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Responding to Continental Insecurity: The Imperative of the Africa Standby Force

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Abstract

The paper made deliberate effort at confirming that African historical narrative is characterized by the incidences of violent conflicts and wars resulting in deaths and destruction of human holdings. This violence also induces human displacements within and across national territories as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees. This situation has become unacceptable to the people and governments of Africa. In response, due to the neglect of African interests in the international environment which results in the perpetuation of African violent conflicts, the people of Africa collectively decided that the OAU – that was legally limited - must give way for the birthing of a new continental organization – the AU; an organization that will be empowered by standard legal instruments to prevent and manage African security challenges. It is this proactive reasoning that led to the construction of an African Standby Force (ASF). Africa is realizing, perhaps for the first time, that while it has been at the forefront of maintaining international peace and security through her contributions to International Peace Support Operations (IPSOs) since 1948, her own conflicts challenges have not enjoyed prompt responses from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This is what makes the ASF initiative as a conflict response mechanism imperative to the

prevention of African security challenges. The paper employed the content analysis of the literature in the areas of international relations (IR) and peace and conflict resolution to examine the central issues surrounding the ASF framework. The paper has found out that if properly funded and giving access to operational resources including equipment, the ASF – due to its broad and clearly defined mandate will contribute immensely to the reduction of the violence plaguing Africa. Finally, the paper recommends the importance of taking seriously Early Warning Signals emanating from the theatres of violent conflicts in Africa for the ASF's prompt response.

Introduction

The end of the First and Second World Wars in 1918 and 1945 respectively became a time for sober reflection for the whole of humanity. For the first time in the history of human evolution, it became evident that man is capable of 'manufacturing' savagery and destruction of his kind in a manner that was before the twentieth Century thought to be inconceivable (Paige, 2009). The magnitude of this devastation and the realization of its implications on the relations between groups residing within the territories of states and the relations between these states in a wholly inchoate and anarchic environment by extension have informed the urgent need to ensure that such catastrophic phenomenon-as that of war- is not allowed to re-occur as human morality and historical consciousness advances.

Thus, from the twentieth Century, the world has seen the emergence of different shades of Peace and security advocates determined to understand the complex factors responsible for violent conflicts and how best to check these fiery and devastating infamies. These peace advocates saw International Relations (IR) Scholars, economic and political historians, seasoned Diplomats, national military institutions and veterans of international Peace Support Operations (PSO), a cross breed of interfaith ethicists drawn from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim orientations all convening to achieve a common goal - to chart a course that will direct the thrust of international peace and human security. The result of this effort has seen the conception of different theories and practical approaches for responding to the challenge of insecurities. However, despite the institutionalization of different international instruments; from the League of Nations and the United Nations (UN) and the legal regimes giving them legitimacy, to the decentralization of security activities resulting in the formation of regional and Sub regional bodies, insecurity at both the domestic and international terrain has persisted (Mckay, 1963). It is evident that Africa is one of the most affected regions plagued by violent

conflicts and other equally devastating challenges militating against its development.

It is increasingly becoming clear that Africa's post-colonial environment is besieged and embattled on many fronts by non-state actors (Alamu, 2015). With the end of the ideologically motivated Cold War and the liberalization of the processes of illicit arms procurement, the dynamics of insecurities have become highly unpredictable. During the recently concluded Amani Africa II Exercise in Pretoria, South Africa, the African Union (AU) has identified some of these contemporary challenges to Africa.

According to the AU, some of the core issues are, increased incidences of the failure of democratic ideals threatening peace and stability in 'dangerous places' like Nkurunziza's Burundi, Central Africa Republic (CAR), Somalia, the newly born Republic of South Sudan and Sudan itself, the Comoros, Lesotho, Darfur and a host of others (Amani Africa (2015).

This is apart from the cancerous phenomenon of terrorism and asymmetrical warfare eating into the very existence of African states (Born, Fluri, and Johnson, 2003: 109). In this regard, the challenge to the sovereignties and territorial integrity of Mali, Chad, Niger, Cameroun, Kenya, Ethiopia, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria and the entire Sahelian region readily comes to the fore. Terrorism remains one of the greatest threats to domestic, regional and the international environment. Responses to the incidences of terrorism are complex, especially as it is often linked to the organic networks of organized crime. These range from police action to border control. In addition, there is also the dimension of intelligence and measures covering the interconnected fields of finance, criminal law and informational technology (Born, Fluri, and Johnson, 2003).

