointly solve the problems they face and jointly oppose world imperialism and neo-colonialism.²⁶

For the last quarter of a century of the OAU's existence, this opportunity has been realized through coordination of African diplomatic efforts in accordance with Article II of the OAU Charter both at the organization's fora and in the African groups at the United Nations and in other international organizations.²⁷

Thus, it is possible to speak not only of the diplomacy of individual African countries, but of African diplomacy simultaneously, i.e. joint diplomatic activity of OAU member-states in solving certain foreign policy tasks common to them in the struggle against both external and internal forces of destabilization.²⁸ It must however be observed that the expression "African diplomacy" is both relative and conventional. We apply it here only in reference to the socio-political differentiation of post-colonial African states, their salient interests and disagreements and individual member-state's foreign policy and diplomacy.

The term therefore implies collective efforts of OAU member-states, a new brand of diplomacy pursued by African states, echoing similar features in the diplomacy of the NAM more generally.²⁹ In other words, we are anatomizing the diplomacy of OAU member-states, although aware that present-day Africa does not represent a "diplomatic monolith". In other words, multilateralism in African foreign policy has its own problems. For instance, although all OAU member-states share the aspiration of developing their economies rapidly.

...in part at least—by importing or inviting foreign capital and technology... there is a wide divergence of views on whether, for example, transnational corporations (TNCs) are the appropriate agencies for effecting the transference of such capital and technology. Thus, whereas socialist Tanzania is suspicious of the activities of TNCs, "free enterprise", Ivory Coast pursues an open-door policy with regard to those corporations.³⁰

Thus, in their approach to specific international issues, OAU member-states are divided into two or three camps, each camp trying to pursue its own diplomatic course. These camps are divided by the actual attitude to their major foreign policy purposes and principles and by the degree of their radical and consistent implementation.

The acceleration of social differentiation as national liberation revolutions evolve into national-democratic ones determines the diplomatic activity of a given state. This activity also reflects the character of development — the clash between the two socio-economic systems — socialism versus capitalism. This ideological division is increasingly being noticed in African foreign policy too. It is true that

socialist-oriented member states of the OAU are now in the vanguard for progressive, anti-imperialist forces in Africa. They are, however, challenged by the capitalist-oriented member-states who tend to appease the imperialists and the former act as the latter's resident allies in the continent. The third camp comprises what can be called the centrists — those member-states whose diplomatic tactics is to follow others.³¹

Since Africa is still going through a period of transition, social and foreign policy differentiations are still far from being identical. Social differentiations are not yet traceable in foreign policy and diplomacy. Moreover, there is an increasing role of the personality in shaping foreign policy and diplomacy and because of the frequent military coups, there is every likelihood that a change in the leadership will involve a change especially in diplomacy.³² Or as another source puts it:

...The character of the ruling party, the leaders' personal likes and dislikes ... all this may and does lead to decisions often startling from the point of view of a strict scientific analysis.³³

Thus, it would be an oversimplification to demarcate African states into politically stable groups and simultaneously label one as total progressive and the other as totally reactionary. This is because such demarcation is artificial, relative and indeed uncertain. This is for the reason that the general content and trend of a country's diplomacy can change even with relation to one and the same question. So the existence of states with progressive regimes

is no reason to list all other developing countries as 'reactionary'... The imperatives of the national liberation struggle influence the orientation of most of the former colonial countries all the same, though to varying degrees.³⁴

From the point of view of International politics, the camp of progressive African states consists not only of those states with revolutionary — democratic parties and socialist tendencies; it is much wider particularly in matters which impinge on the independence of Namibia and the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. In such matters, even the regime of President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya, with all its capitalistic tendencies often takes firm stand in favour of the majority Africans in Namibia and Azania.

