

The OAU and the Namibian Crisis 1963 – 1988

A. O. Adeoye*

Introduction

When the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) emerged in 1963, it showed an unequivocal commitment to the total liberation of Africa from colonial and racist white minority rule. Indeed one of the fundamental purposes for which the continental body was formed was to “eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa”.¹ This anti-colonial orientation is not surprising, given the fact that nearly all the states that converged in Addis Ababa on that memorable day were once subjected to colonial domination. Many of these states regarded the perpetuation of colonial rule in the continent as a threat to their very survival. Some even regarded their independence to be meaningless so long as their African brothers were under colonial domination. Consequently, the OAU called for a concerted and coordinated action against all forms of colonialism and fixed at the same time a deadline for the ascension of the still dependent African territories to independence.

As a practical demonstration of its desire to hasten the process of liberation of Africa, the OAU established at the same time a Liberation Committee and a special fund. The former, also called the African Liberation Committee (ALC)² was to coordinate the struggle on a territorial and continental basis, and to harmonise the material and financial support sent to the Liberation Movements from independent African States and from abroad. Initially made up of 9 members and with its headquarters in Dar es Salaam, its membership steadily rose first to 11 and then 17 by 1972.³ The Special Fund, also called the “Freedom Fund” or “Liberation Funds”, was to supply the necessary practical and financial aid to the various liberation movements. The funds was to be financed by direct voluntary contributions from member states and it was to be managed by the ALC. From the foregoing, it is very clear that the ALC was supposed to be the hub of the liberation effort.

The OAU has since its inception, and through these and other organs, given a broad range of assistance to the various liberation movements. This includes:

1. Publicising and legitimising the struggle through diplomacy in international circles;
2. Territorial and inter-territorial co-ordination of the liberation struggle;
3. Financial and material assistance to the liberation movements.⁴

It is within this context that we shall now proceed to assess the role played by the OAU in the struggle for Namibian independence. The major argument to be pursued here is that while it is true to say that the OAU has made diverse contributions to the liberation effort, a conjunction of factors ranging from structural – historical problems, material scarcity and disunity of member states to imperialist chicanery has tended to reduce the OAU to the level of an insignificant actor in the Namibian tangle.

* Lecturers, Department of History, Bendel State University, Ekpoma, Nigeria.

Publicising and Legitimising the Struggle Through Diplomacy in International Circles

We should recall that Namibia was already an international issue as it was a UN problem before the emergence of the OAU.⁵ At its inception in May, 1963, the OAU passed a resolution which merely:

Reaffirms that the territory of South West Africa is an African territory under international mandate and that any attempt by the Republic of South Africa to annex it would be regarded as an act of aggression;... Reaffirms, further, the inalienable right of the people of South West Africa to self-determination and independence.⁶

The organisation initially regarded Namibia basically as a UN problem. The ‘Lusaka Manifesto’ adopted by the continental body in 1969 declared that “... a settlement in South West Africa with a minimum of violence is a UN responsibility”.⁷ Consequently, its main strategy was to work closely with the UN and other interested parties to bring about a peaceful solution to the problem. This implied that the initial diplomatic offensive was focused on the UN and other multilateral organisations.

Generally speaking, OAU diplomacy aimed it:

- (a) getting the UN to end by whatever means, South Africa’s colonial rule and establish its presence in the territory;
- (b) the political, cultural isolation and economic boycott of South Africa;
- (c) limiting and preventing military assistance going to South Africa;
- (d) championing the liberation cause and winning support and assistance from abroad for SWAPO and Namibian Refugees.

It would appear that the OAU was initially hopeful that a settlement of the Namibia problem could be achieved via the UN. Hence the main objective of OAU diplomacy was to compel the UN as it were, to take decisive action against South Africa in the form of sanctions and possibly through the use of a UN interventionist force to eject the South Africans and establish a UN present in the territory. Up to 1960, the UN attitude to South Africa in respect of Namibia was characterised by polite persuasion and conciliation but which led to no where. South Africa repeatedly refused to recognise the right of the UN to supervise its administration and it failed to assist any of the UN committees in this supervisory effort. Negotiations between several UN groups and South Africa failed to yield dividends due to South Africa’s intransigence. In spite of the compromise posture of the UN, South Africa continued to disregard the resolutions of the General Assembly and the advisory opinions of the world court.

But the year 1960 marked a turning point in the UN approach to South West Africa as the composition of the world body changed drastically when African membership in the General Assembly rose from 9 to 25.⁸ These Afro-Asian countries, for reasons of history and sentiments were in varying degrees opposed to colonialism and racial discrimination. They realised that the increasingly negative reaction of the South African government indicated beyond doubt that the solution of the Namibian problem could not be made contingent upon the voluntary observance by South Africa of the General Assembly Resolutions.

Rejecting the old policy of compromise and conciliation as insufficient to move South Africa, African States mobilised their voting strength as well as that of their Asian, Communist and Scandinavian allies to goad the UN to embark on a more forceful policy towards South Africa.⁹ In December 1960, the Assembly adopted the

famous "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial countries and peoples". With this declaration, all states were obligated to promote actively and in co-operation with the UN, the right of colonial peoples to self-determination and Independence. In 1961 the Assembly established a Special Committee (also known as the Decolonisation Committee) to implement this declaration. It was to this committee that the question of South West Africa was transferred in 1962, with the expressed aim of preparing the territory for independence.