The paper purposes to examine the reasons why the African continent has continued to be exposed to the kind of insecurities it is going through. In addition, the paper recommends a proactive approach in tackling insecurity

especially at a time when diplomacy is no longer yielding notable results because of the abundance of illicit arms catches in the possession of non-state criminal actors. A situation that is informing the relevance of military deployments both domestically and internationally.

Threat Perceptions to Post Colonial Africa

The post-independence African leadership of the Monrovia and Casablanca inclination was a rare breed that had the interest of the continent ever shaping its thinking and policies. The Pan African nationalism and visionary imagination of Africa's pioneer leaders was largely responsible for the approach they took in their attempt to craft a single organic and supra continental government under one central administration. Most of these policies were driven by security concerns of both the time and the future. Africa had just emerged from the throes of colonialism and the colonial power had bequeathed a weak military to confront these challenges. In addition, there were plenty of nationalist agitations within national territories. These statesmen, including Kwame Nkrumah, Tafawa Balewa, Leopold Senghor, Sekou Toure, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Felix Houphouet Boigny, Ahmadu Ahidjo, have successfully categorized these threat perceptions to the continent as will be brought to the fore in the ensuing debate (Mama, 2006).

Despite the vision and sense of nationalism sustaining the effort at constructing a formidable peace and security framework, they failed to prevent or even manage the myriad challenges the OAU faced at inception as a regional body dedicated to the welfare and the unity of African people. However, OAU failed to achieve its objective of uniting African people. For example, the OAU was not vigorous enough in its effort to resolve the Hutu and Tutsi conflict during the genocide. Thus, even though it oversaw the crafting of the Arusha Peace Accord, the OAU failed to include the most important issues to the conflict prevention and resolution processes. Thus, according to Uvin (1998: 45), the Accord concerned itself almost solely with the component that emphasised modalities for power sharing

arrangement between the dominant actors in the violence. Unfortunately, the OAU ignored the most pressing challenges including the question of poverty, the highly stratified social and economic order, the contemptuous treatment reserved to the poor and the ever present presence of the instrument of government in public affairs which is always accompanied by an oppressive system (Uvin 1998:45). It was issues like these that greatly hampered the OAU from achieving its mandate of uniting Africa people at the intra and inter states levels.

But these shortcomings were not unique to the OAU. An examination of other similar continental bodies across the world reveals the same dilemma. From the Organization of American States (OAS) to the Arab League (AL), all have shown a character that tempts analysts to describe their efforts as a failed attempt at conflict resolution and peacebuilding, peacemaking, and peacekeeping. Haas (1986: asserts that from the period marking the end of the second world war (in 1945) to the mid-1980s, out of the 319 recorded disputes, 86 (only 27 %) were referred to the Organization of American States (OAS), The Arab League or the Organization of African Unity (OAU) “and the council of Europe for management, and the regional organizations failed to abate 44 percent and failed to settle 74 percent of these referrals”. The issues of these threats will be addressed in the following section.

Internal Threats to Africa’s Peace and Security

Internal threats to Africa imply the sum total of developments within the continent that deliberately compromises and undermines the socio-economic and political balance of African states. It is these issues that have threatened the security of most African states since the misadventure of the colonialist that ran Africa’s affairs since Chairman Otto Von Bismark’s Berlin Conference of 1884- 1885 (Ukpabi, 1966; Nnoli, 1998). It was this incursion that resulted in the failure to build strong institutions, culminating in the ‘failed states’ phenomenon in a number of states in Africa: Somalia, CAR, DRC. Etc. This state failure syndrome has resulted

in the spawning of political intolerance, religious extremism, fundamentalism and terrorism against states and their vulnerable citizens. In addition, other issues include students and trade union militancy against the oppressive tendencies of the primordial bigotry, corruption and the mismanagement of national resources of many African leaders.

Inversely, there were equally the devastating nationalism of emergent ethnic bigots as exemplified by Nigeria's secessionist leader - Odumegwu Ojukwu (Basse and Fwa, 2011: 137) and Jonas Savimbi in Angola amongst many others. In addition, there is also the activities of dissidents and separatist elements that fall under the umbrella tag of non-state actors as well as military coup d'états that characterized the firmament of the African political narrative especially immediately after the attainment of political independence. From this overview, it is safe to conclude that the burden of distractions resulting in Africa's stagnation stems more from internal socio economic and political variables than in external factors.