It can therefore be deduced that despite the social, economic, ideological, political and other differences among post-colonial African states, there remains the foundation of solidarity among them. This solidarity is realized because of their past struggles for independence, their common historical destiny, similar development problems and similar foreign policy interests. The quarter of a century of OAU experience demonstrates the organization's vitality despite the fact that it lacks a uniform class basis, and it is not a supranational body; it is an interstate entity and consists of heterogeneous states which often conflict with one another. Essentially, the joint African diplomacy of OAU member-states has emerged in the global arena as a political force to reckon with, despite all its contradictions. In the words of Lenin, such conflicting historical developments are "patchwork reality which we cannot cast aside ... however inelegant it may be ... We cannot refuse to recognize what actually exists; it will itself compel use to recognize it".³⁵

"African Unity" and the Joint Diplomacy of the OAU

In the early years of African independence it was common in the metropolitan countries to write about Africa's "false start".³⁶ This claim was made for the economic and political activities, as well as the diplomacy of African states. It is, however, questionable whether really the contemporary history of African diplomacy had a "false" start. Such labels are unrealistic and are not driven "from concrete realities," but "from abstract postulates."³⁷ It is from this that we acknowledge the successful development process of African diplomacy. This does not mean that African diplomacy is devoid of problems; indeed, it encounters a multiplicity of difficulties – difficulties which emanate from the socio-economic, political and ideological conditions in the continent and from the distinctive features of today's system of international relations.

From the outset, African states carefully chose their major foreign policy goals and the diplomatic tactics, forms and methods to achieve them. We contend that they have made an important achievement in these directions which include: the development and strengthening of African unity; efforts to ensure equality and self-determination in the continent; and non-alignment. We do not intend to go into the details of what African unity means or should mean. Indeed, there are problems in trying to define African Unity much as "the problem of African Unity" itself has engaged the thinking of many scholars³⁸ concerned with African international relations. For our part, the acknowledgement of success is the strengthening of African anti-imperialist unity within the OAU. Despite the forces of destabilization emanating from especially the Western powers, African states regard this unity not as an end in itself; they regard it as a means for accomplishing important economic and political objectives. They do this by adopting common diplomatic positions and joint diplomatic action in African groups at the UN and in other international organizations.

Thus, the OAU and African groups function as conventional bodies that coordinate African foreign policy and diplomacy. Africa UN diplomacy is carried out in consistence with the principles enunciated in the UN charter itself. As such, to facilitate speedy attainment of their objectives, African states developed the tactic of coalition building within the framework of the system of the UN.³⁹

We can therefore assert that the OAU had won world-wide recognition as an instrument of peace in international relations. Indeed, it is the only regional grouping in the world empowered by the UN to act as a body that tries to maintain peace and security in its region. Eversince 1964 when the Security Council adopted a resolution asking the OAU to assist in the settlement of the Congo crisis, the UN has repeatedly recognized the OAU's right to search for "African solutions to African problems".⁴⁰

OAU diplomatic activities in the UN involve coordination of common interests of African states, with the bid to protecting these interests in sessions of the UN General Assembly. Sessions of the OAU appoint special representatives for raising important questions that affect African people and for securing support for African decisions and documents. OAU sessions also nominate African candidates for top UN posts. Thus, the UN has recognized the OAU and extended the status of a permanent observer to it.⁴¹

In these OAU diplomatic activities, African unity earns strong political support

from the world's anti-imperialist forms, especially the Soviet Union and the entire socialist power bloc. Such support, however, does not guarantee total success for OAU diplomacy. In the very first instance, the formation of the continent body was the result of a compromise among the founding fathers. As such, its decisions, statements and activities are also premised upon compromise. To this can be added that the OAU is not a supranational body whose charter has no provision for effective implementation of resolutions. Neither does its charter have provisions for disciplinary measures to be taken on member-states who do not comply and its resolutions. In fact H.M. Basner made a realistic assessment of the OAU Charter and of the achievements of the May 1963 Addis Ababa Summit in the following words:

Charter or Covenant agreement or oath of unity, the document signed at Addis Ababa is a piece of paper, no matter how sacred its contents, how solemn and sincere the intentions of its signatories. Thirty-one signatories on a piece of paper cannot unite a continent of 250 million people. The inspiration and organization means provided by the document will become a reality only if the masses of Africa are mobilized into action.⁴²

Indeed, at Addis Ababa, the radical states of the Casablanca group even failed to convince the majority who belonged to the moderate Monrovia group of the urgent need for immediate political union of Africa. Nkrumah's plea of "unite or perish" was not closely adhered to. Instead, what emerged was a loose organization and some limited forms of cooperation, and the general desire was to protect and preserve national sovereignty.

