INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CONFLICT AS A CHALLENGE TO PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT
It is an indubitable fact that African countries has been highly susceptible to inter and intra conflicts after independence. This has made Africa to be christened the hub of conflicts and wars. Most pathetic is the fact that these conflicts and wars have defied any meaningful solution, and their negative impact has impeded peace and development in the continent. It has eroded to a larger extent the core value of human existence in the continent. The depended nature of African economy is largely blame for this, knowing fully well that whatever affects he developed nations have a rippling effect on Africa. This paper examines the challenges the internationalization of conflict has posed to peace and development in Africa. The paper argues that most of the violent conflict in the continent has external influence and sponsors. It blames the Cold War rivalry between the capitalist United States and the communist USSR as it were, where attempt by the African allies to delink from either of the ideologies to favour the other, always led to intervention by these powerful nations. The paper submits that while the external factors share in the blame for Africa lack of peace, development and progress, African leaders are largely to blame for the myriads of problems that have bedeviled the continent due to their tantrum for bad leadership.

Introduction

The history of Africa as a continent is deplete with conflict. Arguably, there is no part of the continent that is not enmeshed in one conflict or the other. The Cold War rivalry between the capitalist United States and its allies and the communist USSR later Russia and its protégés after the Second World War bifurcated the continent for their selfish gain and interest. Since the 1960s till date, Africa has witnessed series of conflicts and wars such as the Sudan (1985-1990), Liberia (1980-2003), Nigeria (1967-70),

Somalia (1988-93), Angola since 1974, and Burundi, DR. Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone (1991-2001) (Alabi, 2006:41).

A cursory look at the above conflicts revealed international influences in its operations. Alarmingly, most of these countries lack the political will and temperament to maintain previous peace agreement; thereby falling prey to the antics of conflict merchants within and outside the continent. The internationalization of conflict in Africa has a deep historical root that dates back to colonial and precolonial periods, and became prevalent and destructive during Cold War and post-Cold War period. The attempt by the foreign powers and international conflict entrepreneur to influence Africa's political and economic system during decolonization and post-independence period has increased the rate of conflict in Africa (Marshall and Knor,2003; Schmidt, 2016).

The wind of conflict blowing across African continent has raised eyebrows among conflict experts who have fingered some range of key forces such as contradictions in globalization and the attendant intensification of identity-based struggle for the control of power and resources, the opposing economic and political reforms and flawed democratization. There is also the declining state capacities and diminishing resources and the proliferation of light and small arms in Africa. The incursion of external influence into Africa have aided in the incubation and spread of conflicting situations in Africa. Example the was overthrow of Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana in 1966, shortly after independence and the violent conflict in Congo Kinshasa, now DR Congo which led to the killing of President Patrice Lumumba. Apart from the inter communal war/conflict that have ravaged Africa, there have been class, political, religious and environmental conflicts which are mostly intra (Herbst, 1990: 117-139).

Conceptualizing Conflict in Africa: The Origin

Neo-colonialism, weak governance, exclusionary politics, contested legitimacy, resource competition, globalized conflicts and extremist ideologies have all combined to create various episodes of violent conflict across Africa since independence. This crisis has led to loss of lives, wanton destruction of political, economic, social and environmental gains; thereby leading to lack of peace and development in the continent. Some African countries were enmeshed in violent conflict in the 1960's as groups contested the legitimacy of the government in power in the post-colonial Africa. Examples of these can be seen in the conflict in the DR Congo, Ghana, the Nigerian Biafran civil war and the liberation struggle in Angola, Mozambique etc (Gilpin, 2016: 21-32).