Consequent upon this declaration, colonialism and the implied denial of self-determination was now regarded as a threat to international peace and security. Thus in 1961, the UN General Assembly declared the situation in South West Africa as a serious threat to international peace and security. In 1965 racial discrimination as practised by the South African government both in Namibia and South Africa was declared a crime against humanity, a violation of international covenants on human rights, and a violation of the UN Charter.

From 1961 onwards, the UN Committees on South West Africa were under specific instructions to proceed to the territory to eject the South Africans, establish a UN presence and prepare the territory for independence. For the first time, a UN Committee on South West Africa set out to undertake a fact finding of the territory in 1961, but it was denied entry by South Africa. The Committee was therefore obligated to confine itself to visiting other African countries in the region where it took evidence from Namibian petitioners. Associated with this was the growing severity of the General Assembly resolutions against South Africa as African States and their allies pushed for increasingly tougher resolutions against South Africa such as the breaking off of diplomatic relations and trade and instituting sanctions. Hitherto, the resolutions did not go beyond calling on South Africa to implement the UN resolution.

One major trend that should be evident is the fact that even before the birth of the OAU, African member States had been acting in concert to influence the UN towards the speedy resolution of the Namibian problem. The emergence of the OAU provided a more formal – legalistic framework within which such efforts could be better co-ordinated and directed. When for instance Ethiopian and Liberia as former members of the defunct League of Nations (the body that had originally granted South Africa the Mandate over Namibia) went to institute the contentious proceedings of 1960–66, the OAU threw its weight behind the respondents. Both countries had gone to the world court in the hope that a judgement against South Africa would force the sanctions machinery of the UN (the Security Council) to act, thus ending the impasses. But this turned out to be a Pious hope as the court refused to pass judgement.¹⁰ This was a rude shock to the OAU as well as the UN General Assembly as the courts position amounted to a vindication – more or less – of South Africa's contumacious disposition.

Exasperated by the court's ultimate indecision, the OAU member states in the UN succeeded in mobilising their voting strength and that of their allies to influence and goad the UN to take more drastic action which included the revocation of South Africa's Namibian mandate (1966); the establishment of the UN Council for Namibia intended as the interim government of the territory (1967); the adoption of the name *Namibia* for the territory in deference to the wishes of the people (1968); the recognition of SWAPO as the sole authentic representative of the Namibian

people pending UN – supervised elections and independence (1973); the granting of observer status in the UN to SWAPO (1973); the recognition of the right of the Namibia people to seek by whatever means necessary, including force, the liberation of their country – thus legitimising the guerrilla warfare being waged by SWAPO.

The diplomacy of the OAU was not solely confined to the UN. Other fora in which the OAU has helped to publicise the Namibian cause include the Commonwealth, the Arab League, the Non – Aligned Movement, several international sporting bodies and a motley of other human rights organisations. In all these fora, African states have been able to mobilise their numerical strength as well as the support of the anti colonially oriented Communist, Asian, Latin American and Scandinavian countries to advance the cause of the liberation struggle in Namibia. Due to this solidarity, South Africa has been expelled from or denied admission into a number of international organisations, conferences, sport meetings, etc., thus partly achieving the aim of isolating the colonial regime in Namibia.¹¹ Several states have imposed mandatory sanctions on South Africa while others have imposed an oil embargo.

Although actual figures are hard to come by, it will not be out of place to surmise that increased foreign material and military aid do get to SWAPO and Namibian refugees through the diplomacy and instrumentality of the OAU. Apart from the fact that most foreign agencies and aid donors usually channel aid destined for the liberation movements through the continental body, the OAU does canvass directly for aid for the liberation movements recognised by it. Special missions are sent abroad to explain the African position and solicit for military, economic and humanitarian support for the liberation movements.

Territorial and Interterritorial Coordination of the Liberation Movement

As part of its general effort to coordinate the liberation struggles in Africa and ensure the effectiveness of the fighting movements (considering the fact of limited financial resources of the ALC which made it impossible for the OAU to give material aid to all liberation movements) the OAU withheld recognition from liberation movements which it considered "unrepresentative" or "inefficient". In addition, the OAU occasionally shifted its support from one group to another depending chiefly on their military effectiveness and success. It also encouraged the formation of United Fronts among the liberation groups when necessary so as to strengthen the effectiveness of their struggle and enhance the rational use of the concerted assistance given to them.

When the OAU was born, it was welcomed by the 2 leading political movements in Namibia – namely the South West Africa Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) and the South West Africa National Union (SWANU). Both political groups gained OAU recognition. But the refusal of SWANU to embark on a course of armed struggle cost it OAU support and recognition in 1968.¹² This heralded the eclipse of SWANU as a significant force in the Namibian liberation movement, and at the same time the ascendancy of SWAPO as the major political movement waging the liberation struggle in the territory. There after SWAPO became the only political movement in Namibia recognised by the OAU as the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people. This recognition entitled the liberation movement to material and financial aid from the OAU, as well as foreign aid sent from abroad in respect of the

liberation struggle in Africa.

Beyond that, the organisation also displayed a great deal of flexibility with regard to strategy and tactics; these were periodically reviewed when called for. There was the initial optimism that unconditional independence could be won and at an early date, for the still dependent territories through military confrontation, political and cultural isolation as well as the economic boycott of the colonial and racist regimes. But the financial and military weakness of OAU member states and the liberation movements forced a reassessment of strategy. In the Lusaka Manifesto of 1969¹³ the OAU adopted a dual – strategy approach to African liberation which committed the organisation to the attainment of independence by peaceful means of possible and through an intensified armed struggle if inevitable. This implied that the OAU was prepared for a negotiated settlement for the peaceful transfer of power to the African majority once the minority/colonial regimes were prepared to accept the principle of self determination for the Africans and declare their intention to decolonise failing which the OAU would have no other choice than to intensify the armed struggle.