It is true that the OAU is an instrument for achieving African Unity. However, it is not only constitutionally but also structurally defective. The goals as listed in the charter are inconsistent with each other, and the principles are not in harmony with the declared objectives. Similarly, the Cardinal organs of the continental body—the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers, the General Secretariat, the Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration and the specialized Commissions either lack adequate powers or are inappropriately structured.⁴³ Additionally, their powers and functions are not all that well distributed to lessen jurisdictional disputes; and the institutions are elitist both in structure and orientation. Indeed, among the main problems of the OAU are: lack of funds, inadequate number of skilled manpower, the dependence of its member-states on external powers and ideological and other divisions among its members.⁴⁴

Due to these and related problems, the adoption of common diplomatic position on critical international issues and the adoption of agreed resolutions in the OAU are in most cases the result of heated debate. Contradictions are especially glaring between socialist and capitalist oriented states. At times pro-imperialist regimes ostentatiously oppose most of the other member-states to the detriment of both the entire continent and their own national interests.

Ironically, the overall course toward greater OAU unity and joint basis in African diplomacy is maintained by some of the principles of the charter we have just described as being defective: principles of inter-African relations as sovereign states, equal cooperation of member-states, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, condemnation of subversive activity, mutual respect for the existing borders and territorial integrity of member-states, non use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes. Any departure from these generally accepted principles by member-states upsets African unity and weakens the effectiveness of the joint dip-

lomaticy of the OAU.

Since African unity is still a process, one way of effecting such unity is for the OAU Charter to be revised. The style of functioning of the OAU also has to be transformed, because,

To wait for the time when there are no local differences, suspicions and hostilities, is to wait for ever. Like mindedness even on major economic and social questions among all African states is not likely to be achieved even after unity ... If we wait for that common approach, then Africa will never be united. We have to accept our differences and accommodate them. There is no other way.⁴⁵

Thus, under the compromise approach to OAU solidarity, its common diplomacy alternates. And although there are in most cases vacillations and sharp differences in the Pan-African body, eventually a position acceptable to virtually all members evolves and stabilizes. We can therefore observe that a typical feature of OAU diplomacy is the relative stability of its major trend. This makes it possible to forecast African diplomacy in today's international relations.

Suffice it to emphasize that all-African anti-imperialist unity of the OAU underwent yet another test of its strength between 1970 and 1982. Developments in that period confirm L.I. Brezhnev's observation in 1978 that the "imperialist forces and their accomplices in Africa are now placing their main hopes on undermining the unity of African countries".⁴⁶ Under the pretext of preventing a "second Angola" they rallied African "moderates" to the struggle against socialist-oriented member-states, thereby sparking off dangerous conflicts. Cases of such conflicts include the still unresolved Western Sahara issue, the Somalia-Ethiopia war of 1977-1978, the Chadian civil war and the anti-Qaddafi campaigns that nearly wrecked the OAU in 1982.⁴⁷

Responding to these imperialist-instigated conflicts, the socialist-oriented member-states closed their ranks and strengthened coordination of their action. Thus, today the struggle is between advocates of stronger anti-imperialist solidarity of non-alignment and socialist-oriented member-states and proponents of Africa's "equi-distance" from blocs.⁴⁸

With this struggle going on as can be reiterated, certain changes in the OAU Charter and in the organizational forms of African diplomacy will have to be made to ensure the smooth development of African unity and joint diplomacy of the OAU. The path of Unity must remain an important facet of African foreign policy if the African revolution is to be accomplished.

The Major Trend of African Diplomacy

Ensuring equality and self-determination of African peoples is the major trend in African foreign policy and diplomacy. This is evidenced by the fact that the OAU Charter opens thus: "CONVINCED that it is the inalienable right of all people to control their own destiny..."⁴⁹ or as the UN General Assembly in 1960 revealed and stressed the broad content of self-determination: "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development".⁵⁰

It is toward this trend that most OAU member-states pool their diplomatic efforts to try and eradicate colonialism and racism in the continent and achieve economic independence. They aim at reducing their economic dependence on the

imperialist core states (de-linkage) charting their own path of development and at expanding constructive international ties - including their effective participation in solving international problems. In this drive, African states use both domestic and foreign policy means, although at times with difficulties. Part of the difficulty is that African states remain within the orbit of the world capitalist economic system - through their economic, trade, financial, technological and other dependence on the former colonial power and other imperialist powers.