The end of Cold War at the end of 1980's changed the character and contour of conflict in Africa as it heralded a new dynamic in conflict trends in Africa, where conflict occurs along the lines of cultures, religion and identity. According to Huntington, this was the reason for the 'clash of civilization'-

> *In this new world, the most pervasive, important and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities. Tribal wars and ethnic conflicts will occur within civilizations. Violence between states and groups from difference civilizations, however carries with it the potential for escalation as other states and groups from these civilizations rally to the support of kins in countries (Huntington, 1997:28).*

This ideology has incubated and hatched a lot of tribal conflict that produced ethnic militia and warlords in a lot of African countries. Groups such as Al-Shabaab in East Africa, Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin and North East Nigeria, M23 rebels in the DR Congo, the conflict in Sudan, Mali and the post Ghaddafi violence in Libya etc, have all contributed to the new face violent conflict in Africa. A Cursory look at the above conflict revealed that it is among parties in the same countries and groups.

In conceptualizing conflict in Africa, it must be understood that statehood in Africa is highly contested. African countries during colonialism struggled to relate with their neighbouring countries, as colonial conflicts were about groups survival and freedom from oppression. Inter-state rivalry and intra violent conflict within the same state has been the new face conflict in Africa since independence. However, Small and Singer (1982), identified various types of conflicts in Africa since independence and this are-

1. Inter-state wars.

2. Extra-state war: (a) Colonial conflict with the colony, (b) Imperial-state vs non-state actors

3. Intra-state wars: (a) civil wars for struggle for power and over local issues, regional internal wars and inter-communal wars.

4. Non-state wars: (a) In non-state area, and (b) Across the state borders.

The above conflicts/wars have domestic, transnational and global effect in Africa with an estimated 12 million deaths, over 105% of war deaths and unquantified numbers of displaced persons (IDP) in African countries since the end of 1963. It's worth noting that most African conflict remain unresolved or partially resolved which diminish the number of war related deaths, while underlying drivers such as political alienation, ethnic cleavages and entrenched socio-economic inequality and sustainers such as foreign aids and proceeds from natural resources persist (Lacina and Gleditsch, 2005: 145-156; Gilpin, 2016: 21-32).

Moreover, the activities of non-state actor across the continent since the end of Cold War has led to the resurgence of anther phase of conflict in Africa. Militant groups such the Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Banditry in Nigeria, the M23 rebels in DR Congo, the Lord's Resistance Army in Mozambique, have all carried out various forms of violence in the countries and regions in which they are domiciled. These non-state actors have engaged in acts of terrorism, insurgency, some of them in the extreme form. Different authors and scholars have given different descriptions and connotations to the modus operandi of these groups in their activities and their contribution to the distortion of peace and development in Africa. They have argued that because some of these groups are faceless, it has been difficult to know their aims and objectives other than to cause disharmony in the society and nation for a selfish few. Examples of these groups are the Boko Harm and the Al-Shabaab etc, militant groups whose grievances remain blurred from the beginning. These authors and scholars submitted that labelling this violent conflict as civil war, an insurgency or genocide is not as important as a comprehensive diagnosis of the causative factors that can help resolve the impasse (Gilpin, 2016: 21-32).

Historical Overview of Conflict Trends in Africa from 1960

The number of countries plagued by violent conflict annually during the pre-independence period rose from three during the 1950s, to more 12 in the 1990s, before it dropped to below nine during 2000s. Therefore, four conflict epoch can be understood since independence- the immediate post-independence years, characterized by liberation struggle and contested legitimacy (1960-1974); the Cold War years, characterized by proxy wars (1975-1992); the post-Cold War years, characterized by recurring violent conflicts that were fuelled by economic and political exclusion (1993-2005); and the era of non-state actors, characterized by extremist groups and globalized violence (2006-2013) (Gilpin, 2016: 21-32).

