Chapter II

THE NLC'S AFRICA POLICY
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NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL'S
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As the National Liberation Council (NLC) perceived it, the primary objective of its foreign policy was to serve the national economic interests of Ghana while conducting its relations with both African and non-African states. This perception emerged out of a belief of the NLC leaders that the foremost duty of the state was to protect and promote the interests of its own nationals. The deposed regime, according to NLC, failed in this task and pursued domestic and foreign policies that created serious problems for Ghana. The need was, thus to adopt policies and strategies that would help overcome these problems.

The so-perceived need moved the NLC to pronounce changes affecting the overall conduct of Ghana's external relations. Africa being an area of immediate concern, the new rulers spelled out a specific policy for the state's role in the continent. The content, the nature and the achievements of the NLC's Africa policy form the subject-matter of study in this chapter.

Four days after the coup, General Joseph A. Ankrah as the Chairman of NLC addressed the nation to spell out in detail the policies of the new regime. Beginning his address by citing the causes of military intervention, he concluded with the declaration:

It is against this background of maladministration, mismanagement, the loss of individual freedom and economic chaos into which the country has been
plunged by Kwame Nkrumah and his band that I have come to you to outline the policies...to put the country on an even keel--politically, socially and economically. We have a gigantic task before us to build our country and to resuscitate its economy. We shall direct all our energies towards this goal.

Ankrah also elaborated on the policies in pursuit of this goal. Referring specifically to the NLC's proposed policy in Africa, he stated:

With regard to Ghana's policy on African affairs, I wish to assure all members of the OAU that Ghana will continue to maintain friendly relations with them. If the old regime has offended any independent African state either by means of press vilification, subversion or through diplomatic misconduct, the NLC of Ghana wishes to make it clear that a new leaf has been opened as from the 24th February 1966.

As a concrete step towards re-establishing good relations with the neighbouring states of West Africa--Togo, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Niger--with which Ghana's relations had deteriorated under the deposed regime, Ankrah announced a decision "to send special missions as one of the first acts (of the new regime) as soon as possible".

In order to regain the confidence of these states, Ankrah sought to place beyond doubt the new Government's disapproval of "subversive" activities of the deposed regime:

The days of harbouring and training political refugees to subvert other states are over. The Council has already given instructions that all known political refugees from independent African states will only be allowed to remain in Ghana if they abide by the OAU resolutions on political refugees. The Council has further directed that all other subversive elements from independent African states should leave Ghana forthwith.

In this context, Ankrah reiterated the NLC's pledge to honour the Charter of the OAU and abide strictly by the
Accepting the OAU as an appropriate forum for tackling continental issues, he pledged:

Ghana will work towards strengthening of the OAU. In accordance with the OAU Charter, Ghana will support all legitimate efforts to promote unity and solidarity of African states and to coordinate and intensify genuine efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa. Ghana will pay her contribution to the OAU Liberation Committee and assist in the liberation of the remaining colonial territories in Africa.

He, however, made it clear that Ghana's role in the continent was based on the recognition of a single principle of equality of all member states of OAU. He stated:

Ghana will respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state. While we follow the path of friendship...Ghana will not tolerate any interference in her internal affairs. We, on our part, pledge to abstain absolutely from interfering in the internal affairs of other states.

Adherence to such a code of conduct, according to Ankrah, was necessary because "Ghana's primary responsibility is to tackle her internal problems with vigour and realism." Thus he concluded his statement on NLC's Africa policy with a plea: "I, therefore, want to repeat with all the emphasis that, at this crucial stage of our nation's history, we will enjoin on all nations to keep out of our problems and leave us alone to do our best to solve them."

Four major points emerged from Ankrah's unambiguous policy statement regarding Ghana's role in Africa. First,

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the immediate concern of the NLC was to restore normal good relations with the states of Africa, specifically with its West African neighbours alienated by the deposed regime. Second, the efforts of the NLC to rebuild cordial relations with the states were based on unequivocal condemnation of Nkrumah's Africa policy as "subversive". It made common cause with these states who in the past did not approve of Nkrumah's policy, while invoking their sympathy for the change of Government and thus seeking legitimacy for the NLC's actions in Ghana. Third, the pattern of renewed relations as advocated by the NLC with the African states was to be based on mutual recognition of the principles of respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of the states. The emphasis on this code bestowed sanctity on the individual nation-state system in Africa. Fourth, in its approach to the continental problems, the NLC adhered to the framework of the OAU where it considered all states as equal, observing a common code of conduct, and emphasised collective striving in coordinating the African states' efforts to solve continental problems like colonialism and racialism, instead of placing individual or group initiatives in the forefront.

The Africa policy under the NLC, as stated by Ankrah, provided a striking contrast to that of Nkrumah's period. It amounted to a rejection of Nkrumah's basic tenets with regard to Ghana's role in Africa. There was no doubt a nominal commitment to the resolution of the prevalent issues in Africa but the framework within which it was stated negated any active approach. As Ankrah stated before the diplomatic corps on 12 May 1966:
Africa shall continue to be central point of our foreign policy. The struggle for the total liberation of our continent will be placed in its proper perspective. The NLC believes in African unity and will realistically strive for its attainment. We shall help our brother Africans within the limits of our resources through the OAU. 2

The proper perspective for Ghana's role for African liberation was to be found, according to the NLC, within the limits of the state's resources. The role was to be played within the organisational framework of the Liberation Committee to which it would pay its contributions and through the OAU where it would adhere to the Charter and be guided by resolutions on freedom fighters and refugees to avoid "subversion".

Two features of the new African policy emerged out of these pronouncements. First, the NLC was committed in regard to all the issues affecting the continent but the framework for the operation of her policy was to be organisational i.e. the OAU, the Commonwealth and the United Nations. The NLC believed in collective functioning in relation to the issues, not in forcing, either singlehandedly or in collaboration with some states, in its views on others. Secondly, it was obvious that the NLC sought to act with restraint—partly because of the controversial role of the deposed regime in Africa which created a wide enough impression that Nkrumah interfered too much in the

2 Ibid., vol. 10, no. 9, 29 June 1966. A reference to earlier statement of Nkrumah on the eve of Ghana's independence brings out the difference. Ghana's own 'independence shall be meaningless unless the whole continent is free', while declaring Ghana to be the base to achieve liberation and unity of the continent he had stated 'Ghana is prepared to surrender a part or whole of its national sovereignty' for these causes. Kwame Nkrumah, I Speak of Freedom (London, 1961).
affairs of other states, and partly because Ghana was thought to have been neglected for Africa under his rule.

The NLC, consequently, opted for a 'Ghana Personality' rather than an 'African Personality', preferring internal reconstruction as a priority and cautious dealings with other African states or issues.

Apparently, the NLC emphasized withdrawal from active involvement in Africa but more realistically the policy shift reflected the growing trend among the African states to concentrate mainly on national development, each asserting its own individuality and identity. Such an approach could only support a loose, functional cooperation with no infringement of the national sovereignty of the states whose primary concern remained their respective national interests.

With a view to effectively pursuing its foreign policy, the NLC introduced reform in the administrative set-up of the foreign affairs renaming the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MEA) as Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The regime constituted a committee on external affairs headed by Vice-Chairman of the NLC J.W.K. Harley. Other members of the committee included senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs. An important step in the process of restructuring the Ministry of External Affairs was abolition of the African Affairs Secretariat that functioned exclusively to deal with African issues under Nkrumah. The NLC also stated its intention, for the purpose of efficiency and economy, to reduce the number of foreign
missions abroad while grouping them into different zones.

Operation of NLC's Africa Policy: Challenges and Achievements

1) Ghana's Coup and the OAU:

The day the new Africa policy was set out, the NLC faced a challenge at the OAU. The sixth regular session of the Council of Ministers was to begin on 28 February 1966 to discuss the Rhodesian crisis. The opening of the meeting was delayed as the credentials of Ghana's delegation led by Principal Secretary P.K.K. Seddoh was challenged by Mali, Guinea, Tanzania and Egypt on the ground that it did not represent the Government of Ghana.

The OAU Secretariat had also received information of a delegation sent by Nkrumah. After a meeting of the heads of delegations where Seddoh maintained that neither the Council of Ministers nor Secretariat of the OAU had any right to question his credentials, it was decided to let his delegation attend the meeting with a clarification that it did not amount to recognition of the new regime in Ghana. The delegation sent by Nkrumah failed to show up at the meeting, which settled the issue of credentials.

But the heads of delegations from Tanzania, Kenya, Egypt, Guinea, Mali and Congo (B) withdrew from the conference protesting against

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5 Alex Quaison Sackey, Foreign Minister of Ghana was with Nkrumah in Peking at the time of coup. He was asked to represent Nkrumah at the OAU summit but reaching Frankfort, he defected to NLC. The Times (London), 3 March 1966.
the seating of Ghana's delegation. The delegate from Guinea, Diallo Abdulaya, announcing the withdrawal of his delegation from the session, stated: "The continued presence of the Ghanaian delegation is contrary to OAU principles...some delegates have become the voices of imperialism. Guinea will not stay in the conference where delegates no longer fight against imperialism but against the peoples of Africa."

Mali Foreign Minister Osman Ba who was the Vice Chairman of the conference resigned his post, saying "Mali can't sit down with this Ghanaian delegation".

Reacting similarly Oscar Kambona, leader of Tanzanian delegation, explained: "We want unity but unity has principles". UAR Ibrahim Kalil also withdrew his delegation protesting that it was "impossible to continue constructive deliberation in present atmosphere of the meeting". It was, however, Kenyan chief delegate Joseph Murumbi who categorically stated the reason for such a variously expressed reaction, while withdrawing from the conference in protest against recognition to Ghana's delegation:

"The Kenya Government is against military coups and the disregard of constitutional authority. Military coups are a menace to the peace and stability of Africa."

There were altogether seven states that withdrew from the

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
The developments in Ghana had not only vitiated the atmosphere at the conference but diverted the attention of the member-states from the main issue before it—the UDI in Rhodesia. Protests at the conference were actually part of larger reaction to the Ghana coup d'état, and pointed to the significance of Nkrumah's role in Africa. There were two specific questions raised by those who commented on the developments in Ghana. The first was about the role of the military as instrument of change in the government and the second about the relevance of the principle of non-interference by any state in the internal affairs of other states as incorporated in the OAU Charter.

States like Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia and Zambia disapproved military intervention and thus withheld recognition to new regime in Ghana. There were other states, however, that

11 The seventh state to withdraw was Somalia but on two accounts. Besides Ghana, the delegate criticised the 'weak resolution' adopted at the Ministerial summit and in protest withdrew. *Ethiopian Herald*, 8 March 1966.