On the contrary, it is common to hear nationalists and underdevelopment scholars and their counterparts in policy establishment arguing that contemporary unfolding experiences of conflicts and underdevelopment have roots in the domination of African and Latin America peoples by the global powers of bygone eras (Mustapha, 2006: Oyewumi, 2006); from Cortez's invasion and domination of the Inca, Mayan and Aztec Civilizations of Latin America to Africa's occupation by an Anglo- Saxon cultural hegemony (Chomsky, 1999), a phenomenon spanning half a millennia of human evolutionary history that had bequeathed the burden of stagnation and underdevelopment to these dominated peoples subsisting in the margin of civilization (Oyewumi, 2006: 313). Specifically Oyewumi (2006: 313) has maintained that:

The last five hundred years, described as the age of modernity, have been marked by a number of historical processes including the Atlantic Slave trade and the attendant institutions of slavery, and the European

colonization of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The idea of modernity evokes the development of capitalism and industrialization, as well as the establishment of nation states and the growth of regional disparities in the world system.

While this is correct, it cannot also be disputed that many of the highlighted timeline historical events and their negative consequences cannot be disconnected from the bad leadership of most African statesmen (Imoibighe, 1996; Meredith, 2005).

The culpability of the colonialist in disrupting the African progress is most evident when the policy adapted for administering African territories is brought under examination. The British, Belgian, Portuguese and French colonial overlord thrived most in dividing African peoples so that they could enjoy absolute control of their colonial subjects. This strategy is described as the 'Policy of Divide and Rule' (Rodney, 1976; Ake, 1992; Ikimi, 1977, Olusanya, 1966; Ikoku, 1976).

Through the infamous indirect rule, the British deliberately created the conditions of rivalry, hatred and sometimes tribal wars to divide the people under their sphere of influence (Rodney, 1969; Imoibighe, 1996). This fact ensured that virtually all the states that emerged from the bitter experiences of colonialism came out weak, unfocussed and panting under the travails of near-dysfunctional institutions. Hence most of these states became vulnerable to external manipulation as much as they were to internal pressures manifesting in coups and counter coup de tats and separatist movements. It is necessary to note that long before the establishment of the OAU, many African states were already embroiled in different forms of strife. For instance, even before independence the Tiv Riots in central Nigeria had become a recurring phenomenon (Aluaigba, 2008). These serial riots continued until the overthrow of the first republic in 1966. Another violent conflict that threatened the survival of the newly independent polity was the one in the South west of the country (Kums,

1996). From the 1954 election in Nigeria, violence became part of the electoral process afterwards.

It was the 1965 western regional election that signaled the dangers Nigeria could be exposed to as an independent democratic state. The said election resulted in so much violence that it literally threatened the first republic. The 1964 Federal election that preceded the regional election in the West actually laid the foundation for the mayhem in 1965 (Ayuba, 2011). The West has been described by political pundits as the 'Wild West' to capture the bleak aura of the times when intra party violence brought the Action Group and the Western regional government to its knees. This resulted in Operation *Wetie* and ultimately the capitulation of the first republic.

The severity of this violent conflict resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency over the region in 1962. It was actually complex socio-political questions like these that climaxed in the coup and counter coup d'états of January 1966 and July 1966 which eventuated in the Nigerian Civil war (Kolade, 2015).

Many other African states suffered from this experience before 1963. Prominent amongst these are; Zaire (then Leopoldville), Sudan, Ethiopia, Togo, Congo (Brazzaville), Benin (then Dahomey), Burkina Faso (then Upper Volta), Libya, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. These confrontations had different forms and were defined by different dynamics making each unique in their individual character. Thus, apart from stifling their developments these conflicts in the same vein blurred the understanding of these countries from appreciating the need for an African Defense Force. The reason for this is simple. Analysis has established that internal threats to African security were widely spread within the continent even before the OAU was put in place. Thus, summing up the matter as pertains the challenge the continent is confronted with, with regards to the imperative of constructing a formidable continental Peace and security architecture, Kums (1996: 25) has observed that:

Therefore, unless the level of external threat is higher than the internal one, so as to undermine the latter, the people are bound to be inward looking in their defense deployment. This situation has been aggravated by the tendency in most African countries who concentrate political power as well as the wealth of the nation in a few corrupt hands.