Despite these limitations, the process of total decolonization of the continent continues vigorously, which confirms the effectiveness and vitality of African diplomacy. The direct collective pressure of member - states has been perhaps the most effective method in the struggle against aggression and interference by the imperialist powers. For instance, in 1980, the OAU Summit in Freetown demanded that Britain restore to Mauritius the Chagos Archipelago and the Island of Diego Garcia where the US has constructed a military base.⁵¹ This opened a new chapter in the joint struggle of African states for the removal of the base.

As for the economic independence of Africa, in recent years the AOU member-states have been working on the forms and methods of joint diplomacy to achieve it.⁵² For instance, in May 1973, the OAU adopted an economic program of African diplomacy which focused on the following principles: constant and joint protection of the inalienable sovereignty and control of African states over their natural resources; asserting the common African interests at all international economic and currency negotiations, especially with capitalist countries and their economic alliances; coordinating positions and intensifying trade and cooperation between African and socialist countries; strengthening the common front with the developing countries of other continents.⁵³

These principles have since been implemented by African diplomacy. For instance, the OAU used them in its negotiations with the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 and 1974. The result was that African States secured certain concessions from the EEC under the 1975 Lome Convention in September 1979.⁵⁵

Thus, African states have realized the necessity of using collective economic pressure against the neocolonialist powers and monopolies which, to a large extent, depend on African raw materials and trade. In the non aligned and other developing countries, the OAU has been the vanguard in the struggle for changing the entire system of international economic relations based on equitability and mutual benefit.⁵⁶

At the UN, the overall course of African diplomacy is geared toward maximum advantages for individual OAU member-states and for regional and continent-wide African projects, as well as effective and full representation of African states at the UN and its specialized agencies. Currently, slightly over one-third of the UN membership are African. This rapid increase in the number of African states in the UN is of a double significance.⁵⁷ First, it signalled Africa's new-found determination to participate fully in international relations not as an object, but as an actor. Second, it secured greater African representation in the Security Council and other UN bodies, as well as the choice of Africa as the host continent for some of these bodies and for sessions of others. This meant that African issues and problems would hence forth receive greater international attention that hitherto had been the case.⁵⁸ Indeed, African diplomats successfully preside over sessions of the UN Gen-

eral Assembly and its bodies. They also hold top-level posts at the UN and its specialized agencies, and the African group is one of the most active regional groups at the UN in raising vital international questions to the discomfort of some Western powers. Indeed, as early as 1972, the West began talking about a "paralysis of the UN", a "tyranny of the majority", and such claims as one made by the West German periodical *African heute* that "ruthless attacks against the imperialist powers led into an impasse".⁵⁹ This, certainly is not true of African diplomacy; rather it is the imperialist powers which subvert the UN, for instance, through their veto power in the Security Council. In such cases, African states are the losers, because their interests run counter to those of the imperialist powers.

It is in the above light that most African countries, after liberating themselves from colonialism, sought new allies in the international arena and forums. This led to rapprochement with the socialist countries of the world headed by the Soviet Union, as a diplomatic means of balancing their international ties and reducing dependence on the West.

This does not however, mean that African states' relations with the former colonial powers and other capitalist powers have lessened; they only differ from the expectations born out of decolonization and the independence slogans of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Indeed, whether socialist-oriented or not, all post-colonial African states have virtually retained broad contacts with their former colonial powers.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, the trend toward restricting the preferential treatment of former colonial powers and curtailing their political influence in Africa is increasing. Indeed, ties have been established with other Western countries — with the EEC countries, the US and Japan — for especially economic purposes. This has dismantled the monopoly of the former colonial powers in influencing African international relations.

African diplomacy has also forged close political ties with other developing countries, beginning with Bandung in 1955 to Colombo in 1975⁶¹ and beyond. The Afro-Asian group at the UN was the platform for such cooperation. Another form of cooperation commenced in the 1970s between the OAU and the Arab League. The 1970s also saw the emergence of the Islamic conference based on "Muslim solidarity". This was an entirely new form of Afro-Asian organization.

On the global scene, on the basis of anti-imperialist solidarity, there is growing cooperation between African states and Asian and Latin American countries and other developing countries. The struggle of these countries is for political equality, a radical transformation of international economic relations, and social and economic liberation. Therefore, the long-term and dominant trend of African diplomacy is the strengthening of political solidarity among these countries. In this task, the ideology of non-alignment becomes crucial, a subject we now turn to.