12 But President Julius Nyerere commended Nkrumah's role in the politics of Africa and offering him asylum in Tanzania commented: "Tanzania does not approve of some methods employed in affecting changes in government particularly violent methods. We believe that a government should be voted in and voted out, not shot in and shot out." *Nationalist*, 12 March 1966. President Kaunda in a statement asked the military rulers in Ghana to hand back power to establish government of people. "As a result of such coups there is an obvious danger that leaders in Africa become so frightened of what is happening that they will be preoccupied only with their own safety." Zambia refused to recognize the regime in Ghana—a position that held till the elections in Ghana in 1969. *Times of Zambia*, 19 March 1966.

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considered a change of government in a state exclusively an internal matter and advocated strict adherence to the principle of non-intervention. Reactions in West Africa, an area contiguous to Ghana, were important as a reflection of direct inter-state relations. The coup in Ghana was greeted by most of them, but strongly denounced by some others. The change of

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Kenya also withheld its recognition to the military regime in Ghana. In a statement read out in Parliament, Minister of State said "The fall or otherwise of Dr Nkrumah has nothing to do with recognition, he will go down in the annals of history as a staunch opponent of colonialism and champion of African independence." East African Standard, 11 March 1966. Likewise Somali Foreign Minister while calling Dr Nkrumah "the Messiah of Freedom" declined to accord recognition to NLC as "it is unlikely to help the progress of Ghana". Radio Magadisou, 8 March 1966. Quoted in African Research Bulletin, 4 April 1966.

President Mobutu of Congo stated in a message to NLC on 10 March: "We recognise the state and not the government which is an internal matter of the country. I and my government recognised your Govt. since Feb. 25...whichever Govt. is in power does not change our relationship with Ghana." Ghanaian Times, 11 March 1966. Dr Banda of Malawi also pointed out "Change in Ghana is an accomplished fact. Dr Nkrumah recognised the military regime in Nigeria with a hand of applause and openly gloated over the downfall of Nigerian Prime Minister...it is an internal matter and we extend our recognition to it." Ghanaian Times, 10 March 1966.

President Tubman of Liberia stated: "The Government of Liberia is opposed to coup but reason or justification for such rests with the State concerned and can't be questioned by another state...former Ghana government has set a precedent in recognising the new military regime in Nigeria within 24 hours." Ethiopian Herald, 5 March 1966.

Col. Lamizana of Upper Volta sent a message to the NLC informing him of "earnest desire of my government to promote the best relations with the neighbouring and brotherly people of Ghana". Ghanaian Times, 8 March 1966. Reaction from Mali and Guinea as former allies of Nkrumah attributed Ghana coup to "an imperialist conspiracy...it represents a threat to all that is left of true sovereignty and liberty in Africa." Mali had also withdrawn its ambassador from Ghana. Ethiopian Herald, 10 March 1966.
regime in Ghana has set in a process of refashioning the inter-state relations in West Africa, both bilateral as well as in terms of regional grouping and alliance. West Africa was, thus, the crucial area of operation for the NLC's Africa policy.

**Ghana-Guinea Dispute**

During Nkrumah's rule, Ghana's relations with most states in West Africa were strained. Among these states were particularly the border-states of Ivory Coast, Togo and Upper Volta which, as members of 'Entente Council', had also consistently opposed Nkrumah's policies. The hostilities, that had divided West Africa into groups, had also led to harbouring of foreign dissident elements on both sides. Thus the mutual accusation of organizing subversion against each other. For all these states the fall of Nkrumah was a welcome development particularly so as the NLC had declared its desire to rebuild friendly relations with all states on an assurance of non-interference in their internal affairs and never to allow Ghana to be the base of subversion against other states.

Once the NLC had made its policy stance clear, the response from these states was both favourable and imminent. Favourable it was because a regime had fallen which pressed for policies bitterly opposed by them. It became imminent because Nkrumah arrived in Guinea on 2 March 1966 and was declared a co-President by Sekou Toure who promised him all-out support for his return to Ghana. It was no mere coincidence that the

15 At a welcoming mass rally Sekou Toure announced: "If a conference of heads of African states took place tomorrow, Kwame Nkrumah would speak in the name of Guinea because he... contd. on next page
day after most of the West African states recognised the new regime of the NLC.

Guinea's act of granting asylum to Nkrumah had raised apprehensions about its role in the region. Thus Ghana's coup and Guinea's action had regional implications that generated new tensions in the area leading to a shift in alliance and the pattern of inter-state relations in West Africa.

As to the reaction in Ghana, the NLC promptly announced severance of diplomatic ties with Guinea. In a statement issued

is not simply an African but a universal man... Kwame Nkrumah can be considered the chief of state of Guinea and the Secretary General of the Parti Democratique de Guinea (PDG)". Again he invoked the Ghana-Guinea Union "Created in 1958 which makes Nkrumah a Guinean citizen in the same way that President Sekou Toure is a Ghanaian citizen."


16 Ivory Coast along with Entente Council states as well as Liberia and Togo recognised the NLC's regime on 4 March 1966, the same day United Kingdom and United States also recognised the military regime in Ghana. President Houphout Boigny conveyed to NLC on 4 March "Ivory Coast has decided to recognise the new regime in Ghana. This decision has been taken in agreement with the governments of other Entente Council countries". Ghanaian Times, 5 March 1966.

17 The Liberian Star (Monrovia), a daily from Monrovia warned the Government of Liberia against deposed Nkrumah's subversive activities and urged that if Nkrumah settled in the neighbouring Guinea, the Liberian Government must drastically review its policy towards Guinea. The paper recalled "Nkrumah had set up as recent revelations made in Ghana indicate, training camps to carry out subversion against other states. It is not unfair to suppose that those Chinese and Russians and subversive camps may turn up in Guinea a situation which can result in our government subjecting its friendly open frontier and other policies to drastic review. Agents have come from Ghana to overthrow our government in the past... the man behind all this is now only a few miles from our border. President Tubman has always strongly opposed Nkrumah's pan African ideas and Liberia is among first African countries to recognise NLC." Ghanaian Times, 9 March 1966.
on 4 March, the NLC said that the Council had learnt with shock that its own accredited Ambassador and all his staff in Conakary had been placed under house arrest on the orders of the Guinea Government. It further called upon Sekou Toure not to bestow the new offices on Nkrumah under the illusion that Ghana-Guinea Union still existed, while it had been "dissolved long ago owing to the dictatorial tendencies of Nkrumah". The NLC added that "Guinea owes Ghana £ 5 million which the generous people of Ghana had sacrificed to save Guinea from collapsing when it attained its independence". The statement concluded: "In view of the hostile attitude and unfriendly act of Guinea Government to the new regime in Ghana, the NLC has decided with immediate effect to close down the Ghana Embassy in Conakary and to withdraw the Ambassador and his staff."  The NLC simultaneously protested to OAU Secretary General on Guinea's acts of "aiding, abetting and harbouring Nkrumah, the deposed and discredited tyrant of Ghana". It stated: "It is a glaring example of gross interference by Guinea to allow Nkrumah to use Radio Conakary to address the Chief and people of Ghana. The NLC vehemently protests and condemns these acts of interference by Guinea in accordance with OAU charter and various resolutions of the OAU on subversion and political refugees."

Toure, on his part, introduced a new element in his support to Nkrumah and opposition to the military regime in Ghana. Radio Conakary on 10 March 1966 broadcast a speech

18 Ghanaian Times, 5 March 1966.
19 Ibid., 7 March 1966.
by Toure, in which he stated:

The Guinean army joined by 5000 ex-servicemen, women's organizations and thousands of men and women militants of Partie Democratique de Guinee will go in military convoys to liberate the Ghanaian people from the dictatorship of military traitors.

A commission had been appointed, Radio Conakary reported, by Political Committee of PDG to mobilize the people to undertake a 'March to Ghana'. An order of the day, the Radio reported was:

Our people have firmly decided to support the courageous people of Ghana and their glorious President Dr. Nkrumah. We are determined to halt the criminal actions of the imperialists... the unpopular military agents will soon pay the price of their crime. 20

The NLC termed Toure's statement as a "declaration of war" and pointed out that "the armed forces of Ghana which are superior to those in Guinea are fully prepared to defend the country's territorial integrity". Harley, Vice-Chairman of NLC, declared that the threat from Guinea must be treated "with the utmost contempt". He stated: "We are not alone. Ghana has the full support of its neighbouring African states which Nkrumah persistently attempted to subvert." The claim was well-founded.

Not merely the policies pursued by Nkrumah but Guinea's threats to instal him back in power strengthened the support for the military regime among the other states.

Criticism of Guinea's "declaration of war" was not confined to West Africa alone. Julius Nyerere, a critic of the Ghana

20 Voice of the Revolution (Radio Conakary), 10 March 1966
coup, expressed his sympathies for Nkrumah and his supporters but pointed out:

After our sympathies what do we do? Do we organise subversion... provoke or promote civil war in Ghana?
It is not the business of another country to help in effecting another change of Government because we believe in constitutionality. 23

In West Africa the opposition to the Toure plans were voiced by all states except Mali. The Head of the Nigerian Military Government issued a serious warning to these African states contemplating military intervention in Ghana. He said:
"Should this report prove to be true, a serious threat which no true African can ignore would have been created."

It was, however, the members of Entente Council who mainly spearheaded the moves in expressing and mobilizing opposition to Guinea's threats. Their involvement in the Ghana-Guinea dispute had two reasons. First, the relations of the Entente States with Toure's Guinea, like that of Nkrumah's Ghana, were anything but

23 Nationalist, 12 March 1966. The paper also carried an editorial asking "Do we have the cohorts to march into a neighbouring state to fight for an individual? If we have then our obvious destination should be Salisbury and not Accra". Nationalist, 15 March 1966.

24 Before making announcement on 10 March, both Sekou Toure and Nkrumah had visited Mali on 6 and 7 March. Mali had expressed its solidarity with Nkrumah but subsequently the statement was made available after 10 March by Malian leadership reacting to President Toure's plans. Africa Report, vol. 11, no. 4, April 1966, p. 37.

