Chapter VI

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In the previous chapters an attempt is made to examine the hypothesis in the context of Ghana during 1966-69 that the goals and conduct of the foreign policy of a developing nation as perceived by its leadership is closely linked with and contributes to the national development of state. That is to say that the foreign policy is determined by its objective to achieve positive results essentially for its own economic development.

A close linkage was envisaged between Ghana's foreign policy and national development by both the Convention Peoples' Party regime (1957-66) and the successive military regime of National Liberation Council (1966-69). Both the regimes were committed to national development of Ghana though presenting radically opposite perception of it. Both followed different policies and strategies in their domestic and external spheres in pursuit of national development. The difference of perceptions between the two regimes can be studied against the background of two approaches to 'nation-building' as prevalent in Africa. One approach focusses the weakness of existing nation-state system in Africa and supports a collective pan-African effort for grappling the problems of 'underdevelopment' at a continental level. The pan-African protagonist seeks radical alteration in the nation-state system in Africa for the meaningful development of one and all. The second approach rules out any change in the existing system and instead emphasizes the paramount priority of
individual states for development with or without the cooperation of others. According to this approach 'national interests' are exclusive and, irrespective of continental commitment, adherence to principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity is absolute. The protagonists of this approach rejects integration or union and prefers only a loose functional cooperation at the sub-regional level.

Ghana has experimented with both the approaches. Under Nkrumah, Ghana stood for political union of the African states. With commitments beyond the frontiers of nation state, Ghana was actively involved with continental issues. Also the CPP regime opted to develop the national economy under active control of the state. NLC, on the other hand, was categorical in according priority to the national interests of Ghana over its commitment and role in Africa. It encouraged the private sector while retrenching and restricting the state's share in Ghana's economy. The impact and consequence of such a course by military regime on Ghana is the major concern of this study.

The foreign policy of Ghana during 1966-69 was explained by the military regime in terms of constraints inherited from the deposed regime of Nkrumah. The major constraint faced by the NLC was overall deterioration in the economy along with the legacy of a huge national debt incurred mainly from the western countries which found Ghana's policy as pursued by Nkrumah inimical to their interests. The problem was so enormous that NLC could not even try to salvage Ghana without the support and backing of those countries. To achieve this, it sought to obtain (i) favourable settlement of national debt, (ii) attract aid and assistance to ease economic burden, and (iii) attract new foreign investments.
and resources for economic development of Ghana. All these required congenial and suitable conditions in the country and the adoption of a foreign policy as could win the confidence of the western countries. Thus the NLC introduced changes and shifts in both Ghana's economic and foreign policies under compelling circumstances.

The problems confronted by NLC after the 24 February coup d'état were in deed serious both in the economy as well in the sphere of Ghana's external relations. There was a crashfall in the prices of cocoa, the mainstay of Ghana's economy that drastically affected its export earnings since early 1960 and brought large deficits in balance of trade that led to exhaustion of foreign reserves. Simultaneously there was accumulation of large foreign debts in the form of supplier credits on medium and short term basis incurred mainly from western private sources but guaranteed by their governments. Repayment of most of these credits falling due by early 1966, was beyond the capacity of the regime under the circumstances. Refusal of Ghana's creditors to either reschedule these debts or advance more resulted in serious shortages in supply of various consumer goods including food. The reason for such refusal lay precisely in the conduct of Ghana's foreign policy by the CPP regime. Ghana's relations had steadily deteriorated with the United States and other West European powers who considered Nkrumah's stand on various issues of world politics inimical to their interests. There were tensions between Ghana and western powers due to Nkrumah's closeness with the socialist states and were greatly annoyed because of frivolous criticisms carried out in the official media
against them. Nkrumah's economic policies with a clamour on socialism had also been disapproved by the western countries. Coup was timed by the military officers when Ghana had also been isolated due to open hostility of some African states who were opposed to Nkrumah's pan-African perceptions.

The NLC had, no doubt, the critical task of responding to multiple challenges. But the manner in which NLC proceeded to tackle the immediate and long-term problems leads one to form the opinion that military leadership was not influenced only by the constraints inherited from the past in determining the options of its policies. That is, the policies of NLC were no doubt in reaction to those of Nkrumah but were not singularly conditioned by the past. There were other factors that influenced the NLC in shaping its policies. Reference to these factors could help a better understanding of the nature of NLC's foreign policy.