Inter-African Threats

Beyond the grievous challenges of internally induced violent conflicts and civil wars, African states have also made their mark in the area of inter-state wars. This is despite the seeming homogeneity in their racial and cultural identity, apart from their similar historic-geographic experiences that should have ordinarily facilitated Africa's cohesion and integration, thereby enhancing her competitive capacities in her post-independence history. Reasons for these disharmonies are ascribed to the conditions of the asymmetrical distribution of resources between states as well as the differences in the ideological mindset of the countries constituting contiguous neighbors (Ikoku, 1976).

Disputes over territorial boundaries as defined by the different European colonial administrations after the Berlin conference of 1884-85, marked yet another defining characteristic of inter-African conflicts. A cursory examination of Africa's inter-states conflict reveals that boundary/territorial questions were largely responsible for continental insecurities. For example, there was the Ethiopia-Somalis border war of 1982; the Mauritania-Senegal conflict in 1989-1991; the 1998-2000 Eritrea/Ethiopia war; the Djibouti/Eritrea border conflict of 2008 and the most recent one, the Sudan/ South Sudan border conflict of 2012. These conquering European powers did nothing about bringing certain basic considerations into play to delineate the boundaries in contention. For instance, the peoples' ethno-cultural identities, economies, political

orientation and physical features were not issues of consequence to the colonial powers when they carved out these territories. Their only motivation was their avaricious national interests (Imoibghe, 2013). R.L Kapil (1966: 660). Has noted that “delimitation agreements were negotiated before detailed knowledge of the terrains and peoples in the interior of the continent was available”

The deliberate refusal of these powers to take into cognizance the components of national stability like the ethnic/linguistic, sectarian religious leaning, the clan distribution of the people and the overall conceptual framework and world view of African people greatly imperiled the evolution of organic states which is central to the understanding of African conflicts. These basically cultural components often harnessed in the pursuit of and the aggregation of corporate interest could be seen as Geertz presents it. According to Clifford Geertz (in Keohane, 1991: 107), culture is the ‘web of significance’ that people have created for themselves. The negligence of the cultural component of the people led to the partitioning of many national and ethnic communities into two or more ‘dissimilar states’. Amongst ethnic groups partitioned were the Hausa/Fulani between Niger, Nigeria and the Chad republics. There are, among others, the Yorubas between Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, the Ewe between Ghana and Togo, the Somalis between Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia, the Maasai between Tanzania and Kenya, the Hutu and Tutsi stocks between Burundi and Rwanda. Therefore some groups within some countries have operated as minorities with limited rights and privileges. Where this is the case, these groups aspire to join their kith and kin in the countries where they have the majority population (Kapil, 1966; Meredith, 2005). In fact this was a major factor responsible for the Rwandan genocide (Meredith, 2005).

It is important to note that a total of thirty boundary/territorial disputes were recorded on the continent before the end of 1996. Out of these, twenty one did not experience any implosion, while the others experienced massive human casualties and bloodshed consequent on war. To reiterate, some of the common issues resulting in the violence in question include

the pursuit of individual national economic interests by states (the presence of mineral deposits in some areas, thus making them of strategic benefits); ethno-cultural attraction that makes nationalists pursue irredentists policies against their neighbours. Some key examples include Somalia's territorial claim against Kenya and Ethiopia based on ethno-cultural concerns. Morocco's assertive claims over Western Sahara are premised on the same consideration (International Crisis Group, 2007). On the Morocco/Western Sahara conflicts, the International Crisis Group has made the following interesting comments;

The Western Sahara conflict is both one of the world's oldest and one of its most neglected. More than 30 years after the war began the displacement of large numbers of people and a ceasefire in 1991 that froze military positions, its end remains remote. This is substantially due to the fact that for most of the actors – Morocco, Algeria and the Polisario Front, as well as Western countries – the status quo offers advantages a settlement might put at risk. But the conflict has human, political and economic costs and real victims: for the countries directly concerned the region and the wider international community. This is important to acknowledge if a new conflict-resolution dynamic is to be created.

On the other hand, Cameroon's claim against Nigeria's Bakassi Peninsula has its source in the huge oil mineral deposits in the Bakassi Peninsular, a territory lying between the two countries. Hence, economic and strategic considerations sustain the thrusts of the struggle between the nations (Alamu, 2013; Dokubo, 2010).