25 Morning Post (Lagos), 14 March 1966. Another Nigerian paper said: "The domestic affairs of a sister state whose sole prerogative it is to change its government or head of state the way it sees it fit... Sudian act may have dangerous consequences for Africa. The West African Pilot, 14 March 1966."
Second, the logistics of the action threatened by Toure involved directly Ivory Coast and Upper Volta, as Guinea's forces had to cross the territories of these two states in order to invade Ghana. Thus, Guinea's posture had assumed regional dimensions. It led to intense preparations by the West African states to prevent a war. President Houphout Boigny warned Guinea against embarking on the "fatal adventure" of sending military forces through Ivory Coast to attack Ghana's new military regime: "Our dignity commands us to oppose by every possible means any passage by Guinea hordes across our country." He further reminded the Guinean President: "It has defence accords not only with the Entente Council but also with France which will intervene with all the weight of its power." In the wake of the war threat, Ivory Coast was put on full alert, the armed forces being moved to the borders with Guinea. Liberia, having common borders with Guinea and Ivory Coast, also alerted its forces. Upper Volta, expressing solidarity with Ivory Coast, also categorically stated: "It shall not permit any passage to Guinea forces to invade Ghana." There were attempts to pool


28 The Liberian Star pointed out the army moves on common borders and stated "The situation is extremely tense but President Tubman is in constant touch with Governments of both Guinea and Ivory Coast to ease out tension." The Liberian Star, 29 March 1966.

29 Quoted in Ghanaian Times, 17 March 1966.
all the Entente Council members together and strengthen their alliance among themselves as also to extend full support to Ghana. In a meeting of the Council convened on 6 April, President Hemani Diorl of Niger asked all the members to be vigilant against Guinea as it might develop to be "the base to organize subversion against other states". The communiqué stressed the need "to step up cooperation within Entente itself". In another meeting, reaffirming "a total unity of views and entire and complete solidarity on the questions relating to the overthrow of Nkrumah and untimely statements of Sekou Toure", the member-states pledged "all-out support" and reinforced cooperation with the new regime in Ghana. The NLC had succeeded in winning the support and confidence of Ghana's neighbours and Guinea's threats contributed significantly to this success. In the face of Entente's onslaught, Guinea found itself isolated and Toure subsequently softened his stand towards Ghana.

30 Ghanaian Times, 10 April 1966.
31 Ibid., 14 March 1966.
32 "The best thing Nkrumah has done for us is that he has ensured for us friendship and sympathy of formidable neighbours who are now ready to fight on our side. Clearly the whole sabre-rattling exercise of Sekou Toure can be dismissed as one gigantic hoax", Moses Danquah, "We and Our Neighbours", Daily Graphic, 26 April 1966.
33 President Sekou Toure denied that Guinea had any plans to attack Ghana. However he asked the NLC to hold a referendum to establish its credibility. Quoted in Africa Report, vol. 11, no. 6, June 1966, p. 26. Analysing Guinea's attitude it was asked in Ghana "Does Sekou Toure really mean war? Can he succeeded in this 'fatal adventure'. Sekou Toure is not serious at least now so now. Reactions of nations with which Ghana shares common boundaries is clearly one of hostility. Guinea has no naval or air force to talk about. The only alternative is invasion by land and that is the problem which he should have foreseen would be... contd. on next page
NLC's fence-mending with the Neighbouring Countries

The Ghana-Guinea dispute provided the NLC with an opportunity to gain the sympathy and confidence of other states and subsequently quicken the process of normalisation of its relations particularly with its neighbours. It was during the crisis that the NLC took the initiative of sending goodwill missions separately to both the English and French speaking states of West Africa. The missions had a twofold purpose: (i) to explain the reasons for the coup, and (ii) to renew contacts while convincing the states visited that the policies of the previous regime had been abandoned. That the NLC succeeded in its purpose was reflected in the communique issued as a result of Ghana's missions visiting these states.

The first of the missions visited Ivory Coast where a joint communique stated: "The two countries have agreed to pursue a policy of fraternal cooperation based on tolerance and non-interference in each other's internal affairs in the interests of both peoples and of African unity". The head of the mission, Van Lare, told the National Assembly of Ivory Coast:

The one and the only man who had been a bee in the foliage of Ivory Coast was no more. We are ashamed to say that, unknown to the people and Government of Ghana, the deposed Nkrumah has been engaging in

fraught with serious complications and consequences. The way to Ghana would have to lie through 400 mile width of Ivory Coast's territory. That is impossible. Then there are condemnations which his threats have evoked from a number of African states and the expression of sympathy which the new regime in Ghana has received from well-meaning African countries...The unpopularity of the threat and the determination of the Ivory Coast and its allies to resist aggression are strong deterrent factors." Moses Danquah, "Does Sekou Toure Really Mean War", Daily Graphic, 5 April 1966.
subversion against our neighbouring countries. Secret training camps have been discovered, rounded up and ransacked. 34

As a proof that subversive policies of the deposed regime had been abandoned, the mission handed over six "subversive elements" 35 including leaders of the outlawed Sanwi Party. The dissidents had been brought to Ivory Coast from Ghana by the mission. Similarly a joint communique issued in Niamey, Niger, said that "the two governments express our mutual desire to re-establish sincere cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and technical fields...in the near future our experts shall meet in order to determine the practical methods of implementing this cooperation." The mission's visit to Togo, with which Ghana had territorial disputes leading often to the closure of borders, was also successful. Togo's President Nicholas Grunitzky said that "Togo and Ghana are friends again...we have settled our economic and frontier problems. Our borders will soon be reopening... experts shall be meeting soon to examine ways of providing political, economic, cultural and social cooperation." Communique of similar content were issued also after Ghana's goodwill mission's visits to English-speaking states like Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 The communique issued in Lagos, Nigeria said: "Nigeria and Ghana have agreed to pursue policies aimed at effective policies. We will tackle as a matter of urgency all problems resulting from nationals residing in each other's country with a view to bring about a free flow of persons and goods between the two countries." Ibid.
A third goodwill mission sent to Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia along with Malawi and Ethiopia under the leadership of Supreme Court Judge Sir Arku Kossah, however, could not claim similar success. Whereas Zambia refused to entertain the mission, Kenya and Tanzania expressed their reservations about the new regime. Even after the mission, these two states did not recognize the regime for over a year.

A scrutiny of the different communiques brings out four common features: (i) recognition of the NLC as the change in Ghana was an internal matter, with support against external threats; (ii) attempts at normalization through settling disputes e.g. re-opening of borders; (iii) promotion of cooperation in various fields for mutual benefit in a regional perspective; and (iv) protection of the interests of the nationals or aliens in both the states.

Insofar as the first point was concerned, the NLC was successful in West Africa at least. It lost no time in initiating steps to accelerate the normalization process, which mainly involved Ghana's neighbouring states. The major problems vis-a-vis these states were of common borders, which had been closed on the sides of Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Togo. At the invitation of NLC, representatives from Ghana, Ivory Coast, Togo and Upper Volta met in Accra during 14-17 April in a four-day conference in order "to explore common interests and sort out problems". Inaugurating the conference, Harley referred specifically to the NLC's concern to ensure Guinea that "Ghana reopens her borders with her friends and brothers...to demonstrate to the world that we can live
together on the well-recognised principles which will govern border-crossing along Ghana's frontiers. The principles mentioned were of mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. The communique thus stated: "The four delegations expressed satisfaction with the spirit of understanding... and are confident that this spirit will lead to speedy normalisation of relations between Ghana and her neighbours." The spirit of understanding mentioned in the communique pointed to the common outlook, policy framework, and belief in the established principles or code of conduct that the NLC now shared with its neighbours. The NLC could arrive at this understanding only by and sharing in the belief structure of these states. In Ghana, there was now a state that followed a path of set rules and traditions rather than advocating changes.

**Ghana and Togo:**

The NLC, as a sequel to the conference, entered into bilateral negotiations with neighbouring states to establish cordial relations. Togo was the first state with which NLC initiated its efforts of normalization of relations. A visit by Ghana's goodwill mission in March had already established contacts with the Togolese Government when a desire to settle long-standing disputes was expressed by both. With regard to the specific issue of border it was stated that it would be opened at the earliest. President Grunitzky, however, expressed doubts about immediate opening pointing out that it involved problems, though, "we are not afraid of problems." What he was referring to was the

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41 Ghanaian Times, 14 April 1966.
The longstanding issue of unification of Eveland that had been the cause of dispute between the two countries since independence. After the Accra Conference of neighbouring states was over, President of Togo demanded "reunion of former British Togo, now incorporated in Ghana, with the Republic of Togo in order to meet the legitimate aspirations of the people... we have established excellent relations with the new government (but) question of the old territorial dispute between the two must be solved now."

Togo's President had chosen to raise the issue at a time when there were efforts for rapprochement by the NLC with its neighbours which also were interested in stabilizing the post-coup situation in the region. The NLC's eagerness to improve relations with its neighbours might have given Togo's leaders an impression of the new regime's vulnerability in Ghana and hope of extracting concessions. But Togo did not get support from Ivory Coast and Upper Volta which preferred normalization of relations and suggested referral of the larger issue of border disputes to a joint commission that could be established by the concerned states in the future. Moreover, Ivory Coast known for its rigid stand on the sanctity of the existing boundaries of African States, a principle accepted by the OAU, could in any case not have encouraged such demands in West Africa. Also as a senior member of the Entente Council, in which Togo had been co-opted, Ivory Coast's influence could not have been ignored.

43 Ghanaian Times, 18 April 1966.
44 Comments on the conference's communique in Ghanaian Times, 20 April 1966.
easily. Ghana's border with Togo were formally opened on 30 April 1966. Attending the ceremony Vice Charman Harley stated the significance of the occasion thus:

We must first of all live at peace with our neighbours before we can think of uniting all of Africa. For, how could we achieve African unity when we close our borders and erect wires around us, thereby engendering ill-feeling, hatred and suspicion amongst our neighbours?

We of the NLC are firmly resolved to maintain permanent and lasting cordial relations with all friendly sister African states and this ceremony marks the opening of a new and clean page in the annals of diplomatic and other intercourse between Ghana and Togo. 45

Subsequently the two Governments also concluded agreements regarding:

(i) direct communication links between the two;
(ii) establishment of Ghana's Bank in Lome; and
(iii) supply of cheap electricity from the Akosombo hydroelectric plant to Togo.

The two Governments also announced abolition of entry visas to facilitate easy movement of persons across the borders, the only condition being that the borders would operate on the internationally recognised immigration and customs formalities. The border residents were also to require identity cards for crossing the borders.

Ghana’s borders were subsequently reopened with Upper Volta on 14 June and with Ivory Coast on 4 July 1966. This completed the phase of normalisation of Ghana's relations with its

45 Ghana Today, n. 40.
46 Ibid., vol. 12, no. 6, 20 March 1968.
neighbours as undertaken by the NLC. The NLC could thus restore normal relations with its neighbours and improve Ghana's relations with other states of the region within a few months of seizing power. This helped in consolidating the NLC internally and assured it of a friendly environment externally. But it could achieve this goal only after giving proof of a similarity in role perceptions between Ghana and its neighbours, by fashioning its policies on the same principles as done by other states. Wherever that similarity was lacking, the relations continued to be tense.