The NLC, since the day of coup, made the categorical commitment, inaccordance highest priority to their plan of 'national reconstruction' while initiating policy measures in order to overcome impending problems and to facilitate the process of economic development in Ghana. The economic development as perceived by NLC was to encourage predominance of private enterprise while seeking to release the economy from the control of the state. The role of the state in the sphere of economic development was envisaged to be supervisory and in creating conditions of stability and healthy competition. Alongwith initiatives for Ghana's economy under the dominance of private sector, NLC also advocated for the establishment of a liberal polity in the country. NLC stood for both these aims and took
concrete steps in terms of policies towards their realization during its tenure in Ghana. This approach was not merely a reaction to the deposed regime, blaming the existing problems mainly due to state control of economy and monopoly of political power under one party, one leader and one ideology of Nkrumachism. The experiences of Nkrumah's era were used more as an alibi to switch over and gear the country on a path in accordance with perceptions of NLC. But their perceptions stemmed essentially from the value preferences of military leadership that adhered to the principles of western liberal tradition and rejected any form of state control over economy. In the process of projecting these principles the NLC forged a close alliance with and patronized only those elements and political forces in Ghana which were not merely opposed to the CPP and Nkrumah but shared and represented the similar value structure in body polity. It was not again with a view to merely create a base of support for NLC but more significantly to organise and consolidate a social structure clearly based on and dominated by the middle class in Ghana. Military was itself a part of this structure. After the coup, a total environment had been created in Ghana presenting and propagating an ideology of free enterprise and liberal political values. The policies that NLC pursued reflected this influence of the environment and to that extent were more deliberate.

The military officers comprising the NLC clearly bore the impact of education and training received by them in the British institutions like Sandhurst and Eaton. Many of the officers who plotted the coup were trained in Britain where
they not only learnt to be professional soldiers but also imbibed the prevalent socio-economic and political values of the metropolis which determined their intellectual frame of mind. They were explicit in expressing their indebtedness to Britain for their training and education and acknowledged the impact of western liberal traditions and institutions in their memoirs which are a testimony to the ideas held by NLC. Their support and efforts to create a free enterprise economy in Ghana was the result of this impact.

Similarly, NLC pursued a foreign policy which supported the western position on major world issues whether on the forums of Commonwealth and the UN. In direct relations with super powers NLC sought to cultivate close relations with the United States whereas the open hostility was expressed towards Soviet Union and other socialist states. Socialism in any form had been decried as dangerous and unsuitable ideology in Ghana. That Ghana leaned towards west during NLC's rule could not be explained by simply referring to the fact of Ghana's dependence and unavoidable cooperation of western nations to help it settle various problems and which NLC tried to ensure by following that course in the foreign policy. It is the extent to which NLC went in supporting US that even where freedom of judgement could be exercised, for example, in case of China's membership in the UN or more balanced view of Vietnam war, that military junta declined to take such stands. These instances and the overall conduct leads one to form the opinion that irrespective of compulsions and constraints for the need of western help, the NLC's foreign policy revealed biases of a west-oriented ruling leadership.
The most crucial factor that emerged partially as a consequence of western impact and acknowledged by the military leaders was that they learnt during their training to accord highest priority to serve their country as patriots and nationalists. It was this concern that prompted the military officers to overthrow Nkrumah since he ignored and flouted the national interests of Ghana. After the coup, it was the similar concern that led NLC to frame and determine Ghana's policies guided by the highest interests of state. The notion of 'national interests' was derived from the conviction that state's first and foremost duty was towards its own citizens. The national interests of a nation-state were exclusive and stood over and above all other commitments. In case of NLC the national interests of Ghana were interpreted as economic interests to be served through such policies which would lead to economic development. For NLC, thus, the foreign policy was primarily motivated to serve the national interests of Ghana as highest priority. Such a categorical emphasis by NLC on being guided and serving the national interests of Ghana as a nation-state had important ramifications and bearing on the conduct of its foreign policy. The approach, policies and methods of Nkrumah were accordingly denounced as being against the national interests of Ghana and subsequently abandoned. Those were replaced by NLC's own perception of national interests and suitable policies to serve them. Accordingly, Ghana's external role and commitments within the continent or beyond were judged by the sole criteria of their contributing directly to its own economic development. This was in contrast to Nkrumah's perception of Ghana's role
which was to be determined not by achieving its own development alone but by its contribution to the progress of the continent to which it was linked organically. NLC was emphatic in its commitment to concentrate on Ghana's own achievements and development irrespective of what happened in the continent.

As a consequence of this approach since NLC spelled its first obligations towards Ghana to rebuild and resuscitate its economy, its role in the context of the continent was conceived as secondary and unimportant. The NLC gave up the pan-African perception or pursuit of an ideal like a political or union of African states instead assumed a role in Africa under which no issues were raised affecting the existing character of African international set up. There was strict adherence to the code of conduct for inter-state relations based on mutual respect or national sovereignty and territorial integrity with absolute non-interference in the internal affairs of a state. The NLC, no doubt, expressed concern to end colonialism and racialism in Africa but avoided to spell out an effective strategy in such specific cases as Rhodesia. In case of South Africa there were even suggestions in Ghana to have alternative strategies to initiate a dialogue for peaceful transformation of apartheid. There was thus not merely a withdrawal of Ghana from an active pan-African role in the continent but the trends had set in the country due to concerns for promotion of national interests of individual nation state alone to encourage only conservative and status quoist policies.