Emerging Conflict and Security threats in Africa

African countries are facing a number of emerging security threads presently and there is more to come. These includes- 'rapids urbanization', characterized by urban expansion and migration drift in most African countries; 'climate change', characterized by draught that affect agricultural production in most African countries, leading to low food production and hunger; There are also 'border dispute', characterized by humanitarian crisis and attempt to seek for greener pastures elsewhere; 'Demographic transition', characterized by the emergence of youthful population that needs political and economic support by the government; and lastly illicit 'transnational network', characterized by drug cartel and barons who engaged in illicit drug dealing use and abuse (Gilpin, 2016: 21-32). While the above factors could give rise to instability and unrest in Africa, it is pertinent to consider the historical, political, socio-economic and environmental issues that has been discussed so far.

The New Face of International Conflict

With the paradigm shift since the end of Cold War in the violent conflict in the world, international conflict has been broadened to include ethnic conflicts, and other kinds of violence within the national borders. With the new waves of democratization, increasing globalization of information and economic power, there are more frequent efforts for international co-ordination of peace and security in policy articulation and implementation. A rash

of sometimes violent expressions, claims to right based on identity, and redefinition of sovereignty that imposes on African states new responsibilities to their citizens and the world community have sparked conflicts between the host and the international forces or between leaders in the states and the belligerent citizens (Burton,1990).

These transformations are changing much in Africa, with the increase in ethnic conflict among people from the same culture. This revolutionary change is the new face in African conflict and this perhaps describe and redefine the new face of international conflict. Examples of these can be seen in the conflicts in Mali in recent times, Sudan, the Libya conflict, the Boko Haram conflict that is currently raging and has drained the finances of Nigeria and neighbouring countries. Added to this is the international dimension these conflicts have had on the world economy. On the 21 September, 2013, the Westgate shopping mall in Kenya was attacked and a lot of people killed. This attack was carried out by the dreaded Al-Shabaab who said it was in retaliation to Kenya's contribution of troops and resources to fight them in that region.

The inter-connectedness to these conflicts can be seen in the proliferation of small arms in all the countries and regions of Africa. These conflicts have also increased the business of drug cartels in some countries such as Chad, Burkina Faso, Libya and South Africa. The palpable fear in which people in African countries are engrossed in violence are alarming; even as it has highlighted the need for conflict resolution expert to re-strategize and with a template to combat insecurity in the continent.

The effect of globalization on conflict in Africa is another case that deserves mention. The globalization of virtually everything as postulated by the World Bank, IMF and other Washington consensus means that border remains open for businesses (trade liberalization) for prosperity to strive. Recently, following the closure of Nigerian border, it has been discovered that the activities of armed bandits, mercenaries and terrorist attacks have been drastically reduced. Reports emanating from Department of State Services (DSS), Customs and Nigerian Immigrations attest to this.

However, the post-Cold War pattern of internationalization of conflict in Africa is taking a new twist with countries hitherto thought to be "clean" countries indicted/mentioned as sponsors of militancy/terrorism. According to the former aviation Minister in Nigeria, Fani Kayode (2019), Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, have joined the usual suspects Islamic State, Al-Qaeda and other Islamic Jihadists as the sponsor of the current insecurity in Nigeria and in other West African countries. They have been fingered as those sponsoring Boko Haram, armed bandit and Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria and in other West African countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso etc. In a letter sent to the Federal government and copied to the US President, on the 26 November, 2019, the then Minister advised the federal government to solicit the support from the US President and government in nicking their activities in the bud.

Internationalization of conflict in Africa has done so much harm- politically, economically, socially and culturally in the continent. The case of Libya in which United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 was used to oust former Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi from power comes to mind. Even though the UN said this was done in the spirit of the 'responsibility to protect', it can be seen that the US led coalition went beyond the mandate of protecting the citizens to oust Gaddafi from office (Libya Crisis, 2011). Since the ousting of Gaddafi in 2011, the country has never known peace. Libya has become a hub for militancy and terrorism; the economy that was once very vibrant has nose-dived.

During decolonization, some African leaders fell-prey to the politics of the international system; where for example the first Prime Minister of DR Congo (former Zaire), Prince Patrice Lumumba was killed. His plane was shut down by the Central Intelligent Agency (CIA) for what they termed insubordinate and alleged link with communist Russia in 1960 shortly after independence. Also, the first President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah was ousted from power because he tried to delink from western oriented policies/ideology, and allied with the communist ideology.