The Accra Declaration on African liberation adopted by the ALC in 1973¹⁴ devised a new strategy whereby efforts were to be concentrated on the liberation of the Portuguese colonies in view of the substantial gains made by the liberation movements in those areas. The aim was to enhance the rational use of the resources available to the OAU. Although this meant a temporary reduction in the amount of aid that went to Namibia, the attainment of independence by Guinea Bissau (1973/4), Mozambique and Angola (1975) seem to have vindicated this strategy.

With the independence of those territories, attention shifted to Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. The Dar es Salaam Declaration of 1975 was devoted to these areas. It made a distinction between the colonial problems of Namibia and Zimbabwe on one hand and the racial problem in South Africa on the other and pledged priority attention to the liberation of Zimbabwe and Namibia from colonial rule – guided by the dual – strategy approach. This implied that increased financial and material assistance was to be extended to the genuine liberation movements in those territories. The Declaration also laid down the 2 essential elements for the effective de-colonisation of Namibia:

These are, first the granting of independence to the whole country without fragmentation, and second, the recognition of SWAPO as the sole authentic representative of the whole of Namibia.¹⁵

Elaborating further on the dual strategy approach as it relates to Namibia, the document is emphatic that:

In the event that South Africa were to indicate a willingness to carry out effective decolonisation as thus defined, Africa should welcome the change in South Africa's policy and act accordingly... But while South Africa remains unwilling to carry out effective decolonisation, Africa as a whole, and all African States, should refrain from any contact with South Africa over the details of its administration of Namibia, or over any plans for the fragmentation of the territory... Further in the absence of South Africa's agreement to decolonise, Africa must help SWAPO to intensify the armed struggle in Namibia...¹⁶

The insistence of the OAU on the inviolability of the territorial Unity of Namibia and the primacy accorded to SWAPO can better be appreciated against the backdrop

of developments taking place in the territory itself. This was a time when the colonial regime in the area was implementing its obnoxious scheme of internal settlement meant to fragment the territory into Bantustan ethnic homelands and at the same time exclude SWAPO from the determination of the future of the territory.¹⁷

The OAU was instrumental to the formation of the grouping called the frontline states. This was anticipated in the Dar es Salaam Declaration of 1975 which mandated Botswana, Tanzania, Zambia, and Mozambique (owing partly to their support for the liberation struggle in the area and their geographical proximity to the 'action spots') to negotiate on behalf of the OAU with the colonial and white minority regimes on the mechanics of a peaceful transfer of power to African majority rule.¹⁸ The OAU further encouraged these states to continue to support the liberation movements through, *inter alia* the provision of training facilities and operational bases – a role which has earned them retaliatory, often destructive raids from the colonial and racist minority regimes. In the case of Namibia, Zambia and Angola have successively provided operational bases for PLAN¹⁹ soldiers, while training has been received from Egypt, Tanzania, Zambia and Angola. Indeed, since its inception PLAN has worked *intandem* with the ALC.

The Dar es Salaam Manifesto came in the wake of a vague promise given by South Africa to work towards the decolonisation of Zimbabwe and Namibia. Acting on a mandate from the OAU and on behalf of the frontline states, President Kaunda of Zambia attempted to negotiate with South African Prime Minister Vorster between 1974 and 1975. Vorster later reneged on his promise over Namibia and so the talks bore no fruit.²⁰ When in 1977 the leading western supporters of South Africa – Britain, France, Germany, the USA and Canada – came together as the western contact Group on a self appointed mission to mediate in the Namibian conflict to bring about an internationally acceptable settlement, the OAU reluctantly seized the chance. It worked (through the Frontline states) in concert with the contact Group, the UN, South Africa and SWAPO to seek a peaceful solution to the problem. The series of tortuous and complex negotiations which followed led to an agreement which formed the basis for the Western Plan for Namibia subsequently adopted by the UN in September 1978 vide S/C RES 435.²¹

But South Africa failed to implement the plan and instead went ahead to implement its pernicious internal settlement scheme designed to bypass UN and exclude SWAPO. Needless to say, the OAU was vociferous in its condemnation of South Africa's treachery and evil machinations. It refused to recognise any of the successive "interim" and internal settlement governments set up in the territory such as the Bantustan homelands of 1973–5; the ethnically inclined Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) administration of 1972–82, and the Bantustan oriented Multi-Party Conference (MPC)–based Transitional Government of National Unity ruling the territory since 1983.²²

The rise of President Reagan and the introduction of the "linkage" concept into the Namibian issue in 1981 helped to transform the genuine struggle of the Namibian people for national liberation into an alleged "communist threat" to the "free world" (that is, a cold war phenomenon). By demanding the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola as *guid pro quo* for the implementation of the UN Plan for Namibia, the USA sought to annul the UN Plan which it helped to formulate, and in effect has actively collaborated with South Africa to bring about the organised delay of Nami-

bia's independence.