**Tensions Between Ghana and Guinea:**

The rift, for instance, continued to widen between Ghana and Guinea. President Toure had offered political asylum to Nkrumah who arrived in Guinea along with 78 members of his entourage on his visit to Hanoi at the time of the coup in Ghana. The NLC alleged illegal detention of Ghana's diplomatic staff and other Ghanaians being Guinea Government and asked for their release. On 27 April Ghana lodged a strong protest with the UN Secretary-General regarding Guinea's threat of war, unfriendly act of asylum to Nkrumah and detention of diplomatic staff and Ghanaians against their will. On U Thant's intervention, Ghana's diplomatic staff left Guinea on 30 May 1966. But the other Ghanaians remained in Guinea according to an official release by NLC, which stated:

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48 In a historical perspective the new regime led Ghana to defect Casablanca Group and join Monrovia in terms of ideology.

Ghana has the information there are about one hundred Ghana's citizens who have been held in Guinea against their will. 78 of them are in entourage to Hanoi with Nkrumah and 28 Ghana's students returning to Ghana on completion of their course in Moscow.

It added:

Ghana has appealed for the release of Ghanaians through such bodies as OAU, the UN, Commission for refugees and International Red Cross. 50

In a bid to highlight the issue of its citizens detained in Guinea and secure their release, the NLC resorted to an unprecedented act on 29 October 1966. It intercepted the Guinea Foreign Minister and 18 other Guinean citizens who were in transit in Accra on their way to Addis Ababa to attend a meeting of the OAU Council of Ministers. An official Ghanaian statement issued after interception of the Guinean delegation said that "the action has been taken as a reprisal for Sekou Toure's refusal to release over a 100 odd Ghanaian's citizens in Guinea against their will. This action under normal international relations would have been contrary to diplomatic norma as observed among civilized countries." The statement pointed out:

Consistently hostile attitude of Guinea Government towards the new regime in Ghana while allowing Nkrumah use of Radio Conakary, issue of threat of war and detention of its citizens. All these actions together absolve the Ghana Government from observing the usual diplomatic norms and legality in our relations with Guinea...The Government of Ghana, however, undertakes to release all the Guinea nationals being held immediately on the release of all Ghana citizens now held in Guinea...The Government of Ghana will only honour her undertaking under these terms. 51

51 Ibid.
This act of the NLC was the first of its kind in Africa, adding a novel feature to inter-state relations. It was an act outside the OAU framework and committed by a state which had only recently had pledged to stick to the principles of the organisation. The NLC chose to highlight its grievances when a OAU conference of heads of States and Governments was to be held from 5 November 1966 in Addis Ababa. It was, however, due to the occasion itself that the NLC action met with a sharp reaction from the other African states. The fact that Guinean delegation was coming to attend the conference and was only in transit in Accra appeared to make the incident a kind of state-sponsored highjacking. Ethiopia, as the host state, was the first to react and denounce the NLC for "violation of international law and diplomatic privileges according to signatories to such International Convention". Asking for the immediate release of Guinea delegation, the statement added: "Government of Ghana can not proceed unilaterally to take measures that are detrimental to peaceful solution of the problem". A Zambian spokesman pointed to the wider consequences and impact of the NLC action and said that "it will wreck the conference".

Similar condemnation of NLC was expressed by Algeria, UAR, Tanzania and Somalia. Nigeria, though it considered the incident

52 *Ghanian Times*, 30 October 1966.
53 Ibid., 4 November 1966.
54 Congo (B) called it an 'act of piracy'. Algerian Foreign Minister stated "This action of Ghana is an anti-African element which imperialism must necessarily welcome". According to Radio Mogadisou it was a "plot concocted by certain governments aided by international imperialism and

...contd. on next page
as unfortunate, was the only one to support the NLC on the
55 ground that the latter was left with no alternative. At the
same time, UN Secretary-General U Thant, also appealed to the
Ghana Government to release the detainees. His appeal was
rejected by the NLC.

The OAU Council of Ministers, due to open formally on
31 October 1966, decided at an informal meeting to send a
delegation comprising representatives of Sierra Leone, Congo (K)
and Kenya to visit both Accra and Conakary to resolve the dispute.
In Accra, the Government of Ghana reiterated its stand on first
securing the release of detained Ghanaians from Guinea. In
Conakary, however, the delegation was met with a demonstration
at the airport by Ghanaians, who stated that they had not been

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African reaction". Reactions both Tanzania and UAR were
directed towards consequences of such an action with regard
to OAU and issues before the conference. President Nyerere
stating 'there is a devil somewhere in Africa' pointed out
"some delegations who came to attend the conference had got
their credentials signed by foreign powers". A lead article
in Al Abram (Cairo) pointed out "the manner in which the
incident occurred gains suspicions on the motives...Already
some African states have accused Ghana Government of having
done this on behalf of foreign circles which wish to put a
half to the OAU meet, it is a deliberate attempt to postpone
the solutions of the questions vital to Africa." African

55 Ghanaian Times, 5 November 1966.

56 U Thant’s message to NLC. General Ankrah in reply to
him reiterated: "It appears that your assessment of this
incident failed to take into account background of a
series of gross violations by Guinean Government...The GG
will release the 19 Guineans immediately in exchange of
our nationals in a neutral country." Ghana Today,
vol. 10, no. 19, 16 November 1966, p. 2.

57 Ghanaian Times, 1 November 1966.
detained and would like to stay in Guinea. Following the report of the mission, the heads of three states--Ethiopia, Liberia and the UAR--met to consider the move whether Ghana could be allowed to participate in the conference due to begin on 6 November 1966.

The same day, however, the NLC announced the release of the detained delegates. The official statement on the release stated:

The Government of Ghana has decided to reconsider its position by releasing the Guinese concerned. In taking this decision the Government has taken into consideration the expeditious manner in which the O.A.U. Council of Ministers has despatched a peace mission to investigate the dispute and work out ways of a peaceful settlement. Further the Government of Ghana has taken into full consideration the personal appeals of his Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie, President Tubman and President Nasser who have undertaken to secure the immediate release of Ghanaians.

Two factors seem to have influenced the NLC in reconsidering its decision. First, a realisation that the NLC could not get support for its action but elicited only overwhelming criticism. Second, the report of the visiting mission to Guinea was a demoralising factor. The fact was that Guineans were released without any assurance from President Toure who had held that "anybody is welcome to visit Guinea and affirm whether there are any detained Ghanaians". In the confrontation with Guinea NLC had lost and its efforts to obtain legitimacy after February coup suffered a setback. The NLC's action on the eve of

58 The delegation reported to have interviewed 80 Ghanaians during their visit to Conakary including two in the hospital. All were of the opinion that they would like to stay in Guinea for the time being. Ethiopian Herald, 5 November 1966.

59 Ghana Today, n. 56.
the OAU conference, held to discuss vital issues like Rhodesia, had a significant bearing on the deliberations as member-states were found engaged instead in resolving the dispute.

There was adverse reaction even from Ghana's press. Sounding a note of dissent, Legon Observer pointed out that, in the "Ghana-Guinea crisis, Ghana got a setback as it had to back out without achieving its aim... Ghana seems to have sacrificed herself unnecessarily; for her conduct of the situation after the initial move, she lost the position of strength... no one expects from the NLC which is an interim Government to play according to the rules of the game."

In the first round Guinea had lost against Ghana because Sekou Toure's war threat involved other states that considered it a dangerous development. In the second round, Ghana lost because the NLC's action threatened the very foundation of African diplomacy and the OAU.

The NLC was to be guided by the principles laid down in the OAU Charter and determined by Ghana's own national interest taking precedence over the issues of the continent. Ghana was to be committed but not necessarily with forefront

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60 Radio commentary from Lagos pointed out "4th summit of the OAU has not lived up to expectations. There was poorest attendance... Their absence from the summit and the fact that it was Ghana's new rulers who almost wrecked the conference by the ill advised arrest of Guinean diplomats clearly shows a waning interest in the organization." Radio Lagos, 10 November 1966, quoted in Africa Research Bulletin, 1966.

61 Legon Observer (Legon), 11 November 1966.
activity on issues beyond its boundaries. Pursuit of a moderate or low-key policy in Africa was not a temporary phase in the process of reformulating Ghana's policies. The tone and the framework within which the new policies were set as well as the priorities of the leadership were to remain unchanged or even refostered in the remaining period of military's rule. Commitments were made with a view to reaffirming the NLC's stand on different issues of the Africa. But commitments needed policies for their fulfilment and policies required a framework and perception which had been clearly laid down since February 1966. Trends were to grow to strengthen that framework in the subsequent years.

NLC's Policy towards Issues of Rhodesia and South Africa

Ankrah's pledge on new year eve of 1967, "to pursue a vigorous Africa policy which shall leave no quarter for colonialists and racialists in Africa was in line with reaffirming Ghana's commitment." If Ankrah meant a "vigorous policy", an active and leading role by Ghana to help and strengthen the cause of Africa, the subsequent years belie such hopes. What emerged most clearly in those years was, besides government's commitment, a trend in the official press of Ghana that, more than contradicting the NLC's position on issues,
reflected the true mind of the decision makers. The nature of NLC's Africa policy could be understood by combining the government stand on issues and views appearing in official press. The issues of Rhodesia and South Africa, in which the NLC had stated its uncompromising commitment, illustrate its Africa policy.

Rhodesian Issue and NLC

At the time of the coup in Ghana, the most crucial problem faced by the African states was Rhodesian rebellion. General Ankrah gave explicit expression to the NLC's stand that the "illegal regime of Ian Smith in Rhodesia must be pulled down immediately" and that "Ghana is ready to extend all help within its means". Elaborating, he said:

We believe that measures laid down in Chapter 7 of the UN Charter for mandatory sanctions and the resolutions of the OAU on Southern Rhodesia should be applied vigorously if Ian Smith's regime should fall...It is the firm determination of the Ghana Government to assist within the UN, the OAU and the Commonwealth in ensuring speedy realisation of majority rule in Southern Rhodesia.

Even within this organizational framework, it was only through taking initiatives and suggesting effective measures in vigorous pursuit of its policy that Ghana could have fulfilled its commitment. The emphasis of the NLC, however, was on taking decisions along with the majority of the African states. This set limits to its policy stand making it weak and ambiguous.