External Threats

This section focuses on the role of external forces in contributing to the overall condition of insecurity plaguing the African continent. It has been noted that Africa, more than any other continent and her peoples have suffered under the yoke of a global conspiracy (Chomsky, 1999). From the slave trade to colonialism right into the experiences of imperialism and racism, Africa has been at the midst of it all. In recent times, while the objective has not shifted significantly, the pursuits of the nations of the North Atlantic region pertaining to Africa is its re-colonization by proxy and sometimes even directly. The interest of the West and Asia (China and Japan) in Africa is economic as it is strategic (Chomsky, 1999). Therefore they have continued to employ that age-old scheme of divide and rule to control individual African countries – a strategy that has worked for these imperialist grand masters in their dream of building a global empire (Bakut and Ayuba, 2013). To this end, these civilizations constitute a major source of threat to an independent Africa, as long as they have continued to harbor the dream of re-colonization by means that are subtle as much as they are aggressively frontal. However, with regards to Africa and even other parts of the Third World, post-colonial states were exposed to a high degree of external political, economic and ideological ‘support’, which tended, in some measure, to distort or even disguise the more general process of economic and political and even military marginalization of the continent from the rest of the global economy (Bakut, 2000: 13). This condition greatly weakens the potential of African actors in contesting alongside other more established global powers (Rodney, 1976).

Apart from the Africa Command (AFRICOM) and the Central Command (CENTCOM) that oversees America’s strategic interest on the continent; other European countries have equally entered into different forms of ‘military alliances, partnerships and co -operations with individual African states. For instance, France has five (5) military bases (that may include missile trial spots) in Africa: Port Boet in Abidjan, Cote D’ Ivo ire, Senegal, Gabon, Djibouti, and Central Africa Republic (CAR). Britain has three (3) in Kenya, Mauritius and in Botswana. The US has her bases in Somalia, Egypt, Morocco and Kenya.

The Former USSR had her installations stationed in Ethiopia after an agreement with Mengistu Haile Mariam's erstwhile junta. Finally, Germany's base was cited in the Shaba region in former Zaire (Kums, 1996: 29). With these heavy military presence, Africa was bound to face the kind of challenges that characterized her post independent history. For instance, France overthrew Jean Badel Bokassa of the CAR, and France went on to "halt revolts against favored regimes like in Gabon in February 1964 to restore Leon Mba, and in Zaire during the Shaba crisis of 1977/79". Just recently, the French military was at the fore front of entrenching and consolidating the government of Allasane Ouatarara in Cote D' Ivo ire. This is apart from the French's and the US' culpability in the Rwandan genocide. This assertion is validated by Chossudovsky (2003: 115) who maintains on this note that

The genocide was successful in its intentions, as the French-supported Hutu Habyarimana government was replaced with a US-supported Tutsi Paul Kagame government, with the aid of US Special Forces and CIA. The situation (the genocide) should in fact be viewed as an undeclared war between France and America. The aim was to install an Anglo-American protectorate in Rwanda, which enabled the US to establish a neo- colonial foothold in Central Africa. This was successfully achieved, as the language of the private and government sectors switched from French to English. (Chossudovsky, 2003: 115).

In addition;

The RPF deputy leader, Paul Kagame was trained at US Army installations in the United States and when, during the 1990 invasion of Rwanda, the RPF's leader was killed, "Kagame became the head of the guerrilla army, and his ties with the Pentagon, CIA, and State

Department became closer. Classified UN documents revealed that Annan and Albright were aware of this information. It came out in a French National Assembly inquiry that, the U.S. even supplied the RPF with the Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles that were used to shoot down the Rwandan presidential aircraft, and that a UN investigation team got a hold of information that, a company linked to the CIA leased the warehouse used to assemble the missile launchers. However, the investigation was closed down once the relationship to the US was realized (Marshal, 2008: 2).

These imperialist hegemonists were active as well in the conflict between the Polisario Nationalist movements and Mauritania (Kapil, 1966: 26). Many other incidences of the west's aggression and interventionist activities through coup de tats and the scuttling of the overall development project of the continent abound.

This may to some extent explain the challenge the OAU farced in its attempt to resolve conflicts involving its member. Thus, while the OAU was thought to be facing an African problem, in the real sense, the challenge confronting her was against an external force.