The position of the OAU has been to regard "linkage" first as an unwarranted interference in Angola's internal affairs, and second as a delaying, if not diversionary tactic in so far as the issue of Namibian independence is concerned. The linkage idea glosses over the fact that America and South African support for the anti-government UNITA bandits in Angola and South Africa's persistent aggression against Angola were the factors that brought the Cubans to Angola in the first instance and that so long as these factors remain, the Cubans will continue to be in Angola.²³

The OAU has routinely expressed dissatisfaction with and condemnation for the linkage idea, reiterating time and again that UN resolution 435 remained the only basis for the solution of the Namibian problem. It also threatened that any measures to circumvent it would be vehemently resisted.²⁴ On the whole the OAU could be said to be engaged simultaneously in intense diplomatic lobbying abroad, strengthening SWAPO to enable it intensify the liberation war and cooperating with the UN, the Contact Group and South Africa (whenever the latter showed a willingness to decolonise, even if deceptive) to bring about a just and fair settlement.

But because of the stalemate which now exists, the OAU has devoted increased attention to strengthening SWAPO — with a view to improving its striking capacity, and the frontline state to enable them withstand and repulse South Africa's recurrent and punitive cross border raids. To this end, appeals have been frequently made to member states to increase their level of material and financial support to the frontline states and the liberation movements in Southern Africa namely SWAPO, ANC, and PAC and to individual Africans to volunteer their services to the liberation effort when requested to do so by the liberation movements and the frontline states.²⁵ It has also encouraged the formation of National Committees for the liberation of South Africa and Namibia in member states, the aim being to mobilise increased political and material support for the liberation effort.²⁶

Financial and Material Assistance to the National Struggle

The OAU has been an important source of funds to the various liberation movements in Africa. These came principally from the annual budgets approved for the ALC and the special fund also managed by the ALC. Another source was the special aid given from time to time to the ALC by individual member states in respect of the liberation struggle. Several African countries launched series of campaigns to mobilise political and material support in aid of the liberation struggle in Africa. We have already noted how the OAU coordinated these efforts via the National committees on Southern Africa established in each country.

Although the actual aid that went to SWAPO is difficult to quantify — owing largely to the paucity of figures — it is possible to establish from the scanty figures available to us that the amount of aid that reached SWAPO from the OAU was rather small. For example out of the \$1,152,000 that was allocated to the liberation movements by the ALC during the 1967/68 year, the sum of \$72,000 was earmarked for SWAPO, but the actual amount received by the liberation movement was a meagre \$6,235. The allocation declined still further during the 1968/69 year with SWAPO being promised only \$48,000 out of the total ALC allocation of \$1,173,000.²⁷ The Accra strategy of 1973 which gave priority attention to the liberation of the Portuguese colonies meant that liberation movements like SWAPO

received less aid from the OAU. But the Dar es Salaam Declaration of 1975 which shifted attention to the liberation of Namibia and Zimbabwe pledged increased substantial aid to SWAPO. We can surmise therefore that the amount of aid reaching SWAPO from the OAU increased substantially since that date, more so with the emergence of independent Zimbabwe in 1980.

The point being made is that with the attainment of independence by Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, the OAU was now better placed to increase the level of funding as well as material support going to SWAPO and other movements fighting the racist minority regime in South Africa. It is generally agreed that the striking capacity of SWAPO increased tremendously from 1976 onwards²⁸ with Angola providing a rear base for PLAN Soldiers. One is only being modest to aver that the OAU should claim part of the credit for SWAPO's increased capacity to strike at military, economic and administrative targets well inside Namibia since that date.

The OAU has also supported SWAPO's training camps as well as Namibian refugee camps located mainly in Botswana and Zambia. Namibian refugees have benefitted from scholarship schemes operated on their behalf by several African countries, in addition to the access which they have to employment opportunities. All these efforts are significant in the sense that they complement the military struggle.

Finally, as already noted, the existence of the OAU made it easier for foreign aid to be channelled to the various liberation movements, including SWAPO. This is important since the bulk of the aid was given en bloc to assist the liberation struggle in Africa. In all these respects, the OAU has proved invaluable to the Namibian nationalists in their just struggle for self-determination and national liberation.

Weakness of the OAU

Despite the manifold contributions made by the OAU towards the liberation struggle in the territory, the attainment of Namibian independence remains as of now a noble dream. The persistence of the colonial problem in Namibia reveals poignantly that the OAU has not achieved its objective to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa. By and large, we regard the non-resolution of the Namibian problem as a failure of the organisation. A combination of several factors has tended to militate against the OAU in its effort to bring about a speedy resolution of the National problem. We shall now proceed to isolate and discuss these factors.

We should begin the discussion by pointing out some of the structural problems which confronted the organisation vis-à-vis strategy and tactics.²⁹ While the OAU Charter called for "the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent",³⁰ it made no provision for the coordination of African states' military efforts to achieve this desired objective. This was a grievous mistake considering the fact that the task of liberation required military action to be undertaken not by the freedom fighters alone, but by the whole of independent Africa. The military weakness of OAU member states in relation to the colonial and racist enemies of Africa dictated such as cooperative endeavour — it was a necessity which member states failed to grasp. Even if we assume that the consciousness was there, the will to act was quite lacking as we shall soon demonstrate. Thus with specific reference to Namibia, the OAU has not shown any determination to confront South Africa militarily. The

Frontline states, particularly Angola who bear the brunt of South African aggression on account of her support for SWAPO, is left underended and unprotected by the OAU.