65 Ibid., vol. 10, no. 4, 20 April 1966.
66 Ibid., vol. 10, no. 9, 29 June 1966.
The press in Ghana, however, was more forthcoming on Ghana's new priorities under the NLC leadership. It made clear that in the pursuit of national interests by the military leaders African issues were only secondary. The delegation of Ghana to the Commonwealth conference in September 1966 claimed to have come with "an open mind to enjoin on our colleagues in the Commonwealth in patient search for solutions to the problem". Referring to Rhodesia, Ghana's delegation was "to request an assurance from Britain that no independence shall be granted before majority rule". It did urge Britain to impose mandatory sanctions but, unlike Zambia and Sierra Leone which threatened to walk out, refused any step to pressurise Britain. The press in Ghana supported the NLC's stand at the Commonwealth. By the time the next conference was held in January 1969 besides a commitment, Rhodesia was not a priority issue for Ghana. The NLC delegates were more actively engaged in appealing to Britain to help solve economic and financial problems faced by member-

67 "Judging by their demeanour and utterances members of Ghana delegation are behaving with decorum...they are proving to be businesslike without exhibiting any traits of a vain demagogue...Solution to the Rhodesian problem does not lie in disintegration of the Commonwealth or walk outs from its conferences...all members must come to a majority decision." Ghanain Times, 6 September 1966.

68 An editorial pointed out the impasse. "In the absence of force which Britain will never use to bring Rhodesian rebels to their knees, Rhodesia like South Africa will perhaps have to be dismissed as a lost cause." Daily Graphic, 17 December 1968.
states. The Ghanaian press fully confirmed this approach. *Daily Graphic* in an article entitled "Africa and the Commonwealth", wrote:

As long as we look at the Commonwealth through the spectacles of Rhodesia, its survival what to talk of its efficacy must be in very serious doubt...a true picture of the Commonwealth could be if it were considered from the point of view of the Colombo Plan, the special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan, Development Corporation, the legal and finance conferences and such like. 69

Within Africa NLC persisted with its commitment endorsing all resolutions on Rhodesia by the OAU which urged Britain to use force and rejected any negotiations between them. The argument that Rhodesia was solely Britain's responsibility had provided most African states with a rationale for their own marginal rule. The NLC also adhered to the same rigid position unlike Nkrumah in the past. Thus, any proposal for more direct involvement was opposed. On the eve of the OAU Council of Ministers meeting at Kinshasa in September 1967, head of Nigerian delegation Chief Awolowo commented at a press conference: "It is the weakness of the African states to rely on Britain to bring down Smith's regime in Rhodesia and African States must do something by themselves as well."  Even though there was no official reaction from the NLC, the Ghana press took strong exception to these remarks. *Daily Graphic* wrote:

If by these words Chief Awolowo was calling on African States to wage war against Rhodesia because African States are militarily strong then he should be told in plain words that he is deceiving himself. We do not think it is the

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70 *Ghanaian Times*, 1 September 1967.
business of the OAU to wage war against Britain because that is what it amounts to in the final analysis. The Commonwealth African countries have already agreed to let Britain handle the rebellion until the matter is finally settled. There is no point in calling on African states to war against Rhodesia.

Instead it said in the editorial:

We must concentrate on raising standards of living of the people and of the economic problems. The summit must give them a priority. In the face of economic matters political matters should be relegated to the background. 71

NLC's Attitude towards South Africa

A similar trend was reflected in the NLC's stand towards South Africa. In a bid to end its isolation and extend contacts the leaders of South Africa had adopted a policy of "Outward movement" for cooperation with black African States. The borderline states like Malawi, Botswana and Lesotho responded positively to the call of "detente" and cooperation with South Africa with a view to overcoming their economic problems. President Kumwzu Banda of Malawi opposed use of force and sanctions against Rhodesia and abstained from voting on such measures at the UN. Acknowledging that he was the most unpopular leader of Africa, he defended his stand on Rhodesia as well as contacts with South Africa in the name of serving the national interests of Malawi. On the eve of the OAU summit at Kinshasa on 10 September 1967, he announced the decision to establish diplomatic relations with South Africa. The OAU Council of Ministers condemned such overtures by South Africa "to lure away some independent states by economic and

71 Daily Graphic, 2 September 1967.
financial rewards". In Ghana, however, Banda's policy met with approval and the OAU was criticised for its stand. The *Ghanaian Times* wrote in an editorial reflecting on the developments.

Dr. Kumuzu Banda's (Lion of Malawi) violent language apart and the insinuating resolution of the Council of Ministers notwithstanding, Malawi's decision to establish diplomatic relations with South Africa is a realistic act of faith and sheer necessity.

The editorial went on to suggest:

Looking at the matter from South African angle, we dare to state that it is time African leaders changed their whole approach to the problems of South Africa. We make this call with the knowledge that the present regime in South Africa are making conscious effort to establish a genuine liaison with the rest of Black Africa. Perhaps Dr. Banda has lighted a torch which might blaze the way even earlier than his detractors think.

This reflected a new thinking in Ghana. The NLC refused to approve it officially. Refuting the assertion by a representative of the pan-Africanist Congress that Ghana and some other states were to follow the Malawi example, a statement issued by Ghana's Ministry of External Affairs said:

Ghana Government considers the allegation to be a figment of its authors' imagination. Ghana continue to condemn South Africa's apartheid policy and follow the OAU resolution on intensifying activities against South Africa.

The NLC chose to refute an allegation from outside Ghana but did not react to the editorial. A few months later when General Ankrah on his visit to Canada was questioned about Malawi's move, he replied: "I do not support Banda's move but I

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73 *Ghanaian Times*, 12 September 1967.
appreciate the difficulties of Prime Minister Kumuzu Banda."

At a certain level there was collusion of outlooks between the NLC leaders and the Government-controlled press in Ghana. There might not have been an actual move in Ghana's policy towards South Africa in terms of direct contacts. Banda's policy in Malawi was, however, praised not because of its so-perceived realism, pragmatism and priority for national interests. It was on the basis of these criteria that a change was sought in Black Africa's stand as a whole on South Africa. The outlook found an illustration in a lengthy article in the Daily Graphic which said:

At the risk of calling the disgust and opprobrium of masses on our heads we dare to say that time has come to look at the South African question from a fresh angle...For the past decade independent African States have tried all manner of ways...to pressurize her to change her ways, all without apparent success. For nearly a decade, South Africa has been spending huge sums of money to strengthen her defence against invasion from north of river Zambazi because of the threats of African States...passing more repressive acts internally against blacks as a reaction towards the hostile policies of independent African states. The irony of this whole development is that African states are in no position militarily or economically to topple the regime even cripple it...The screws of repression have been tightened as the independent African states issue empty threats and abuse against the regime in South Africa...The time has come for independent African states to begin a dialogue with South Africa to see whether a new relationship can be forged between north and south in the interests of humanity. Evidence is available that South Africa will be prepared to participate in such a dialogue...Has the time not come for these Africans who call themselves progressives, to those Africans who are prepared to commit suicide because they believe that patriotism and economic interests are not enough for a nation's survival to come down to earth and look at facts in the face and begin a dialogue with South Africa. 76

75 Ghanaian Times, 8 October 1967.
76 Daily Graphic, 8 March 1968.
It was not pan-Africanism or anti-racialism according to this approach but patriotism and pursuit of one's own economic interests that were more necessary virtues for the survival of a nation. A significant consequent of the trend towards individual nation-building was manifested in the weakening of pan-African links between African and Arab members of the OAU—particularly in Ghana's attitude towards the Arab-Israeli war of 6 June 1967.

**NLC and Arab-Israeli Conflict**

The six-day war between the Arab states and Israel posed two problems for Ghana. The first related to support for the Arab cause which had been championed by Nkrumah along with other member-states of the OAU. The second conceived bilateral relations between Ghana and Israel. The NLC policy towards Arabs in this conflict, if not of direct opposition, was certainly marked by a lack of sympathy for them. Endorsing the Security Council resolution for immediate cease-fire by both sides, the NLC "called for quick restoration of peace in the Middle East while bringing all the parties concerned to the negotiating table at the UN". But reactions in Ghana's press revealed total opposition to Arabs and sympathy for Israel. The targets of press criticism included not only the UAR and President Nasser because of his support to Nkrumah, but the entire course of war and the case of the Arabs against Israel. The *Ghanaian Times* welcomed the NLC's statement on cease-fire.

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77 *Ghanaian Times*, 7 June 1967.

78 "No one in Ghana who has followed the heart rendering developments in the Middle East crisis has failed to recognise that the UAR's dictator Nasser is a latter day Nkrumah with his own policy of aggression and subversion". *Ibid.*, 15 June 1967.
and commented: "Unfortunately some of the warring Arab States, particularly Kuwait, Iraq and UAR have despite their military reverses, rejected the idea of an immediate ceasefire". Wishing "good sense" to prevail, as there was no hope of winning a military victory over Israel, the editorial attempted to define Ghana's approach towards three issues which (it argued) could be settled before the UN: 1) The right of access through the Gulf of Aqaba—Israel's exit to the Red Sea for commerce with East Africa and Asia. The UN will have to guarantee the international nature of this narrow neck of water so that all nations without exception can use it. There should not be one law of sea for the rest of the world and one for the Arabs. 2) Concerning the Suez Canal: the UN must make up its mind whether Israel and other nations that do not now use the waterway are to use in future and if not why not. 3) Concerning the future of Palestinian refugees and the responsibility of Arabs for their settlement.

NLC Vice-Chairman J.W.K. Harley, in an address to the 22nd session of the UN General Assembly on 25 September 1967, spelt out Ghana's stand on the Middle East. Stating the terms for an "everlasting peace" in the area, he said:

1) In view of my delegation, Israel should withdraw from occupied territories. This however, must simultaneously be accompanied by the territorial integrity and political independence of all states in the Middle East being safeguarded and guaranteed.

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79 Ibid., 9 June 1967. Commenting on peace moves in Middle East, the paper again pointed out "Arabs should be pressurised to (i) recognise the existence of Israel, (ii) Drop all anti-Israel propaganda, (iii) Guarantee of free passage by Israel ships through Suez and Gulf of Aqaba". Ibid., 12 June 1967.
11) The recognition of the right and freedom of all states to have access to all international waterways wherever they may be situated.

iii) Compliance of UN Resolution passed in Emergency Session on Jerusalem.

iv) Relief and settlement of refugees.

Harley had reiterated the same terms for Middle East peace as presented earlier on 9 June in the Ghanaian Times. This was the blueprint of NLC's Middle East policy which became operative at the UN. At an emergency session of the UN General Assembly on 4 July 1967, Ghana's delegate chose to vote for a resolution moved by Latin American states which was nearest to the Israeli position and opposed the non-aligned move which was nearest to the Arab case. Within the continent, along with members of Entente Council, Ghana led the opposition in the conference of the OAU heads of State and Government held in September 1967, at Kinshasa to denounce Israel and express unconditional support to the UAR. As a result of the opposition, a mild resolution, expressing sympathy with the UAR and pledging the OAU to work with the UN to help it recover its lost territories, was passed at the conference. At a subsequent meeting of the OAU Council of Ministers held at Addis Ababa in February 1968.