Non-Alignment and African Diplomacy

In their participation in world politics, post-colonial African states, via the OAU, adopted the principle of non-alignment. Asian countries were the first to apply this principle, and the OAU simply adopted it. Indeed, one of the major principles of the OAU Charter is an "affirmation of a policy of non-alignment with regard to all blocs".⁶² The notion of "African non alignment" implies that OAU member-states

have to coordinate their foreign policy bearing in mind that non-alignment does not mean passive neutrality but positive neutrality.

Because of the dangers posed by African involvement in political and military blocs stemming from the former colonial powers and other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) powers, African non-alignment has from the very beginning, been anti-imperialist. In fact virtually all OAU member-states have joined NAM, despite imperialist machinations. The Colombo Summit of 1976 acknowledged the continent's contribution by declaring that "Africa gave a firm anti-colonial and anti-racist content to the movement."⁶³

The record, however, shows that African non-alignment to blocs is often feasible in organizational terms only. For instance in politics, a number of African states are not able to remain "non-aligned". To a certain extent, this is rooted in ideological proximity or hostility, likes and dislikes and even identical or different political interests. While refusing to join blocs, most African states' positions tend to be closer to those of the socialist countries than to those of the former colonial powers or the US, especially at sessions of the UN General Assembly. This is so, because of the objective interests of African states.

It is not hard to find out the actors that contribute to the closeness of African states and socialist countries in international affairs. These factors include: decolonization, the strengthening of world peace and universal security, or curbing the arms race and disarmament — factors that are anti-imperialist. This is partly why African diplomacy supports the initiatives of the Soviet Union at the UN, especially in regard to the Soviet Union's policy of detente of the 1970s. This African diplomatic position is acknowledged even in the West, as is evidence by one Western source, *The Diplomatist*: "Whether knowingly or unknowingly, whether with determination or reluctance, Africa, both Arab and black is now as solidly behind communist diplomacy as any third party could possibly be"⁶⁴ This does not mean that it is the general rule for all African states. Indeed, there have been only a few exceptions. Otherwise African diplomacy does not tend to side with imperialist diplomatic initiatives.

Despite this, generally and theoretically, African states, like other states in the periphery, belong neither to the imperialist camp nor to the socialist one. Simultaneously, most African states are still tied to the world capitalist economy, although in a disadvantaged way. This, certainly is duality in the policy of African and other non-aligned countries. This is an obvious contradiction between their radical demands proclaimed overtly, and the moderate course of their foreign policy implemented covertly and sometimes even overtly. Because of this, non-alignment has been variedly interpreted — depending on a given state. Whereas some African states interpret it in purely anti-imperialist terms, others base their interpretation on "complete neutrality", or "equidance". Yet others base it on the notion of "neither left nor right nor in the middle".⁶⁵

All the same, in Africa, non-alignment is often regarded not as a foreign policy principle but rather as a tactical diplomatic means of relating with the "rich" north which comprises both the Western bloc. In this divide, Africa belongs to the "poor nations of the South".⁶⁶ Thus, in their economic diplomacy, Africa and other non-aligned countries use the term non alignment to make the same demands on all "rich nations", given the fact that the world is increasingly being divided in terms of wealth.

Apart from using the non-alignment approach in their economic diplomacy, African states also use it in their political diplomacy. For instance, in November 1975-January 1976, half the OAU member-states demanded that foreign intervention in Angola stop forthwith. They also made no distinction between the South African aggressors with their imperialist backers and the Soviet Union and Cubas who had been invited by the Angolan government to assist in resisting the expelling the aggressors.⁶⁷

Thus African non-alignment tends to be more stable. Although at times there are conflicting positions of individual member-states all-African diplomacy levels them out, and assists these countries in arriving at a common and generally acceptable position.

The anti-imperialist element in African non-alignment is increasingly becoming one of its major trends. This is especially true of the evolution of African diplomacy vis-a-vis the Middle East conflict. Previously, during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, most African states invoked the principle of non-alignment and tried to avoid expressing their views of the conflict; others only made public statements from the position of neutrality, which in fact put them into the hands of Israel. As such, African diplomacy split between its Arab and non-Arab components.