Towards the Emergence of the African Union (AU) and its Potential in Peacebuilding:

Historically, progressive African state-men like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Sekou Toure of Guinea had favored the idea of an African Union at the dawn of African rebirth in the 1960s. On the other hand, their conservative compatriots maintained the view that the continent at the time was not ripe for a political union (Birai, 2001: 234). For the latter group, a gradual functionalists approach should be adapted towards initial

economic cooperation and subsequently continental political integration (Birai, 2001).

Some of the perceived weaknesses that hastened the transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) was the provision in the OAU charter that gave undue recognition to the sovereignty of nations (hence no entity, whether statal or organizational) could interfere in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state within the organization. Despite the leverage enjoyed by the AU, consequent on enabling laws strengthening it, it has not lived up to the confidence reposed on it. For instance, with the prevalence of crime against humanity and sometimes outright genocide the “Just cause Threshold” now permits intervention to protect victims of violent conflicts. This proviso is embedded within the Rome Statutes, and it subscribes to the doctrine of the ‘responsibility to protect’ giving legal backing for intervention as observed above.

With this doctrine, the International Community has now resolved that it would no longer stand by and watch while despotic regimes and certain interests within states continue to perpetuate themselves in power and in the process ignite violent conflicts and wars. Anan reiterated this position in his speech at the millennium summit where he called on strategic actors to appreciate the emergent reality that “human rights concerns must transcend the claims of sovereignty by nations” (Anan, 1999). Unfortunately, China, Russia and many of the developing Worlds, led the opposition against Anan’s benign advocacy (Ayoob, 2001). What must not be lost on observers however is that Africa’s multifaceted political, financial and operational limitations afford western nations and their agencies entry points to intervene in the affairs that are purely African in their orientation which gives them opportunity to manipulate the process(es) to their own economic advantage (Bencherab, et tal, 2011: 17).

Despite the conceivable efforts of the OAU at addressing the multifaceted conflicts confronting Africa from the Congo crisis in the early 1960s to contemporary incidences, the area the Organization of African Unity has faced the most challenge has been in the spheres of preventive diplomacy,

conflict mitigation and resolution. Thus, in its more than fifty years post-independence experience, the African continent has remained the continent with the most grievous security challenges ranging from violent conflicts, terrorism, war and the massive flow of refugee populations and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in the case of intrastate conflicts. It was obviously this short comings that informed the action of the African Heads of States and Government (AHSG) to make a detour from its previously passive attitude towards continental conflicts as elaborated by Nhara (1998: 3) He is on record as saying:

Much has been said in recent times about the role of the Organization of African Unity in the maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa. Without delving too deeply into the history of the OAU, the turning point for the Organization, in the area of conflict prevention, management and resolution, came in 1993.

Some thirty years after the founding of the organization, the African Heads of State and Government adopted the Cairo Declaration, which established the OAU Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The decision to establish this Mechanism within the OAU was reached against a realization that there was no way Africa could improve its socio-economic performance, in the years following the end of the Cold War, in an ocean of wars, conflicts and domestic tension. The Heads of State and Government saw in the establishment of such a Mechanism the opportunity to bring to the fore the process of dealing with conflicts on the African continent a new institutional dynamism, enabling speedy action to prevent or manage and, ultimately, resolve conflicts when and where they occur.

The failings of the OAU occasioned by what is perceived the state-centrism and the principles of non-interference “which constitutes the organization’s charter is deemed an important factor in stirring the renewed vigor for the translation of the O.A.U. to the A.U. Nonetheless, the difference between the two organizations is hardly noticeable (Dunmoye, 2001: 246). To create a cohesive organization, members in 1997, established the African Economic Community (AEC) The body had in mind the development of an African common Market which was later to become the A.U. The AEC entered into accord with regional African economic groupings that was projected to lead to the harmonization of policies of those common markets. A more aggressive expansion and transformation of the OAU was adopted at Lomé, Togo, in 2000, in the structure of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which replaced the OAU in 2002. The A.U. carries within it more powers to advance African economic, social, and political integration, and a stronger commitment to democratic principle (<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history>). Of course, an important component of the newly birth African Union is the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). This is the platform upon which the Africa Standby Force is embedded to manage African security challenges. This initiative was conceived because of the experience of Africa in the post-cold war international environment and the weakness exhibited by the OAU in confronting the menace posed to continental peace and security.