Methodology

The study adopts the narrative and descriptive method of data analysis in the profiling of violent conflict trends as it affects peace and development in Africa. The paper critically analysed how global conflict has impacted negatively on peace and development in Africa using relevant reports, books and journals articles. Using content analysis the

paper sourced for opinions from respondent on the effects of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa situation in Africa.

Theoretical Framework

International conflicts strive on the mechanics of threat, force, influence and power. In the international system, conflict is more conspicuous and serious due to the deep-rooted understanding of international society as anarchic, Hobbesian jungle where one fights against everyone else because of the absence of a leader. Classical realism argues that conflict is the state of nature in international arena. Walt, (1979) in his neo-realism (offensive) theory argues that the struggle for power has always been the central theme of international relations. Liberal institutionalism also believes that conflict exist as something normal, though it is more optimistic about conflict resolution through international institutions.

Following from the above, it can be deduced that international conflict took another turn following the end of the Second World War in 1945. Therefore, this paper adopts the "ideological theory" that came with the Cold War after the Second World War and "clash of civilization theory" that came after the end of the Cold War in 1990. Before the end of the World War II, George Kennan, the American ambassador to Soviet Union argued that a conflictual relationship would be formed after the war between the United States and the USSR, the two superpowers after the war. After a detailed analysis of the Soviet Union, Kennan concluded that it was the 'ideological' differences between the two major players that would eventually lead to the inevitable conflict between the two giants and in the world (Kennan,2019).

At the end of the Cold War, when the world witnessed the collapse of the conflictual bipolarity, the prediction of the "clash of civilization" was put forward by Huntington. His theory divided the world into several major civilizations, and discusses the differences among them. The theory believed that that the world of different ideologies which had characterised the Cold War years would be replaced by different civilizations such as cultures, religion and identity; leading inevitably to conflict among cultures, religion and ethnic groups (Huntington,1997:21, 207-209).

The above postulations by these theorists are currently the norm in Africa and interestingly it has devalued and retarded peace and development in the continent. A cursory look at the plethora of intra-conflict in Africa since the end of the Cold War reveals some undercurrent within these countries and cross-border crisis between African countries. According to the imperialist theory, international influence in conflict in Africa is geared toward protecting international investment in African countries; whether multinationals, cartel or to monopolise the system. A typical example of these can be seen in Ogoni in Niger Delta of Nigeria where since 1993 till date, no crude oil has been drilled as a result of the internationalization of the conflict by Shell Petroleum Company (Isike, Ojakorotu and Uzodike,2007:19-34).Other cases are Zimbabwe, where the government have been in conflict with the white farmers, the internationalization of oil export between Sudan and South Sudan, the politicization of the peace-keeping operations in DR. Congo, Congo and the conflict in Central African Republic.

Conflicts in Africa: Trends and Dynamics

Conflict trends and dynamics in Africa are interwoven in state fragility as a result of bad governance, corruption, poverty, ethnicity, contested legitimacy, small arms proliferation. These trends and dynamics have made African states to be unstable and always conflict prone. The monopolistic nature of the African leaders and their tantrum for totalitarianism has made most African states to be weak; thereby making it very unpopular. The term violent conflict can come in the form of civil war, ethnic war, and war at high and low intensities as well as violence that fall short of war, such as militarised disputes, terrorism and riot or strikes. Also, trends and drivers of conflict intersect in complex ways. While these imply that the dynamic nature of the factors and processes of conflict contribute to violent conflict, there is great deal of debate about reducing causees of conflict to one factor.

The UK Aid in 2015 identified the following factors as likely to exert and influence the nature and extent of conflict.

- The increasing threat posed by terrorism, extremism and instability.
- The resurgence of state-based threats and intensifying wider state competition.