NLC's policy stance of avoiding to enter into controversy over larger issues like African Union and its adherence to
strict observance of non-interference in internal affairs resulted in normalization and establishment of cordial relations between Ghana and other African states. The normalization became possible only because Ghana under NLC shared the common perception of national interests with those states. One significant outcome of this pattern of relations was initiative for promotion of regional cooperation among the states of West Africa leading to establishment of a West African community. But Ghana and other states also experienced the limits of those principles in African context which formed the basis of their mutual relations. Ghana's close involvement with Nigerian civil war met with sharp criticisms by the Federal Nigerian Government precisely in defence of the principle of territorial integrity and non-interference of which NLC was accused of gross violation. Unqualified adherence to the principle of non-interference and territorial integrity in the context of Africa as traditional code of relations among nation-states led to encourage non-involvement and weakened the spirit of common concerns and bonds among Africans.

Secondly, NLC keenly participated to promote regional economic cooperation as an alternative to pan-African union, but the principles involved for such cooperation clashed with the aims of community. Given the nature of the economy of member states, a high level of coordination and integration of policies and interests was necessary for effective cooperation. Instead every state was concerned with promotion of its national interests without affecting its national sovereignty for the common interests of community. The inward looking trend created
inevitable clash of interests. NLC, in the name of serving the national interests of its citizens as the only priority expelled a large number of 'aliens' of African origin from Ghana. This action of NLC was responded to similarly by other states as well. There was not only any lack of fruitful and effective cooperation but the differences between as 'African' and a 'Ghanaian' or 'Nigerian' with priority to the latter sanctified the trend of individual nation building.

Such an exclusive emphasis on 'national interests' that motivated NLC to determine Ghana's foreign policy with a view to make it a direct contributory factor in country's economic development through a course which would attract and draw external resources, suffered with and posed inherent contradictions. The NLC itself provided a criteria to judge the success or failure of its foreign policy in terms of its contribution to economic development of Ghana. If NLC achieved a level of economic development, its policies succeeded in achieving the aim and the 'national interests' served. But NLC not only failed in achieving this goal, instead there was total halt to any process of economic development. The emphasis during 1966-69 was only to release the economy from state control and to hand it over to private enterprises. The consequences of such a shift were: reduced expenditure on welfare schemes, closure of state projects reducing state's share in economy, increased rate of unemployment due to retrenchment, soaring prices and higher standard of living alongwith heavier debt burdens due to unfavourable terms of its repayment.
There was no investment from abroad to boost economic development. Emergency aid and assistance could provide only temporary relief without solving any long-term problem of the economy. Thus even from NLC's point of view and justification Ghana's foreign policy failed in its primary objective of attracting sufficient external resources despite its close alliance with western countries to facilitate Ghana's economic development.

NLC's reliance on west with a view to serve Ghana's national interests brought forth a contradiction exposing the entire policy framework to question. The NLC directed its efforts to develop free enterprise and as it claimed to be nationalist it was committed to encourage the indigenous entrepreneur group to play a dominant role in Ghana's economy. These sections of Ghana's society also looked towards and supported NLC for such a development. But NLC's actual policies favoured and extended the hold of foreign private expatriates from western countries. NLC showed preference and provided incentives and concessions while inviting these expatriate firms to take over a large number of state-run-projects and corporations. NLC overlooked the claims of indigenous business groups even in those concerns which they offered to take over from the state. There was strong reaction and opposition to such policy measures and NLC appeared to have been alienated from its own base of support. NLC had thus contradicted and violated its own perception of national interests. Ghana was more closely tied down to the external forces and NLC was the instrument through a set of economic and foreign policies in extending that domination on the country.
Ghana, under NLC's rule, pursued a foreign policy that aroused least controversies in Africa, supported the west on all major issues of world politics and removed various aspects from its economic policy considered as irritants by western alliance because of which the previous regime was denied any assistance and aid. In short, NLC assured the west that Ghana was firmly back into its fold. In return NLC expected as a gesture of goodwill from west all cooperation and help in the form of substantial aid and assistance for resolving Ghana's problems. What the western nations offered in terms of rescheduling the national debts, commodity loans, IMF credits proved to be more profitable to their interests than to the recipient. Even the foreign expatriate firms established greater hold in various sectors of economy than in the past. The question arises whether a specific course in the foreign policy of a developing nation is sufficient to attract resources from abroad to contribute to its economic development. The NLC's experience shows the answer in negative. The reason is that advanced industrial nations will offer substantial and effective economic assistance only if a particular state is crucial to their interests and emerge as a significant factor in their economic, strategic and geo-political considerations. Ghana had none of these advantages. For west an assurance was welcome that regime in Ghana was favourable but was not a sufficient cause to offer it all aid and assistance.

As a major producer of only cocoa Ghana was not of crucial importance to other nations. This position of marginal importance in world system was, however, held by Ghana ever
since its independence. But in the first nine years of its independence Ghana, though controversial, was the most prominent state of Africa when its leadership raised issues relevant to African independence and development and performed a role in international politics that made Ghana the focus of world attention. Ghana as the main spokesman for the continent projected an African perspective on world politics. It was in the limelight because of Ghana's leadership pursuit of an independent foreign policy with a perception and interests of Africa at heart. Where NLC really lost was to abandon this role and be willingly subservient to the western interests. The understanding of NLC that such a course would accrue benefits for Ghana proved erroneous. NLC did not gain anything for Ghana and in the process gave up even the marginal causes of Africa. Ghana, was therefore, reduced to a position of an insignificant state in the continent.