The intensity and frequency of South Africa's cross-border raids has brought to the fore the need for some form of collective military action to protect the Frontline states so that they can continue to render vital support to the liberation movements. Talks about the establishment of an African High Command, or a Defence organ,³¹ would seem to manifest a realisation of that desire, but they remain mere wishes as they are yet to be translated into concrete projects. In the meantime, the Frontline states remain vulnerable to South African military pressure. Because of this vulnerability, Zambia at one stage banned PLAN soldiers from operating against South Africa from its territory, while countries like Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, and now Mozambique and Zimbabwe do not allow the freedom fighters of Namibia and South Africa to operate from their territories. We hold therefore that this has been a major impediment towards the realisation of the goal of an independent Namibia.

The military weakness of the organisation is compounded by another factor—its financial weakness. Having no army of its own to do the fighting, the OAU would have earned a loud acclaim (and hence excused for the first lapse) if it had been able to adequately fund and equip the liberation armies. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. The financial weakness of the organisation greatly hampered its assistance to the liberation struggle. Leaders of the liberation movements frequently complained about the low level of financial and material aid that reached them from the OAU.³² In a way, the financial weakness of the organisation is a reflection of the economic backwardness of member states. Most member states have failed to honour their pledges and commitments to the OAU, while others are in arrears. Although OAU officials repeatedly drew attention to this problem, the situation was never reversed. Rather, it led to a pattern where:

The burden of contributions to the special fund has fallen on the shoulders of very few states whose dedication to the liberation cause is very unswerving. Unfortunately, such states total less than one-third the membership of the OAU...³³

When the special Fund was established in May, 1963 it was expected to total \$800,000 by the end of July. But by 1964, 24 of the 30 member nations failed to make full or partial payments; and in 1969, the special Fund totalled only \$550,000 and nearly 30 of the 41 member states were in arrears at the end of 1971.³⁴ In 1984, the arrears stood at \$17 million, while that of the regular OAU budget stood at \$40 million.³⁵ In 1986, only 18 states were without arrears as per the special Fund, while a whopping 32 (excluding Morocco which has pulled out) owed a total sum of \$14 million.³⁶ In 1987, total arrears in respect of the regular budget amounted to \$47 million, with 40 of the 50 member states delinquent in their payments.³⁷ In 1988, arrears in respect of the regular budget stood at \$35 million, while for the special Fund it totalled \$12.5 million with 39 of 50 member states being delinquent. During the 50th session of the ALC held in Harare in May, 1988 the Chairman, Maj-Gen. Mwan-chukwu of Nigeria lamented:

How can we Africans have any sense of pride and dignity when we are not meeting these financial obligations? None of us can feel free when we know our brothers and sisters are being systematically trampled upon by the apartheid forces in South Africa and

Namibia... we face a growing lack of commitment just when those struggling valiantly against apartheid need it most.³⁸

When we compare these huge deficits with the generally acknowledged smallness of OAU regular budgets³⁹ and the allocations to the special Fund and against the proliferation of liberation movements to which the funds were disbursed, we find that,

- (1) the OAU could not meet its financial obligations to the liberation movements most of the time,
- (2) the liberation movements ended up receiving smaller sums than were allocated to them,
- (3) the amount of financial and material assistance that did go to each liberation movement was rather small.

The financial problem which beset the OAU meant that the amount of aid that reached SWAPO from the organisation was rather small. The same goes for aid from member states. When the United Nations Institute for Namibia was opened in 1976, it was expected to be financed by contributions from member states and organisations to the Namibian Fund which is managed by the UN Council for Namibia. But it was revealed a year later that "apart from Zambia, there is a surprising lack of African countries on the list of those who have given financial aid so far."⁴⁰

One important consequence of the financial and military weakness of the OAU was that it greatly attenuated its ability to influence the direction of the liberation struggles in Africa. Most of the liberation movements increasingly came to rely on direct foreign financial and material aid, especially from the Eastern bloc and Scandinavian countries. In fact, some people have argued that the victories of the OAU in the liberation struggle had been due more to external influence than internal muscles, and that the liberation movements received greater support from the Eastern bloc than from African countries.⁴¹ The Cuban presence in Angola dramatically illustrates the potency of the argument. How could SWAPO operate in Namibia without a secured Angola to provide a rear base?

Still there are other historical factors which made it impossible for several member states to comply with OAU directives as they related to South Africa. Following the lines of incorporation and dependence mapped out by colonial rule, several states in Southern Africa, including most of the Frontline states, have continued to be dependent, to varying degrees, on South Africa in areas like food supplies, transport, communications and provision of employment. The economic dependence of these states have tended to be an obstacle in the way of Namibia liberation. For example in a memorandum submitted to the UN decolonisation committee meeting in Conakry in April, 1972, SWAPO accused Lesotho and Malawi of sabotaging the liberation war inside the territory. Both countries were said to have sent thousand of workers to replace striking Namibians. It was these workers, SWAPO claimed, rather than the strong arm of the Pretoria government which had hampered the effects of the strikers during the general strike of 1971-2.⁴² Lesotho and Swaziland which are completely surrounded by South Africa are in a veritable dilemma. No matter their level of commitment to the liberation struggle, the extent to which they can go in implementing OAU directives is practically circumscribed by the factors of geography and the exigency of daily living.