- The impact of technology, especially cyber threats and erosion of the rules-based international order, making it harder to build consensus and tackle global threats.

- Transnational factors such as population movements, climate change creates risk and opportunities to be managed at multiple levels. This has been confirmed by World Bank and the United Nations in 2018. The Boko Haram and farmers/herders' conflicts in Africa and other developing countries is fluid: spreading across borders to affect regions due largely to greater connectivity of countries (International Security and Arm Control). It has been asserted that the same network that allow for trade across the border can be exploited for organised crime by conflict entrepreneurs to spread violence. There is also the regional impact of conflict and the flow of refugees from conflict situations; all add to international dimensions of conflict (UK DFID, 2019).

Traditionally, the term "international conflict" refers to conflicts between different nations-states and between organizations in different countries. It can also be seen as conflict that is transported from one country to another or conflict that is flayed along ethnic, regional or continental lines. It can even be imported from outside the continent.

The Challenges of Conflict to Peace and Development in Africa

Cross Border Crime

Most of the conflicts in Africa result from crimes/conflicts across the border or across the continent. This incident has been so rampant in Africa; where in the Horn of Africa the activities of militants/terrorist groups like the al-Shabaab in east Africa and the Moslem brotherhood/fundamentalist in the North of Africa are mostly imported from the Middle east and these groups have link or affiliation with renowned terrorist groups like the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda and the Hezbollah in Lebanon. Even the Boko Haram in Nigeria and the insurgents in Mali and Libya all have links outside Africa.

Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Arguably, the decolonization period constitutes the defining moment in small arms proliferation in Africa. Although the reason was genuine i.e., for national interest, peacekeeping and for law enforcement, the abusive use of these weapons by the state agencies led to these weapons getting into wrong hands, especially the non-state actors who uses it to perpetrate criminality against the state and citizens. The struggle for political and economic power, weak security architecture and the management of the weapons by the security agencies and even bad governance all combine for surge in arms supply into Africa. In some countries, there is the failure of the government to carry out comprehensive disarmament and destruction of arms that were used in the previous crisis/wars. For example, some of the weapons that were used during crisis Congo DR after independence, Nigeria after the civil war, Uganda during Idi Amin regime etc all helped in perpetrating violent conflict in those countries because they were not mopped-up after the crisis. (Fleshman, 2011).

According to Best-

> *As it is Nigeria, that is how it is in other places. We have failed to build togetherness, failed to build a nation out of national identity. It is forcing people back to primordial sentiment- ethnicity, religion, state, tribes, region and so forth. There are small arms and light weapons in the hands of the people who cannot control it and this is against the law. The introduction of small arms and light weapons is prolonging conflict and make it get out of control. For example, the conflict in Plateau State and Nigeria you can agree with me that the security architecture is weak. The security apparatus in Nigeria is not interested in arresting and persecuting those carrying arms, perpetrators of conflict in the state, rather they take side. Our security agencies have failed to guarantee internal security in Plateau state and in Nigeria in general (Best, 2023)*

Bad Governance

Bad governance has become a recurrent decimal in Africa since independence. Regimes in Africa since decolonization has been fraught with mismanagement, dictatorship, irresponsibility, bickering, endemic corruption,

etc. Political leadership in Africa is characterized by misrule, abuse, personalization and authoritarianism, insensitivity, etc. When this happened, conflict will set in and this will further lead to public distrust. Almost all the leaders in Africa have all exhibited this character in their relationship with the people. Failure of the social contract on the part of government has made some aggrieved citizens to constitute themselves into rebel groups in an attempt to replace the government. In doing this, they always seek the support of conflict entrepreneurs from outside Africa (Ikelegbe,2013:213-216)

Economic Development/Decolonization Theories

During the process of decolonization in Africa, there were fundamental disagreement over both the short-and long-term outcome of the process of economic development in Africa, considering the fact that much of Africa's wealth was used in the development of Europe or the metropole. African counties were granted political independent but economically they depended on Europe for its development. With this development, the socio-economic well-being and development of the continent was under the influence of the former colonial powers. African countries were not to exert energies in working for development on their own, but rather rely solely in the international politics and economics of the developed nations. Also, the decolonization process according to the theory must undergo evolutionary process as dictated by the developed economies till it achieved political and economic autonomy. Independence to the imperialist represent only an initial step and the reforms will continue through bilateral and multilateral in military, population (active), economic reforms and cultural resurgence (Rodney,1972:107-125).