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80 Text in Ghana Today, vol. 10, no. 16,

81 The situation was supported by USA. From Africa the states who voted 'Yes' for Latin American resolution and 'No' on non-aligned resolution were: Botswana,ambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Malagasy Republic, Malawi and Togo. Those who supported non-aligned motion included Burundi, Congo (B), Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Somali, Uganda, Zambia and Tanzania. UN Yearbook 1967; also Samuel Decado, "Africa and the Middle East War".
a stronger resolution was however adopted but only by 

acclamation. Ghana along with four other states, dissociated 
themselves from the resolution. The Daily Graphic rejected 
the whole idea of support to the Arabs by OAU saying: "OAU 
should not be dragged into any war what to say of this senseless 
Middle East war... We have long passed the childish stage of 
making hollow resolutions on issues we know we can wield no 
influence."

All this together represented a success for Israel's 
diplomacy of cultivating close economic collaboration with most 
African states. New contracts were signed between Ghana and 
Israel by which "both were to give utmost priority of treatment 
to each other. Ghana's opposition to the Arab cause was partly 
inspired by Cairo's pro-Nkrumah stance but mainly out of a 
consideration that Middle East conflict was not a part of 
Africa's mainstream. Contacts with Israel to help promote

83 "Affirmed OAU Solidarity with UAR", "immediate and 
unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied 
territory and active moral, political and material support 
of all African states to victims of Zionist aggression" in 
ibid., vol. 13, no. 5, April 1968, p. 21.

84 Contending the OAU Secretary General's press statement that 
all countries present approved the resolution, Ghanaian 
Times, said, "This has proved to be false. The fact is 
that there were five abstentions from this particular 
resolution and Ghana is one of them." Ghanaian Times, 
5 March 1968. Subsequently, P.D. Anin, Commissioner of 
External Affairs confirmed that "Ghana along with Botswana, 
Cameroon, the Ivory Coast and Madagaskar had reserved its 
position on the resolution". Ghana Today, vol. 12, no. 6, 
20 March 1968.

85 Daily Graphic, 5 March 1968. Algiers summit in September 
1968 avoided any condemnation even.

economic cooperation were more beneficial than Ghana's relations with Arab states.

Ghana and Nigerian Civil War

The main issue before NLC's Africa policy during 1967-69 was not Rhodesia or the Middle East crisis but the civil war in Nigeria. Ghana, along with other African states, was increasingly involved in the crisis. The OAU deliberations during 1967-69 were also largely dominated by the Nigerian civil war. The involvement of Ghana was not important only because Nigeria was a West African State. It was significant because the crisis in Nigeria proved a testing-ground for the basic tenets of Ghana's Africa policy to conduct inter-state relations on the principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the domestic affairs of a state. How far were these principles, in the context of Africa, practicable in inter-state relations? The NLC's role, its effectiveness and limits in the Nigerian civil war can be studied from this angle. The first civilian regime of Nigeria which did not approve of Nkrumah's pan-African policies was overthrown in January 1966, just a month before the coup in Ghana. Nigeria was the first country to recognize the NLC's regime in Ghana on 3 March 1966. The military leadership of Nigeria also stood firmly on the side of NLC in its crisis against Guinea's threats. But the counter-military coup in July 1966 followed by massacre of Ibos in the north had changed the balance of ethnic communities in the new Supreme Military Council in Nigeria. The NLC recognized the new leadership as the change of government was considered an internal matter.
The Nigerian crisis, however, grew as a result of the change in the complexion of the Supreme Military Council when the Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, Lt-Col. C.O. Ojukwu, refused to recognize Lt-Col. Gowon as the head of state. By the end of 1966, the discord had escalated between the Federal Government and Eastern Region as Ojukwu refused to attend any meeting of the Supreme Military Council held in Lagos. Ghana watched the situation cautiously as an initiative by Dahomey's President Sogolo for a reconciliation in Nigeria was rebuffed—the Federal Government considered it a purely domestic dispute. The Ghana Government had also expressed its desire to assist with any reconciliation if the assistance was asked for. It was after persistent offers of good offices made for five months by General Ankrah that Gowon finally yielded to meet Ojukwu outside Nigeria. A meeting of the Supreme Military Council was arranged for 4-5 January 1967 at Aburi in Ghana. The involvement of Ghana at this stage in efforts to bring the two parties together was not so much on the governmental level as on the personal. It was made clear by General Ankrah at the opening of the conference that his presence was there only as a "brother officer and not as mediator". In fact Ghana had no leverage to effectively settle the issues in the Nigerian conflict. But the personal diplomacy of General Ankrah did succeed in bringing the


89 Opening remarks by Ankrah, *ibid.*, p. 45.
warring leaders together for the last time at the negotiating table. The final communique issued after the conference also hinted at important decisions arrived at the conference lessening the tension within the Nigerian leadership. But hopes of peace were shortlived as the subsequent developments widened the rifts in Nigeria and the 'Aburi Accord' itself was made a factor in accentuating the crisis. General Ankrah took active interest in bringing an understanding between the two leaders. As Ojukwu threatened to secede if the agreement was not implemented, General Ankrah invited Gowon to Accra in March 1967 to secure his assurance about implementing the agreement. But Ojukwu declined to attend the SMC meet in Lagos called in for reconciliation. As the postures on both sides hardened, Ghana withdrew from further unilateral efforts at reconciliation.

On 27 May 1967, Gowon declared creation of 12 states in Nigeria. On 30 May, Ojukwu declared secession from Nigeria and established the 'Republic of Biafra'.

After the secession, the efforts of Ghana, as of many other states, in relation to the crisis were two-pronged. Firstly, the Federal Government was assured of their commitment to the territorial integrity and unity of Nigeria and their position that the civil war was Nigeria's domestic affair in which there could be


91 In press conferences on 6 and 26 January respectively by Ojukwu and Gowon differing interpretations were put forward about Aburi Accord. Gowon denying Ojukwu's statement that a transitional confidential arrangement was agreed upon was contradicted "We had not gone to Aburi to chalk out a new Constitution... workability of existing institutions was agreed by all". Ibid., p. 35.

92 Daily Graphic, 5 March 1967.
no interference. Secondly, the OAU was sought to be involved in mediating in the crisis.

Ghana had played a significant role in the crisis at the initial stage. But this role could not be sustained after secession because of the different stances that the NLC and the press took in Ghana with regard to the civil war. This factor affected the NLC's credibility with the Federal Government.

The most crucial issue involved in the situation was whether the secession was an internal matter of Nigeria. The Federal Government had made it clear that the country's territorial integrity and unity had to be preserved and this was a precondition for any mediation efforts by the African states. Given this framework, mediation efforts were inherently limited. There was no hearing of the secessionists' case; instead no effort to mediate could succeed without the renunciation of secession.

In an official release, the NLC outlined its policy towards Nigeria while stating:

It has been the policy of NLC to scrupulously adhere to the OAU principle of absolute respect for territorial integrity and national sovereignty with complete non-interference in the internal affairs of sister African States. The Government wishes to reiterate the same principle with Federal Government of Nigeria with which lands of Ghana had long standing bonds and relations. The Government of Ghana will in no way compromise Nigeria's territorial integrity. However, the Government and the people of Ghana wish our Nigerian brother peace and prosperity, if we can be of help to restore peace we will not lack in goodwill. 93

But the press in Ghana projected the civil war from a different perspective while dealing with the secession in Nigeria. A

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93 *Ghana Today*, vol. 11, no. 11, 4 June 1967.
strong case for mediation not only by the OAU but by the Commonwealth and the United Nations was made in the press in order to stop war in Nigeria. All this was done while expressing sympathies with Biafra and blaming the Federal Government for such a situation in Nigeria.

Soon after the outbreak of war in Nigeria, the Ghanaian Times pleaded:

Despite the fact that the news of the war continues to make universal headlines the whole world as watching it with unprecedented apathy. The UN has been conspicuously silent, the OAU surprisingly mute and African statesmen frigidly unconcerned with the matter. The pretext; it seems, is that what is happening in Nigeria is an internal affair which concerns Nigeria alone. Yes it is...but a difference and one which should involve in all men of goodwill a strong desire for quick compromise. 94

In a direct accusation of the Federal Government, the Daily Graphic said: "What actually precipitated the secession of Eastern Nigeria from the rest of the federation was the failure of the Federal Government to implement the Aburi agreement which granted the regions of large measure of autonomy." Legon Observer that crusaded for Biafra's cause, raised more fundamental issues. In one of its articles, it said:

Tracing the artificial unity of Nigeria since independence where differences in customs, temperament and language establish that Nigeria is not one people.

95 Daily Graphic, 16 August 1967. In another editorial, Ghanaian Times warned the countries who were allegedly supplying arms to Federal Government of Nigeria while pointing out "These gun-supplying nations could never exonerate themselves from charges of aiding and abetting genocide no matter for selling arms to Nigeria. Arms supply to Federal Government was picked up as a point of criticism which was used to carry out genocide by Federal forces against Biafrans. Ghanaian Times, 29 May 1968.
The newspaper also averred:

The facts are that the Muslims do not consider the Southern, especially the Ibos as their kith and kin. It is only a loose association of independent Nigerian states. Any crusade to crush East by the North is an holy act. 14 million souls in the new Republic of Biafra are not a small group of people. Ghana and Africa must act. They must not allow nor throw Nigeria to crush Biafra. Biafra deserves a separate existence, she has the right to live; she must be recognised. 96

The main effort of the NLC after secession was to persuade the Federal Government to accept OAU mediation, of which 97 Nigeria was very apprehensive. Efforts were made by many states 98 for mediation but failed due to the Federal Government's attitude.

96 "Biafra and International Recognition", Legon Observer, 7 July 1967, p. 20. In a subsequent article plea for recognition was repeated. "No matter what is said by governments of Africa, but the people in Ghana feel great sympathy for Biafra. The cessation in Biafra should not be compared to Katanga and Ojukwu is no Tshombe...Ojukwu reacted to a program and as a means of survival...the impressive achievements of Ojukwu lessen sympathy for feudal North. Victory of Gowon means genocide of Ibos.... Conflict must be resolved on the basis of a people's right of self-determination and with respect for the personality of the Biafran people." Legon Observer, 1 September 1967.