Thus by circumstance to history and geography, several states in Southern Africa have been compelled to maintain some form of working relationship with the minority regime in Pretoria. Some of them who are loudest in advocating for sanctions against South Africa are the most delinquent in implementing same.⁴³ Thus the policy of isolation and sanctions promoted by the OAU has tended not to be adhered to by these countries. In fact there are others – like Malawi – which have completely disregarded this policy and continued to develop economic relations with Pretoria. It goes without saying that by maintaining fruitful links with South Africa, these countries are directly and indirectly helping to strengthen the minority regime thus obstructing the process of liberation in Namibia.⁴⁴

We should not however that the desire by these states to break out from this cycle of dependence and hence reduce their economic vulnerability of South Africa prompted them to form an economic grouping in 1980 called the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC).⁴⁵ Through the instrumentality of SADCC, these states have coordinated their efforts and adopted strategies meant to redirect their commercial networks and trading patterns away from South Africa. At the centre of these efforts are projects designed to enhance regional integration. Varying degrees of success have been achieved in this endeavour, although the level of dependence on South Africa is still alarming. Yet the significance of this grouping, from a long term perspective is not lost on South Africa who has now made economic projects of regional importance the target for military action and sabotage. SADCC is a veritable threat to South Africa's hopes of economic control over the region.⁴⁶

The frequent disagreements among OAU member states regarding the means of the liberation struggle must count as one of the factors that has tended to reduce the effectiveness of the organisation since the 1970's, several member states have been maintaining a policy of 'Dialogue' as an alternative to the OAU policy of confrontation and isolation for solving the colonial problem in Namibia and the racial problem in South Africa. Proponents of 'Dialogue' have argued that the policy of non-communication would not work and that confrontational tactics would harden the resolve of South Africa to survive and increase its belligerency against her neighbours.⁴⁷ Based on this conviction, interstate visits between South Africa and countries such as Senegal, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Zaire soon developed while others like Malawi, Lesotho and Swaziland are known to have diplomatic representation in Pretoria.

The fact that the dialogue idea was a great betrayal of the OAU is underscored by the hardline position consistently taken by South Africa on the questions of Namibian independence and African majority rule in the apartheid enclave itself. This hardline posturing implies that the basis for meaningful dialogue in the context of the OAU dual strategy approach is simply not there. It is doubtful whether by fraternising with South Africa, these countries have helped to advance the course of liberation in Africa.

Finally, mention must be made of the hostility of the imperialist, western capitalist Nations to the process of liberation in Africa. The material, diplomatic and military support given by these countries to the Portuguese colonialist, the rebel government of Ian Smith and the racists in Pretoria is all too known to be recapitulated here. In the specific instance of Namibia, we should recall that while OAU diplomacy payed off at the UN General Assembly, it failed to impress the imperialist

Nations in the Security Council. Thus even though the General Assembly frequently endorsed the African view that only a combination of peaceful negotiations and forcible measures (such as military confrontation and economic sanctions can pressurise South Africa to halt her stalling tactics and to decolonise, the Security Council has refused to endorse such forcible measures. On several occasions, the "gang of three" – Britain, France and the USA – as permanent members of the Security Council, used their individual and triple veto power to defeat proposed Security Council resolutions which called for mandatory sanctions against South Africa. In this way, they thwarted the effects of the OAU and the General Assembly meant to achieve a speedy resolution of the Namibia problem.⁴⁸

It is our opinion that Western duplicity and conspiracy have been the root cause of the ineffectiveness of the UN in dealing with the Namibia problem. That apart, these imperialist nations have exploited their neo-colonial relationships to foment division within the ranks of the OAU. Just one example. It is on record that the policy of 'dialogue' was sold to the Francophone states in Africa by France.⁴⁹ What is more, we also witness to the surreptitious manner by which the USA has mischievously introduced the 'linkage' concept to frustrate the implementation of the UN plan. Indeed, the ongoing quadripartite talks between the USA, South Africa, Angola and Cuba tend to focus more on how to end the war in Southern Angola and secure the parallel withdrawal of Cuban – South African troops from the area than on the implementation of RES 435 on Namibia. It is significant to note that neither SWAPO nor the OAU is participating in these talks with the stalemate regarding the implementation of the 'linkage' idea, the UN plan may as well remain in abeyance.

Conclusion

It is very evident from the foregoing that while the OAU may be credited for whatever modest successes that have been achieved in the effort to liberate Namibia from South Africa's colonial rule, the Namibian drama has acted itself out in such a way that the OAU has become more or less an onlooker in the unfolding of events. The absence of a self – maintained military outfit, the financial and military weakness of member states, their economic dependence on South Africa and the historical alliance between international monopoly capitalism and settler colonialism – all have acted to drastically curtail the ability of the OAU to influence the direction of the liberation struggle in Namibia.

The OAU must act quickly to seize the initiative so as to be able to shape the struggle along lines favourable to the long term interest of independent Africa. A multi-pronged approach that seeks to marginalise the UN and other foreign actors is what is called for. Under this strategy, efforts will be geared towards the establishment of some form of a continental Army that can be deployed to the Frontline states for both offensive and defensive purposes against South Africa. Some people may sneer at this, but independent Africa has a surfeit of serving and retire field and Air Marshalls, Generals and Admirals to make this a viable proposition. Once this is done, South Africa's acts of aggression and destabilisation against her neighbours will be permanently checked, and SADCC will have the opportunity to grow unfettered and achieve its objective.

At the same time, increased material and financial support, especially military support must be extended to the liberation movements fighting South Africa, namely

SWAPO, ANC and PAC, to enable them intensify the guerrilla warfare. While the presence of an OAU army in the Frontline states will assure the liberation armies of secured rear bases, their enhanced military capability will increase the pressure on South Africa. It is only when that stage is reached that South Africa will be prepared to disengage from the territory, for:

Threatened and attacked from all sides, the South African Reich will not need any persuasion from the five Western powers or any other powers for that matter before quickly surrendering Namibia from its deadly grip in order to buy a little more time for its debased and doomed existence in Azania.⁵⁰

Such a scenario will enable SWAPO and the OAU, by negotiating from a position of strength, to secure a better deal from South Africa than that offered by RES 435.⁵¹ Except such practical measures are taken, all talks about Namibian independence will continue to be subjected to the whims and caprices of the USA and South Africa.