Most African countries have been seen to be weak, irresponsible as a result of negative effects of external debt burden which leads to poverty and the problem of the heterogonous ethnic composition of African states that has made some of these states to be hub of conflict as a result of the scrambling for scarce resources and political allocations. Countries such as Nigeria, Rwanda, Liberia, Cote'divoire, Burkina Faso, among others fall into this category. "Poverty has not only reduced the ability of the people to lead a productive live in Africa, but also exacerbated identity politics along communal, ethnic, religious and regional lines" (Adetula,2006:392).

Peace and Development in Africa: The Way Forward

At the continental level, the African Union (AU) takes the lead by fashioning out a blueprint in its agenda 2063 during the 26 Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) executive council in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2016. According to the then AU chairperson, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the blueprint is for social, political and economic transformation of the continent. It emphasized on the need for a bottom-up, inclusive, participatory and people-oriented approach to development in Africa. There is the need for African elites and regions to spearhead the transformation of the continent in order to direct its peace and development, not forgetting the protection of human right, especially the rights of women and children. Some of the problems plaguing the continent such as chronic poverty, political instability, and violent mobilization by various subcultures, corruption and other forms of impunity were discussed. Others like terrorism and violent extremism has to be dealt with and this Africa Union is doing its best (Mbaku,2015).

Secondly, it is important to note that development is a process and not a one-off event since it is considered as a progression from what existed previously. As such development should always occur and be maintained to ensure that people live a positive life. Access to better health, higher income, greater individual freedom, and better opportunities in jobs, economics, better education and housing, as well as a richer quality of life should be considered. It is also very important to note that only inclusive economic growth and development and the establishment, within each African country, of governance systems that guarantee the rule of law, including respect for human rights, can deal fully with terrorism and other types of violent and destructive mobilization (AU,2015).

Thirdly, social contract between the government and the governed should be prioritized so as to create more synergy that can go a long way toward introducing a sense of civic responsibility and national cohesion. Strategic investments should be focused on the domestic revenue of the social contract. Coupled with transparent policy, mechanisms and accountable official should anchor on such

efforts that could replicate what is obtainable in other parts of the world.

Lastly, there should be security sector transformation in Africa, which is define by citizen-centric prerequisite, including the non-state actors. There should be a shift from the conventional focus of security to comprehensive security where the safety and welfare of all the citizens are catered for. Those measure will help redefine professionalism to safeguard the social contract and foster more productive citizen-security relations in Africa.

Conclusion

Africa has experienced various forms of violent conflict since independence. From the Cold War years to the post-Cold War years, conflict has evolved to the era when the non-state actors and globalized crimes become the norms in most African states. Although some of these conflicts can be blamed on weak governance, exclusionary politics, contested legitimacy, resource competition, globalized conflicts and extremist ideologies, external influences in exacerbating violent conflict in Africa cannot be left out. The effects of this globalized conflict on African peace and development cannot be over-emphasized. At independence, almost all African countries were not strong enough politically and economically to resist external pressures and manipulations; thereby aligning themselves to the United States led capitalist and the USSR Communist orientations. These unholy alliances made these super-powers to always interfere with anything that happened in Africa. With conflict currently embedded in culture, religion and identity, peace and development have continued to elude the continent. It is the submission of this paper that with inclusive governance by African leaders, strong economy devoid of corruption, peace and progressive development will return to Africa.

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