97 Dr E.A. Arikpo, leader of Nigerian Mission to Ghana, stated: "The Federal Nigerian Military Government headed by Major General Yabubu Gowon will not accept mediation from any African state or even from the OAU and any such move will be considered as an act of interference in Nigeria's internal affairs." Ghanaian Times, 29 July 1967.

98 Two earliest initiatives failed in the face of stiff stand against any mediation by Federal Government. First by four leaders of East African states and second, a West African mini summit called in by Ghana to discuss Nigerian crisis prior to Kinshasa Meet of OAU. The summit was not held and Ankrah had to admit that Nigeria did not show enough appreciation of his peace efforts." Stremlau, n. 88, pp. 82-86.
The meeting of the OAU held in September 1967 at Kinshasa was crucial for Nigerian crisis as the Federal Government was under pressure the matter could not, however, be raised at the meeting.

Outside the conference, Ghana along with many others succeeded in persuading Nigeria to accept a Consultative Committee of the OAU with clear terms of reference given to it by the Assembly of Heads of State. Ghana had been associated with the committee because of Gen. Ankrah's personal association with both Gowon and Ojukwu. But Ghana's mediation efforts for peaceful settlement landed the NLC in an awkward confrontation with the Federal Government. The provocation was Harley's address to the UN General Assembly after the OAU conference, in which he referred to the situation in Nigeria. A protest note was immediately lodged before the General Assembly by the

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99 Nigeria accepted OAU mediation only after Zambia and Tanzania threatened to recognize Biafra. The terms of reference of Consultation Committee were however, in conformity with Federal Government's position.

Confirming the adherence to the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states, recognizing the situation as an internal affair, the OAU expressed its desire of placing the services of the Assembly at the disposal of Federal Government of Nigeria and resolved to send a consultative mission of six (Ghana, Congo, Liberia, Niger, Cameroon and Ethiopia) to Nigeria to assure him of the Assembly's desire for the territorial integrity, unity and peace of Nigeria. OAU, Communiqué Issued at the Kinshasa on 14 September 1967. Ghana Today, vol. 11, no. 16, 4 October 1967.

100 Addressing the 22nd session of General Assembly he stated: "Several problems are exercising our mind in Africa. Prominent among them is the situation in Nigeria which is indeed a source of anguish and grief...everything possible will be done by us in Africa...to end this most regrettable fratricidal war and to restore the country to peace and harmony. Text in Ghana Today, vol. 11, no. 16, 4 October 1967."
Nigerian permanent representative. The Federal Government took the remarks of Harley in the background of Ghana's efforts at mediation and thus as a deliberate attempt by it to involve also the United Nations.

In Nigeria, Harley's statement was strongly denounced in the official media. A commentary on current affairs on Radio Lagos described Harley as a betrayer and said:

Since the crisis in Nigeria began, almost all Ghana newspapers have always been giving out distorted versions of the events in Nigeria. The papers have always tried to show up Ojukwu as the defender of an oppressed people whereas this is far from the truth. All along it was thought in Nigeria that these papers were expressing opinions not shared by the Ghana Government, but Mr Harley's stand which obviously had Government backing in New York, puts the whole issue of Ghana's attitude in a different perspective...This raises, more than ever before, the question of the suitability of General Ankrah as a member of the group of six heads of state. Will he be a fit and proper person to represent the OAU? 102

Seeking to clarify its stand, the NLC stated: "Reference to Nigerian situation was meant to forestall any move by any other state with ulterior motives to raise it in the General Assembly." Regretting that the commentary on Radio Lagos should have been permitted, the statement reiterated "Ghana's fraternal and sincere wishes for the peace and progress of Nigeria and NLC's abiding desire for the territorial integrity

101 Chief Simeon Adibo stated: "I strongly object and condemn this clandestine move making it abundantly clear that it is incompatible with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nigeria and not a step calculated to promote African Unity." Morning Star (Lagos), 24 September 1967.

and sovereignty of Nigeria." But the damage had been done.

A difference of approach had surfaced between Ghana and even other members of the Consultative Committee which met first at Lagos in November 1967. General Ankrah appeared to have suggested to the meeting that best thing would be to get both parties around the table and argue out the two sides rather than asking Biafrans to renounce the secession. The plan as suggested by Ankrah was that the Committee would transmit to Biafra the OAU's condemnation of secession, Nigeria's conditions for cessation of hostilities and, after receiving the reply from Biafra, attempt to mediate the differences. The other members of the committee rejected the plan. The final communique sided with the Federal Government's approach that any solution to the Nigerian crisis must preserve the unity and territorial integrity of Nigeria. General Ankrah was entrusted with the task of communicating the committee's position to Biafra and receive their reply.

Meanwhile, in Nigeria, the Federal forces had established clear superiority over the eastern region by the beginning of 1968. But as the military operations caused serious damages to the civilian population, there was widespread sympathy for Biafrans throughout the world. Ojukwu tried to convert the growing international sentiment into political pressures forcing Nigeria to accept an unconditional ceasefire. It was this humanitarian


104 Stremlau, n. 88, p. 96.

aspect, highlighted by Biafra, that broke the stalemate in the mediation efforts and brought about a new turn in the situation. Between 15 April and 20 May 1968, four African states, two in the east and two in the west, recognized the Republic of Biafra.

Under the force of this development, the Consultative Committee renewed its efforts to negotiate peace in Nigeria. Under its terms of reference, the committee continued to condemn cessation and uphold Nigerian territorial integrity. The Federal case was taken up but there was no accommodation of the rebels' views. General Ankrah was the only member of the committee who supported broadening of the terms of reference. At the meeting of the committee held in Niamey, Niger, on 15-25 July 1968, he moved a resolution containing three recommendations of a 'limited truce' for relief supplies, an international police force and a limited peace corridor. These were important concessions to Biafra, amounting to a 'limited ceasefire'. The same demands were made by Ojukwu when he arrived for the Niamey Conference. Under the Federal Government's pressure and lack of unanimity among the members the Consultative Committee limited its resolution only to appealing for relief measures. The resolution of Ankrah was unanimously turned down by the rest of the committee. The stalemate continued. The OAU summit in September 1968 appealed to Biafrans to end secession and to the Federal Government for

106 Tanzania (13 April 1968), Gabon (8 May), Ivory Coast (14 May) and Zambia (20 May).

general amnesty to restore confidence. At Monrovia in April 1969, the committee discussed two incompatible points—renunciation of secession by Biafra as demanded by the Federal Government and immediate, unconditional ceasefire as demanded by the Biafrans. The Ghanaian representative Harley, favoured an unconditional ceasefire and demanded imposition of an embargo on the shipments of arms to both sides in the conflict.

The Monrovia conference was the last bid by the committee on the Nigerian settlement, with no success. Within three months after that, the Federal forces had made a final and decisive invasion on Biafra.

Ghana's role in the Nigerian crisis can be summed up in three phases. The first was the Aburi phase, when the NLC used personal diplomacy and played a constructive role in negotiating the crisis. The NLC viewed the situation in Nigeria as strictly domestic and external interference was unwarranted. The next phase began with the declaration of secession, which started the civil war in Nigeria. The NLC, in this phase, while making firm


109 The communique stated: "The Committee unanimously resolves that the two parties of the civil war should accept in the supreme interest of Africa a united Nigeria which ensures all forms of security and guarantee of equality of rights and privileges to all its citizens." The proposal was accepted by Federal Government but rejected by Biafra. Ghanaian Times, 21 April 1969. The paper commenting on communique stated "The Monrovia declaration supports idea of one Nigeria which is unacceptable to Biafra. This has been the stand of the Committee right from the beginning... it is only now a miracle that can bring peace to that country." Ibid., 22 April 1969.
commitment to the preservation of Nigeria's territorial integrity and unity attempted to negotiate mediation supporting accommodation to the adversary views as well through the OAU. Ghana was a member of the Consultative Committee where it tried to reconcile the two extreme positions of the Biafrans and the Federal Government. The NLC then earned the displeasure of the Federal Government with Harley's remarks in the UN General Assembly which affected its credibility with Nigeria. In its zeal to play a role in the crisis, the NLC had mismanaged a sensitive issue.

Ghana's relations with Nigeria suffered a setback. But, considerable rapport was still maintained between the two, only because NLC was not interested in recognizing Biafra and Nigeria was not interested in alienating any state in its crisis.

The real and fundamental problem that the Nigerian crisis posed before Ghana and the whole continent, however, concerned such principles as national sovereignty, territorial integrity in the face of secession and code of non-interference in the internal affairs in a crisis like that of Nigeria. The crisis brought forth the proposition that, in the context of Africa, there was need for a review of these principles. Various ideas emerged: first on the notion of the existing nation-state system in Africa, secondly on issues like the unity and right of self-determination of peoples and thirdly, on the basis of policy followed by states to justify withdrawal from active pan-African involvement with a priority for national interests in the name of realism and pragmatism.

Ghana's foreign policy was also based on the same premises. Thus NLC's African policy tended to withdraw from continental issues and be mostly engaged with West Africa. Ghana's close
involvement even with Nigeria was more because of the regional affiliations and contiguity. Within the region, the NLC had twin policy goals of developing bilateral relations with its neighbours as well as promoting regional cooperation with all states of West Africa. During 1967-69, the NLC tried to strengthen Ghana's trade, economic and commercial links with the other states and, in collaboration with them, took concrete steps towards establishment of the Economic Community of West African States. This was no mean achievement in itself and it could be attained only because there existed harmonious relations with identity of common interests. The basis of this harmony and peace in the region was a common outlook towards national development, nature of bilateral relations and regional cooperation, that the regimes shared.

The main accent of NLC during 1967-69, after normalising its relations with most states in West Africa, was on three objectives. The first was a resettlement of borders with Ghana's neighbours. The second was establishment of transport, air and communication services between states. Aimed at, thirdly, were agreements on mutual trade including sale of electricity and other commodities.

**NLC's Efforts for Border Settlement**

The problem of conflicting borders had been a major cause of tension between Ghana and its neighbours since independence leading to claims over the territories and ethnic communities. With the change of regime in Ghana both the NLC as well as the neighbouring states adopted a more amicable approach to a settlement of the problem concerned. A number of inter-state commissions
on borders were appointed and, as the talks continued on other inter-state relations, agreements were reached on borders as well.

Thus Ghana-Upper Volta Border Commission began its negotiations when Afrifa paid a visit to the latter for the preliminary talks in April 1967. By the end of July 1967 a final agreement had been reached in Accra on demarcating the borders between Ghana and Upper Volta. Similarly, the Ivory Coast-Ghana Border Commission that began its talks in December 1967, reached an agreement by the end of September 1968. The occasion was marked by the official visit of General Ankrah to Ivory Coast.