* The article was written before the independence of Namibia.

NOTES

1. Article II OAU Charter
2. This is the designation we shall use throughout in this article.
3. O. Aluko, "The Liberation Committee after a decade: An appraisal" *Quarterly Journal of Administration* (Ife) Vol. 8, No. 1, 1973. pp. 59-60. *Africa Research Bulletin* (ARB) 9:6 1972 p. 2496.
4. Z. Cervenka, *The Organisation of African Unity and its Charter*, London, 1979; H. Ododa, "The OAU and African Liberation" *Black Scholar*, 5, 7 April 1974.
5. The literature on the UN and the Namibian crisis is quite intimidating. But see F. Carrolle, *South West Africa and the United Nations*, Greenwood Press Pub. Westport, Connecticut 1975; J. Dugar (ed) *The South West African Namibian dispute: Documents and Scholarly writings on the controversy between South Africa and the United Nations*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1973; U.A. Obozuwa, *The Namibian question: Legal and Political Aspects*, Ethiopie Publishing Corporation, Benin City, 1973; J.H.P. Serfontein, *Namibia*, Rex Collings, London, 1976; W. Johnson, "Namibia: A Sacred trust of civilization", *Africa Today*, 23, 2, 1976.
6. See OAU Resolutions on De-colonisations, Apartheid and Racial Discrimination, Addis Ababa, May 1963.
7. *African Contemporary Record* (ACR) 1969 - 7 p. 43-4.
8. The Years 1975-87 could be regarded as Africa's Liberation decade owing to the ascension of most colonies to state-hood. The year 1960 has been used as a rough dividing point in dating to represent the trend.
9. For details of these developments see F.n. 5 above. and also L.U. Ejiofor, *Africa in World Politics - The growth of African presence in the UN 1945-1970: A Politico-Historic Survey*, Africana Educational Publishers Ltd. Onitsha, 1981; I.E. Sagay, *International Law and the Southern Africa Situation*, Lecture series No. 24, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Lagos, 1978.
10. Ibid. See also E.A. Gross, "The South West Africa Cases: What happened". *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 45, No. 1, 1966; P.S. Rao, "South West Africa Cases: Ethiopia vs South Africa, Liberia vs South Africa", *Africa Quarterly*, VI, 3, 1966; R. Higgins, "The international Court and South West Africa: The implications of the judgement", *I.C.J. Journal*, VIII, 1, 1967; R. Khan, "The World Court Judgement on South West Africa" *Africa Quarterly* Vol. VII No. 2, 1966.

11. A number of Such organisations are listed in Y. Tandon "The organisation of African Unity and the liberation of Southern Africa". In R. Dale and C.P. Potholm (eds) *Southern Africa in perspective*, New York. 1972.
12. R. Gibson, *African Liberation Movements*, OUP. London. New York. Toronto, 1972 p. 123.
13. For an analysis, see E.J. Kisanga "The OAU and the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa" *Taamuli*, (Dar es Salaam), 1977.
14. *ARB* 10:1 1973 p. 2714.
15. Quoted in Serfontein, *op. cit.* pp. 104-5.
16. Ibid.
17. These developments are examined in A.O. Adeoye, "South Africa in Namibia: Illegal occupation and the pursuit of the internal settlement option" (Paper presented at the Faculty Seminar, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Bendel State University, Ekpoma. April 19, 1988).
18. Angola, Zimbabwe and Nigeria were subsequently added to the group of Frontline states, the first 2 because of their geographical proximity, the last because of its material and financial support for the 'Liberation struggle in South Africa.
19. The Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia.
20. Serfontein, *op. cit.* pp. 101-117.
21. For the Western - UN Plan for Namibia, see *Africa Currents* No. 12/13 1978/79 p. 43.
22. See F.n. 17 above.
23. For a clear statement on the OAU position, see Chairman's opening address to the 19th Summit Conference of the OAU in Addis Ababa, June, 1983, excerpts of which can be found in *ARB* Vol. 20, No. 2, March 15, 1983.
24. *ARB* 21, 5, 1984 p. 7236.
25. *ARB* 21, 1, 1984 p. 7088.
26. *ARB* 24, 1, 1987 p. 8356.
27. Tandon, *op. cit.*; M.A. EL - Khawas, "Southern Africa. A challenge to the OAU", *Africa Today*, 24, 3, 1977.
28. Serfontein, *op. cit.* p. 326.
29. Aspects of this as they affect the Liberation Committee are discussed by Aluko, *op. cit.*
30. Article III (6) OAU Charter.
31. The OAU Defence Commission adopted a Military Protocol establishing an African Defence organ in January 1984. this was to be submitted to the Assembly of Heads of States for adoption and ratification. There is no information if this has been done. See *ARB* 21, 1, 1984, p. 7088.
32. *ARB* 6, 9, 1969 p. 1515; 7, 9, 1970 p. 1860.
33. Iselele, *op. cit.* pp. 38-9.
34. EL - Khawas, *op. cit.*, p. 29, *ARB*, 7, 3, 1970 p. 1672 p. 2367.
35. *ARB* 21, 3, 1984.
36. *ARB* 23, 3, 1986 p. 7995.
37. *ARB* 24, 2, 1987, p. 8387.
38. *ARB* 25, 2, 1988 p. 8782; 25, 5, 1988 p. 8864.
39. In 1970, it totalled a mere \$2.466 million of which \$300,000 was allocated to the Liberation Committee, in 1988, it rose to \$23 million. Allocation to the Liberation Committee for that year was not available. *ARB* 7, 3, 1970, p. 1672; 22, 2, 1985 (EC Services) p. 7627.