The end of the Cold War between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the WARSAW Pact alliances successfully orchestrated one of the greatest socio - economic and political disruptions in human history. The Cold war ensured the containment of irredentist and insurrectionist tendencies within the boundary of states. However, from the 1990’s legitimate government authorities and the institutional frameworks upon which these governments rest and receive legitimacy in the international system were suffering increasingly from challenges by non-state actors and criminal gangs operating under different nomenclatures as predicted in Samuel Huntington’s Clash of Civilization thesis (1996).

The triumphalist victory of liberal ideologies over every other form of human system as argued in Fukuyama (1992) reverberated across the world and generated heated debate and intellectual backlashes. The initial concrete reaction to contest Fukuyama's assumption originated from the established scholar of the realists paradigm, Samuel Huntington (1996). In his 'Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World order' thesis, Huntington has remarkably maintained that while conflicts between nations in a geopolitical order might become insignificant, new forms of challenge to states will become the order to define the global future. These will bear ethno-religious and civilizational character and these will unfold within the border of nation-states. From this period, the rising waves of intra-state violent conflicts and trans-border criminalities have been aggravated. These are marked by activities as terrorists onslaughts against states and their vulnerable citizenry, the complex dynamical trends of Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation (SALW), threats to national maritime security through the activities of sea pirates which have all, in a conspiratorial posture imperiled contemporary international peace and security order.

It was this fact that led to violent conflicts and the destruction and collapse of many states of Africa. Thus, in this period, wars and ethno religious and politically motivated violence erupted in Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Nigeria, Libya, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central Africa Republic (CAR), Burundi and Rwanda amongst many other wars.

Rwanda in particular was unique in the sense that between a short span of time; April and July of 1994 to be precise, between 800–850 thousand people were slaughtered in Rwanda (Prunier 1995:265). "The vast majority of the dead were members of the minority Tutsi ethnic grouping. However, members of the majority ethnic grouping

– the Hutu – were also killed if they were seen as opponents of the genocide’s (Hutu) organizers” (Storey, 2012: 2). It is these challenges that informed the conception of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Standby Force (ASF) within its framework to confront threats to national insecurities within Africa.

The Imperative for a Stand-by Force in Continental Security Order

The Charter of the African Union (AU) equips the organization to tackle contemporary threats to regional peace and security. African leaders recognized that peace and unity are critical to development and made it a cardinal priority by establishing the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). This includes the protocol relating to the establishment of the peace and Security Council (AUPSC), the African Standby Force, the continental Early Warning System (EWS) and the panel of the wise and also an AU peace fund. An important addition is the determination to promote human rights. The primary responsibility of the OAU at inception up to its rounding up was to protect the national sovereignty of member states and as such did not allow interference into their internal affairs. This proviso weakened the capacity of the OAU in ensuring the entrenchment of what should be its human security responsibility. It was some of the shortcomings of the OAU that justified the *locus* for the restructuring of the continental organization (Dunmoye, 2001). The AU also respects national sovereignty, but has gone further to authorize rights of intervention in grave circumstances in line with the global resolve for humanitarian protection under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) (Kamani, 2015: 6) .

In other words, while the AU respects the sovereignty status of state entities, it has gone beyond to ascribe to itself the powers and rights to intervene in a member state in order prevent and restore peace and socioeconomic and political stability to threatened countries during genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity wherever and

whenever they seem to be brewing. (Article 4 (h) (Kamani, 2015: 6). Article 3, sub-sections 1 (e) and (f) of the constitutive act emphasize the promotion of the guarantee and respect of the basic human rights and principles of liberal democratic governance. The inclusion of this provision is because the AU recognizes the fact that the struggle for political power is always the reason for the outbreak of violence and war on the continent. Therefore, the AU under Article 30 forbids the unconstitutional change of government within the African region. Undoubtedly, a critical challenge to achieving pan African unity is the prevalence of conflicts and political instability (Dunmoye, 2001). Notwithstanding these carefully crafted legal arrangements, the African Union like its predecessor, the OAU, is still grappling with numerous challenges including poor funding and the fact that the stand by force – ASF has not become fully operational despite the fact that armed conflicts and insurgencies are still prevalent in South Sudan, Nigeria, CAR, DRC, and so on. Thus this negates the principle of ‘African solutions to African problems’ (Dunmoye, 2001).