The turning point came in 1968, and from then on, African diplomacy closed in as the result of the growing anti-imperialist, anti-zionist and anti-American feelings in Africa. Indeed, the Middle-East problem began to be viewed as concerning all Africa,⁶⁸ a position that even resulted into the severing of diplomatic relations between OAU member-states and Israel, following the 1973 Arab-Israel war. Today, OAU decisions unequivocally condemn Israel as the aggressor against the Arabs, and express solidarity with the Palestinian people, despite recent restoration of diplomatic relations with the zionist state by some OAU member-states.⁶⁹ The Middle-East conflict therefore provides the first issue on which African diplomacy pursues an anti-imperialist course. Then comes Israel's close links with racist South Africa-links that have received vicious attacks by the OAU. These links provide the second reason why African diplomacy has increasingly been anti-zionist.

Close involvement in questions of peace and universal security, fuller and direct African participation in their solution and greater democracy in international relations are new developments in African non-alignment and African diplomacy. Another salient feature of African non-alignment concerns "African solutions to African problems".⁷⁰

The dictum "African solutions to African problems" has not been without problems. In recent years, it has been the subject of heated debate in the OAU. At the start it was meant to be used by the anti-imperialist camp within the OAU to prevent imperialist interference in African affairs, and to check covert and overt aggression by imperialist powers. However, during the course of its new counter offensive against the forces of national liberation and social emancipation in the continent, imperialism has begun to lend widespread support to the dictum, with the express purpose of turning this anti-imperialist method of African diplomacy against the Soviet Union, Cuba and the entire world socialist community. By so doing, imperialism camouflages its interference in African affairs and defines the dictum according to its own geopolitical interests, thus trying to render non-alignment, which is a long-term course of African diplomacy, null and void.

Conclusions

Diplomacy is the major means by which African foreign policy continues to be implemented. The principal areas of this policy include: intra-African relations, relations with Asian and Latin American countries, relations with the Eastern-bloc countries, with the former colonial powers, the US and other capitalist powers, and activities in international organizations.

African foreign policy, like the foreign policy of any nation requires concrete scientific analysis, methodologically premised on the basis of class. According to Lenin, "it is fundamentally wrong, un-Marxist and unscientific, to single out 'foreign policy' from policy general, let alone counterpose foreign policy to home policy".⁷¹ This Leninist thesis has lots of relevance to the African condition. An increasing feature of African foreign policy is differentiation, not on national, but on class terms. Within individual states, certain differences in their foreign policies reflect the polarization between pro-imperialist and reactionary tendencies on the one hand, and forces of social progress and genuine national independence on the other. An organic element of African foreign policy is the struggle against imperialism and neocolonialism, and for genuine economic independence.

African foreign policy, like the foreign policy of a nation, always reflects the political ideology of the ruling parties - which policy is shaped and implemented according to the interests of the dominant class or social system. Foreign policy factors exert an increasing influence on the general development of post-colonial African states. African states and their domestic institutions are participating in various ways in international affairs - for instance, the role of politics in international economic relations.

The impact of foreign policy factors on the development of post-colonial African states and the shaping of their foreign policy will most probably remain strong until they solve their acute need for diverse types of foreign assistance - financial aid included. As a result, the contradiction between the generally anti-imperialist foreign policy of most African states and the capitalist-dominated system of their foreign economic ties will intensify.

African states have also focused their foreign policy on issues of war, peace, and universal security because they stand to benefit. This trend is likely to continue.

Although there has been some measures of political unity between African states and other non-aligned states, serious contradictions still affect these relations. These contradictions are especially fuelled by neocolonialism. Despite these differences, the trend toward joint action by these states on the international arena is strengthening. For instance, their joint action in restructuring international economic relations runs counter to the interests of the imperialist powers. Similarly, the trend of African foreign policy is toward minimizing old ties with the former colonial powers and diversifying international contacts for purposes of strengthening their solidarity and ensuring greater independence in political and economic spheres. In all these matters, instruments of diplomacy have been used; hence the African style of foreign policy hinges most on diplomacy.