The basis of the inter-state relations were clearly stated by the two leaders. Whereas Ankrah paid tribute to the President of Ivory Coast as the greatest statesman in West Africa, the latter pointed out the basis of relationship between Ghana and Ivory Coast in the words:

If we must be concerned with world affairs and have a clear vision of the path to be followed by Africa (then we must not allow ourselves to be detracted from that which binds our two countries, we must be aware of that which is most immediate and most essential—the development of our two countries in the interest of our citizens.

Ghana's Efforts on Close Economic Links with its Neighbours

Alongside the border settlements, Ghana made significant headway in promoting mutual economic links with West African

110 Ghanaian Times, 5 April 1967.
111 Joint Communique referred in Daily Graphic, 28 July 1968.
112 Joint Communique referred in Daily Graphic, 28 September 1968.
113 Ghanaian Times, 10 September 1968.
states. Under the terms of trade agreed upon between Ghana and Dahomey, the former was to sell electric power, flour and manufactured commodities in exchange for meat and cattle from Dahomey. But a more important breakthrough was made with Niger, an important member of the Entente Council. General Ankrah paid an official visit to Niger in February 1968 and, while making a trade agreement, Niger invited Ghana to the OCAM conference, opening a new page in the relations between the English- and French-speaking states. This was of particular importance because the OCAM states that had carried out a number of experiments on regional cooperation among the French-speaking states had initiated a new venture of establishing an Economic Community or Common Market comprising all the fourteen states of West Africa. The pace of cooperation was eased further as Modibo Keita in Mali was overthrown by a military junta on 22 November 1968.

The change in Mali was of great significance for the NLC, which immediately approached the new National Liberation Military Council to renew inter-state relations. Two agreements were signed between Ghana and Mali. The NLMC agreed to repay £10 million loan that Nkrumah had offered to Mali. According to the terms of the trade agreement, Ghana was to export agricultural and industrial products including cocoa, iron rods, cement, timber products and pharmaceuticals to Mali whereas the latter was to sell her livestock and cereal products.

115 Joint Communique, Daily Graphic, 8 February 1968.
116 Daily Graphic commented: "It reduces further the dwindling number of the so-called African militants who see in socialism and autocracy the answers to Africa's enormous problems." 23 November 1968.
A close scrutiny of trade agreements that Ghana concluded with other states of West Africa would clearly bring out their common characteristic—a concern with promoting the economic interests of Ghana, while discovering new markets for its semi-industrial and industrial goods. It was the promotion of economic interests that prompted Ghana as well as other states with a similar approach to establish a Common Market or an economic community of West African states.

Ghana and West African Economic Community

The talks for the establishment of a Common Market in West Africa had been initiated in Niamey, Niger, at the instance of the OCAM states. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which had taken keen interest in developing regional cooperation in Africa, encouraged these initiatives and sponsored a West African Sub-Regional Conference held in Accra where articles of association establishing West African Economic Community were signed by West African States. The aims of the community were: (i) maximum possible inter-change of goods and services between its member-states by the elimination of the customs and trade barriers, and (ii) to promote through economic cooperation of the member states a coordinated and equitable development of their economies. In a meeting held in Monrovia in April 1968, the heads of the Government of West African States decided to establish a West African Regional Group corroborating the aims of the West African

118 The signatories were: Dahomey, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Upper Volta. Ghana Today vol. 11, no. 6, 17 May 1967.
Economic Community.

Different attempts at the regional economic cooperation made in West Africa during this time can be discussed with reference to two questions. What was the approach of the states towards regional cooperation? What were the prospects of such cooperation? The approach towards regional cooperation was made clear by E.N. Omaboe representing Ghana at the Monrovia Conference when he stated that there was need for economic cooperation but that such cooperation should be founded on mutual economic interests and not on the right of the more powerful. He set down two cardinal principles for all participants to "scrupulously observe all the time":

1. The right of each country to chose for itself its own economic and political system without interference from other members as stipulated in the OAU Charter.
2. The need to conduct business and financial relations on the lines of internationally accepted norms. "Without observing these rules we feel our efforts will not bear any fruits".

The framework of regional cooperation

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120 Ghana Today, vol. 12, no. 10, 15 May 1968. General Ankrah expressed the similar views when he said "Ghana strongly believes that the development of Africa could be speeded up by such regional economic groupings...fruitful economic cooperation cannot be achieved without harmonious relations between member states...There must be a respect for the territorial integrity of member states and a strict adherence to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of others." Ibid., vol. 12, no. 9, 1 May 1968.
among states of West Africa with strict adherence to the preservation of national sovereignty and independence was close to the model of European Economic Community. But the prospects for economic cooperation in West Africa were rather limited.

The first limitation was the nature of West African economies including that of Ghana as essentially producers and exporters of raw materials. The extra-African economic relations of these states outweighed trade in terms of exchange of goods etc. which was extremely limited. In order to overcome dependence the need was for adequate industrial and infrastructural development as in the EEC which was lacking in West Africa. Thirdly, a degree of industrial development demanded mobilization and planning of resources in such a manner that all the states developed equitably. These goals did not require merely political will but close political coordination of policies which demanded to an extent broader views on national sovereignty.

In West Africa in spite of attempts on regional cooperation, the states had no integrated blueprint for regional planning and development. Then there were states like Ghana which crossed at least the peripheral stages of industrialisation whereas others lagged far behind. The uneven development militated against equality in cooperation of partners leaving to apprehensions of domination by the developed, if the less


developed are being used as markets for the former's goods. The trend was obvious in Ghana's trade contracts with neighbours, that tended towards unequal exchange. The contradiction of emphasising national development and seeking to promote regional cooperation in this given environment manifested in the typical problem of 'aliens' in West Africa.

Ghana and the Aliens' Problem

During the colonial period in West Africa, there had been free movement of people from one part of the region to the others. As a result, at the time of independence, there were thousands of West Africans who lived and worked in countries other than their own country of origin. Ghana which had always enjoyed a more prosperous economy and greater opportunities had 432,000 African 'aliens' living in the country, according to the first census in 1960. The CPP Government never exercised any restrictions on these 'aliens'; instead there were attempts to integrate them into Ghanaian society and politics.

After 1966 coup, the NLC in its efforts to normalise relations with West African states assured free movement of goods and protection of the rights of 'aliens' in Ghana. But the developments in Ghana were incompatible with such assurances. The large population of aliens in Ghana was mainly

123 1960 Census of Ghana (Accra, 1964). Statewise break-up of the aliens was 54,000 from Ivory Coast, 1,200 from Sierra Leone, 8,000 from Liberia, 19,000 from Mali, 195,000 from Upper Volta, 180,000 from Togo, 31,000 from Dahomey, 20,000 from Niger, 191,000 from Nigeria.

engaged in two kinds of economic activities—the retail trade and other small scale business (along with Lebanese and Indians) and industrial, mining and agricultural labour.

The NLC's main accent was on national development envisaged through the growth of private Ghanaian enterprises. The state's withdrawal from active economic role leading to the closure of Government-owned enterprises or projects resulted in retrenchment of labour. As a consequence, unemployment increased in Ghana. Resentment was expressed at the presence of a large number of aliens, both African and non-African. The Government announced policy measures to meet this grievance. In order to encourage the Ghanaian private enterprise, the aliens were to be eliminated from certain sectors of economy, and in order to meet the challenge of unemployment the alien labour was to be restricted. The NLC, thus, framed the policy under which the retail and small scale business was reserved for Ghanaians only. To further discourage the influence of the aliens, the Government announced that all non-Ghanaians were to hold work permits. That Ghana was not alone in facing such problems became clear when Sierra Leone expelled 2,000 Ghanaian fishermen in December 1968 and considered the act as necessary for national interests. In 1969, the NLC

125 The NLC's Policy for Promotion of Ghanaian Enterprises (Accra, 1968).

126 Daily Graphic, 9 December 1968. Reacting to Sierra Leone's action, the Lagon Observer wrote: "Now there are the times when every African country is becoming inward looking and facing the challenge of economic development...With our own intricate problems of unemployment and underproduction, we should be realistic about providing job and business opportunities for our own citizens first. The cause of African unity will be best served by a clear understanding of the Principles of the National interest and of reciprocity. Lagon Observer, 17-30 January 1969."
issued a decree, according to which all aliens were supposed to carry the identity cards too. The steps of the NLC found strong reaction in other states but it defended the steps on the plea of serving the national interests. Unemployment in Ghana was the result of the NLC's economic policies of 'national development' and the aliens policy was anti-climax to its efforts to foster regional economic cooperation. The predicament of Ghana was that of other African states as well.

The NLC's Africa policy consisted of three elements. The first was priority for the national reconstruction and development of Ghana. The second was promotion of relations and close cooperation with other states on the basis of mutual recognition of respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity and absolute non-interference with internal matters. The third was determination of Ghana's stand and role on pan-African issues of the continent within the organisational framework of the OAU. Under the spell of this approach the policy followed by the NLC in Africa was not only inactive and weak but essentially status quoist. To that extent it was a reversal of the policy and perception of the deposed regime.


128 Replying to Lagos's Daily Times comments that Ghana's aliens policy would have far reaching consequences on inter-African relations, Harley said that these measures are of prime importance to every sovereign state. "Ghana would encourage a foreign investor if his investments result in greater good to the country. But if non-Ghanaians who enter this country to seek employment be a Chinese, a Nigerian or a Eskimo, we in spite of our sympathies for brother Africans have to think that thousands of our own citizens are unemployed. What moral justification do we have then to employ a Congolese or a Nigerian as we have to defend our nationals in the economic field." Daily Graphic, 3 February 1969.
On Rhodesia, the NLC's stand lacked both initiative and force, partly because the settlement of its problems with Britain had overshadowed its commitment to Rhodesia. On South Africa, it appeared to have sided with emergent approach of a dialogue, officially confirmed by successor regime of Dr. K.A. Busia in 1970. In the Nigerian Civil War, the NLC went back on its own commitment to the principles of non-interference in the other states' affairs and their territorial integrity in its eagerness to play a role to settle the crisis when, within Ghana, overwhelming opinion favoured the secessionist Biafra.

Finally, the NLC developed close relations with most states of West Africa on the basis of a similarity of approach and views and prepared the grounds for bilateral and regional cooperation for integrated development. But pursuit of national interests based on the sacrosanct principles of national sovereignty exposed the limits of regional cooperation, affecting interests of Africans from their states. The NLC's policy on aliens became a precursor of similar actions by other states, adding a new factor of dissensions among the states of the region.

Ultimately, all this was the outcome of the trend of national development of the individual nation-states in Africa. Ghana had reverted to this trend under the NLC.