Specifically, the functions of the ASF includes: observing and monitoring missions; perform other forms of peace support operations; intervention in a member state in respect of grave circumstances or at the request of a member states to restore peace and security; in accordance with Article 4(h) and (j) of the AU Constitutive Act; organize preventive deployment to prevent a dispute or a conflict from escalating, an ongoing violent conflict from spreading to neighboring areas or states and the resurgence of violence after parties to conflict have reached an agreement; it is also to perform the specialized duties of peace building; pursue activities including post conflict disarmament and demobilization; provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of civilian population in conflict areas and support effort to address major natural disasters; it is also the duty of the ASF to perform any other functions as may be deemed appropriate by the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the Assembly of Heads of States Governments (ASF, 2013).

In principles, the ASF has multidimensional capacity which includes military, police and civilian personnel. This should be on permanent standby in their respective countries. These forces are organized to be ready for rapid deployment to the theatre of violent conflicts in their countries of origin. “Thus the initial concept of the ASF was that of a quick reaction capacity that would enable Africans to respond swiftly to a crisis unhampered by any heavy political and instrumental burdens”. It must equally be reiterated at this juncture that the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has embedded within its well thought – out framework, the AU Conflict Early Warning System (AUCEWS). Therefore a combination of forces on permanent standby and the CEWS mechanism in place will give positive results any time there is threat to human security.

Thus, in the effort to operationalize its mandate, the ASF, in October 2010, organized the first continental Exercise to evaluate its operational readiness. This was conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia’ (Amani Africa, 2015). The initiative, tagged the AMANI AFRICA I, Command Post Exercise marked the climax to “a two years training and capacity building cycle designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the African Union Commission (AUC), through the Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD)”. Pursuant to the above, it was expected that the process will go ahead to mobilize the African Standby Force (ASF) for an AU mandated peace support operation’ (Amani Africa, 2015). This revolutionary initiative aimed at charting the course of peace and conflict resolution in Africa is a result of collaboration between African Union and the European Union.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The thrust of this thesis has been sustained by the assumption that Africa’s post-colonial experiences of violence and war could only be arrested by the creation of an indigenous defense mechanism in the form of a standing military - the ASF - in constant state of preparedness to respond to the

continent's challenges of insecurities including intra state violent conflicts, wars, cross-border crime and criminality, terrorist onslaught against states and many more of these menaces threatening the survival of African states and their fragile institutions. Therefore, the Conflict Early Warning resources of member states need to be developed to facilitate the rapid response capabilities of the ASF. This is important because it was the non-adherence to this mechanism that resulted in the Rwanda genocide. Note that the Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda, the Canadian born and Romeo Delleire had dispatched series of warnings to the UN headquarters and specifically to its department of Peace Keeping Operations (UNDPKO) and to the big players in international politics. But these warnings were not heeded to in what analyst describe as the marginalization of African affairs in international politics. Thus, the APSA and the ASF need to be proactive if Africa is to enjoy the much desired peace and stability needed to serve as catalyst for sustainable human development in the 21st Century and beyond. This recommendation is apt in view of the reality that since the Rwandan catastrophes, regions and the countries within are left to tackle their own security challenges by themselves. This informs the recommendations that Africa, in line with the expectations of the times must arise to confront the problems inhibiting her progress.

In addition, to achieve the above identified solutions, it is important to also consider the empowerment of the Pan Africa Parliament in a manner that it will be central in taking major decisions pertaining matters that cover the security of states within the continental union. This is important because security is core in facilitating human wellbeing, thus it becomes essential that the views of the people are integrated and given expression in national, sub regional and continental security policies.

This is without any doubt imperative because when carefully considered, most countries always take decisions concerning the continent with their selfish national interest determining the course/direction of these decisions. On the contrary, if the Pan African Parliament (PAP) becomes an important decision making instrument in the process, the ultimate

interest that will determine policies and actions will be focused on the continent as a whole and not some specific country or state within the union.

It is crucial to mention at this point of our discourse that most of the conflicts ravaging Africa are structural in nature and are usually caused by poverty and disequilibrium in resource allocation. Therefore, poverty eradication must be the fulcrum upon which any peace-building effort and conflict management initiative should be anchored. Thus, an important approach towards addressing the issues of poverty on the continent is through making practical legislations that cover realistic economic areas like the rural economy, agriculture, mining and small scale manufacturing enterprises. These laws must be fashioned deliberately to protect rural farmers against international agricultural and mining speculators who acquire vast tracts of land leading to the disempowerment of small-scale farmers.

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