FOOTNOTES

1. A.A. Gromyko, *Diplomacy of Socialism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), p. 3
2. H. Nicolson, *Diplomacy* (London: Oxford University Press - OUP, 1950), p. 81

3. K.M. Panikar, *The Principles and Practice of Diplomacy* (Delhi: Ranjit Publishers, 1952), p. 51.
4. *Ibid*, p. 82.
5. *Foreign Relations of African States*. Proceedings of the twenty fifth symposium of the Colston Research Society held in the University of Bristol, April 4th to 7th, 1973. (London: Butterworths, 1974), p. x.
6. For details, consult C.A. Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality* (Translated by Mercer Cook, New York: Lawrence & Company, 1974); W.E.B. Dubois, *The World and Africa* (New York: International Publishers, 1965); S.K. Glanville (ed.), *The Legacy of Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942); A.A. Mazrui, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown & Company, 1986).
7. For details, consult, for instance, R.W. July, *History of the African People* (New York: Charles Scribner's sons, Second Edition, 1974).
8. B.I. Obichere, "American Diplomacy in Africa: Problems and Prospects", *Pan Africa Journal*, Vol. VII, No. I Spring, 1974, P. 67.
9. *US Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 72, No. 1608, April 20, 1970, P. 513; also P.G. Okoth, "United States Foreign Policy Toward Kenya, 1952-1969," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1987, Chapter I.
10. K. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Panaf, 1963), pp. 194 - 204; K. Nkrumah, *Towards Colonial Freedom: Africa in the Struggle against World Imperialism* (London: Heinemann, 1962).
11. For details, consult, for instance, V.N. Mackay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).
12. For details, consult V.B. Thompson, *Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan Africanism* (London: Longman, 1969). V.N. Mackay, *Africa in the United Nations* (New York: Macfadden Bartell Corporation, 1967); V.N. Mackay, *African Diplomacy: Studies in the Determinants of Foreign Policy* (London: Pall Mall, 1966).
13. A. Gromyko (ed), *African Countries Foreign Policy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), p. 25.
14. For details, consult I.W. Zartman, *International Relations in the New Africa* (1 Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1966); O. Alukop (ed), *The Foreign Policies of African States* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977).
15. On the O.A.U. Charter, consult, Z. Cervenka, *The Organization of African Unity and its Charter* (New York: Praeger, 1969).
16. G. Erb & V. Kallab (eds), *Beyond Dependency: The Developing World Speaks out* (Washington, D.C. Overseas Development Council, 1975).
17. This theoretical position was best illustrated by N.M. Shamuyarira, "The Lusaka Manifesto on Southern Africa," *The African Review*, Vol. 1, March 1977.
18. P.G. Okoth, "The Tanzania - Uganda War and the Organization of African Unity." *Journal of African Studies*, Special Issue on Tanzania, Fall 1987.
19. It can be argued that African peaceful foreign policy is in opposite to the armed foreign policies of South East Asian and Middle East countries.
20. Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, p. 184; article II, OAU Charter.
21. K. Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology* (London: Heinemann, 1961), p. 241.

22. V.I. Lenin, "Guerilla Warfare", *Collected Works*, Vol. II (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), p. 214.
23. For details, consult K. W. Grubdy, *Guerilla Struggle in Africa: An Analysis and Preview* (New York: Crossman Publishers, 1971); G. Cheliand, *Armed Struggle in Africa: With the Guerrillas in Portuguese Guinea* (New York: Monthly Review Press 1969); K. Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path* (London: Panaf), 1973.
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26. This official view of the Soviet Government came at the tenth anniversary of the OAU. For details, consult *Pradva*, May 25, 1973.
27. Gromyko, *African Foreign Policy*, p. 28.
28. P.G. Okoth, "OAU: Forces of Destabilization," *Ufahamu*, Vol. XIII, No. 1 Fall, 1983, pp. 148-164.
29. W. Beling & G. Totten (eds), *Developing Nations Quest for a Model* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1970).
30. C.M.B. Utete, "Foreign Policy and the Developing State," in O.J.C.B. Ojo *et al*, *African International Relations* London, New York, Lagos: Longman 1985), p. 49.
31. Gromyko, *African Foreign Policy*, p. 29.
32. R.H. Jackson & C.G. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982.)
33. J. Chikwe, *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1, January 1972, p. 27.
34. *Ibid*, p. 21.
35. V.I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P. (B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), p. 169 and p. 174.
36. R. Dumont, *False Start in Africa* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1966).
37. V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International," *Collected Works*, Vol. 31. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 240.
38. Consult, for instance, K. Mathews, "The OAU and the problem of African Unity," *Africa Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, Nos 1-2 (no year given), pp. 1-27) J. Mayall, "African Unity and the OAU: The place of Political Myth in African Diplomacy", *Yearbook of World Affairs* (London, 1973) Z. Cervenka, *The Unfinished Quest for Unity: Africa and the O.A.U.* (London: Africa Books, 1977); Z. Cervenka, "The OAU and African Unity, 1963-1976," *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1980. C. Hoskyns, "Pan Africanism and Integration," in A. Hazlewood (ed), *African Integration and Disintegration: Case Studies in Economic and Political Union* (London: OUP, 1967); D.K. Orwa, "The Search for African Unity," in Ojo *et al*, *African International Relations*, pp. 96-108.
39. C.M.B. Utete, "African and the United Nations," in Ojo *et al*, *African International Relations*, pp. 121.
40. K. Nkrumah, *Challenge of the Congo* (London, Nelson, 1967); J. Alan, *The Politics of Peace Keeping* (New York: F.A. Praeger, 1969).
41. Gromyko, *African Foreign Policy*, p. 32.