40. *Africa Magazine* No. 66 Feb. 1977 p. 14.
41. *West Africa*, June 9, 1986. p. 40.
42. *ARB* 9, 4, 1972 p. 2453. This point is significant because the General strike marked a watershed in the development of Namibian Society against the colonial regime and its homeland surrogates. See *Africa Report* 17, February 2, 1972 pp. 30-2; M. Kooy "The contract labour system and the Ovambo crisis of 1971 in South Africa" *African Studies Review*, XVI, April 1973; "Namibia" in *ICJ Review* No. 8 June 1972; Serfontein, op. cit., pp. 217-221; *ARB* 9, 2, 1972 p. 2388.
43. A good example is Zimbabwe. See *ARB* 23, 12, 1987 p. 8323 for an instance of this.
44. South Africa's attempts to ossify these tendencies was reflected in the idea of a Southern Africa Economic Community which she advertised in the mid 70s. This was to be a "Constellation" of dependent states that would serve as a captive market for the South African Economy. The idea was roundly rejected by most of these states.
45. For a full text of the SADCC Declaration, see *Africa Currents* No. 21/22 July/August 1980 pp. 52-6.
46. *West Africa*, 22 May 1983, p. 1221. The restructuring of the dependency relationships between SADCC states and South Africa is one of the key issues examined in Chandra Hardy, "The prospects for growth and Structural Change in Southern Africa". *Development Dialogue* (Uppsala) 2, 1987 pp. 33-58.
47. For this controversy, see *West Africa*, December 15, 1975 p. 1515; *Africa Magazine* No. 2, 1971 p. 14.
48. This is well documented see F.n. 15 & 9.
49. Aluko, op. cit., p. 61.
50. Isesele, op. cit., pp. 89-9.
51. The Actual negotiations which took place between 1978 and 1982 to work out the modalities for the practical implementation of the UN plan led to a complete mutilation of the original Plan set out in RES 435. The proposals on ceasefire, the campaign period and the voting/electoral system were carefully tailored to suit the interests of South Africa. The Western Contact Group which sponsored these talks were pro-South Africa through their appeasement policy, hence several concessions were wrenched, as it were from SWAPO and Africa. See C. Coker, "Peacekeeping in southern Africa. The United Nations and Namibia", *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* XIX, 2, 1987, *Africa Confidential* Vol. 21, 3, 1980; p. 7; Vol. 22, 25, 1981, p. 2 Vol. 23, 3, 1982, p. 7, Vol. 22, 10 1981 pp. 7-8, *Africa Magazine* No. 124, Dec. 1981, p. 31, No. 127, March, 1982, p. 1982, p. 29, No. 130 June, 1982.

The Anatomy of the Africa Multinational Conglomerate Enterprise Strategy in International Development

J. A. Harris, Sir*

When Julius K. Nyerere, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, received the 1981 Third World Prize, he declared in his *Third World Lecture* delivered in New Delhi, India, in February 1982 that:

"The Third World Prize is thus a declaration of pride in ourselves, and gives notice of our intension to become controllers of our destiny."

President Nyerere proposed the establishment of a technically efficient and highly dedicated Permanent Secretariat for the Group of 77 that would design and provide the framework for (a) achieving justice in negotiating with the Western industrialized countries, and (b) reducing the already substantial level of the Third World dependence on the industrial North, especially the increasing dependency on importing Western technology.

Most importantly, his declaration emanates from a key principle which is that the formation of South-South cooperation must include a sustained and persistent series of Third World owned and controlled multinational conglomerate enterprise combinations and centralized management consolidation processes; namely multiple Third World plans, numerous Third World international agreements, many and various Third World multinational banking conglomerate enterprises, joint ventures, consortia, syndicates (joint accounts), cartels, bilateral agreements, regional agreements, multi-lateral agreements, and management centralization as processes of concentration that are designed and implemented for perpetuating collective self-reliance.

The principal theme of this paper centres on the analysis and formulation of the Africa multinational conglomerate enterprises strategy in international development as an integral segment of the *South-South Option*, which is occurring vis-a-vis the global conglomeration movement.

Some authors who have examined the vast and intricate multinational conglomerate enterprises combination movement in the past include, among others, Neil Hood and Stephen Young in *The Economics of Multinational Enterprise*; Robert Liefmann in *Cartels, Concerns and Trusts*; Rudolf Hilferding in *Finance Capital: A Study of the Latest Phase of Capital Development*; M. Fennema in *International Networks of Banks and Industry*; an analysis of international business diplomacy presented by George W. Stocking and Myron W. Watkins in *Cartels in Action*; the U.S. Pujo Committee Report of 1913 (see note 2 at the end of this article); the U.K. Board of Trade, *Survey of International Cartels and Internal Cartels, 1944-1946*; and Fritz Stern's *Gold and Iron*.²

The view expressed by President Nyerere in his *Third World Prize* lecture is global in context, analysis, and policy. Some past practices, agreements, and policies, as the preceding references reveal, have provided evidence that establishes

* Adjunct Assistant Professor of Management, New York University School of Continuing Education, New York, U.S.A.