42. Quoted in Cervenka, *The Unfinished Quest for Unity*, p. 11.
43. H.A. Asobie, "The Charter and Institutional Structure of the OAU, 1963–1983: A Political Analysis," Nsukka, 1984, mimeo.
44. I bid.
45. J.K. Nyerere, "A New Look at Conditions for Unity", in his *Freedom and Socialism* (Dar es Salaam, London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 292.
46. L.I. Brezhnev, *Our Course: Peace and Socialism* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1978), p. 131.
47. Okoth, "OAU: Forces of Destabilization," pp. 154–158.
48. Gromyko, *African Foreign Policy*, pp. 34–35.
49. Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, p. 371.
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56. For details, consult, A.W. Singham (ed), *The Non–Aligned Movement in World Politics* (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1977).
57. Utete, "Africa and the United nations," in Ojo, *African International Relations*, p. 119.
58. I bid.
59. *African heute*, Nos. 17–18, September 1971, p. 364.
60. Utete "Africa and the Former Colonial Powers," pp. 109–118. P.K. Tunteng, "External Influences and sub–imperialism in Francophone West Africa", in P.C.W. Gutkind & I. Wallerstein eds), *The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1976); M.R. Singer, *Weak States in a World of Powers: The Dynamics of International Relationships* (New York: The Free Press, 1972) K. Nkrumah, *Neo–Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Nelson, 1965); I.J. Mowoe & R. Bjornson (eds), *Africa and the West: The Legacies of Empire* (New York, Westport Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1986).
61. A.W. Singham & T. Van Dihn, *From Bandung to Colombo: Conferences of the Non–Aligned Countries, 1955–1975* (New York: Third Press Review, 1976).
62. Article III (7) of the OAU Charter.
63. *Colombo Summit. Documents and Selected Speeches of the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non–Aligned Countries. Colombo, Sri Lanka, 16–19 August, 1976* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1976), p. 89.
64. *The Diplomatist*, Vol. XXIX, No. II, November 1973, p. 4.
65. Gromyko, *African Foreign Policy*, p. 44.
66. J.K. Nyerere advanced this argument when he visited Uganda during the month of July, 1988. For details, consult *New Vision* (Uganda's English Daily), July 18, 1988. Nyerere is former President of Tanzania and currently the Chairman of the ruling Party of that country the *Chama Cha Mapinduzi – Revolutionary Party*, and also currently Chairman of th NAM South Commission
67. G. Bender, "Kissinger in Angola: Anatomy of Failure", in R. Lemarchand (ed), *American Foreign Policy in Southern Africa: The stakes and Stance* (Washington, D.C.: University of America Press, 1978); O. Ugumbadejo, "Soviet Policies in Africa," *African Affairs*, Vol. LXXIX. G. Connel–Smith, "Castro's Cuba in World Affairs 1959–1979", *The World Today*, Vol. XXVI. H. Bull, "The Great Irresponsibility? The United States, the Soviet Union and World Order," *International Journal*, Vol. XXXV.
68. A. Akinsanya, "Afro–Arab Alliance: Dream or Reality?" *African Affairs*, Vol. 75.
69. Cameroon, Liberia and Zaire have officially restored diplomatic relations with Israel to the disgust of most OAU member–states.
70. This dictum implies the settling of African conflicts within and among OAU member–states, without the assistance of the UN or non-African countries.
71. V.I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism," *Collected Works*, Vol. 23 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), p. 43.